Anxiety Within Post-secondary Students

Anxiety is a common nervous disorder that comes along with compulsive behaviour and/or possible panic attacks. Students experience anxiety at the post-secondary level, and three of the reasons they struggle are stakes being higher, new environment and sleep deprivation.

Firstly, one reason some post-secondary students struggle with anxiety is due to the realization that Universities/Colleges expect a lot of students which can stress the students out. One of the reasons students struggle with this because in University when a deadline is given, there are no extensions to that deadline. Whereas in high school, teachers tend to be a bit more lenient with deadlines. Another reason is because they have to meet a specific GPA requirement based on the expectations of the University of their choice. Some schools have an academic standing that a student has to meet in order to remain in their program. An academic standing is calculated and recorded on academic transcripts at the end of each semester for every full-time student (“Academic standing”, 2018). It is determined by semester and cumulative grade point averages and the students’ academic standing in the previous semester (“Academic standing”, 2018). The minimum cumulative grade point average required for graduation is 2.00 (“Academic standing,” 2018). Many students struggle with this, because too much is being expected of them. For example, if they do not meet that specific GPA requirement, they can be kicked out of their University/College or be on probation. A third reason is because if they do not study the material for a midterm/exam, they will not be able to do as well compared to if they were to study the concepts. A fourth reason is due to the realization that a student has to be able to manage school on top of their home/work lives. This can be extremely stressful if not managed properly, and can become very overwhelming. The last reason would be due to money issues. When coming to University/College the amount of money that is required by the schools are ridiculously high and some students worry about if they can afford it. It is realized by many students that Universities do expect a lot from them, and this is why they have many issues dealing with anxiety.

Secondly, another reason for post-secondary students having anxiety is due to adjusting to a completely new environment. The first reason for this has to do with the amount of homework students in University/College are given. There is an excessive amount of homework based on the courses needed for their specific program. This can become overwhelming. Another reason for this is to make good study habits. If a student does not make good study habits, then they will not succeed. For example, if a student does not know a good way to study, this might make them worry about failure, resulting in anxiety attacks. A third reason has to do largely with time management skills. For example, if a student does not know how to time manage they will most likely end up doing poorly, rather than if they knew how to time manage. A fourth reason is due to a students note taking skills. For example, if a student has poor note taking skills, they may end up doing poorly on tests as a result of this. The last reason has to do with meeting a bunch of new people. This can stress some students out as they may not be comfortable large groups. This can make one become very anxious and want to leave the situation. When coming to a new school it is extremely hard to become comfortable when being a new student. Living in a new environment means a lot of changes in life including absence from family and friends, meeting new friends and developing networks, learning new social customs and behaviours, experiencing a different climate and different foods (“Adjusting to a new environment – Future

Students," 2019). Adjusting to different environments can make some students very anxious.

Lastly, one other reason some post-secondary students struggle with anxiety is because they lack sleep. Sleep is a very important factor when it comes to cognitive thinking. One reason that many students struggle with this is because they may not be getting enough sleep around exam time. Many students struggle with this issue because in University/College the weight of midterms/exams are much higher than the weight of the assignments. Another reason would be because homework and studying is keeping the student up at night. Since there is a lot of homework and tests to study for, many students tend to stay up way too late studying which can affect their sleeping patterns. A third reason is due to the lack of sleep a student gets when trying to juggle their home/work/school lives. It can be very stressful when trying to manage everything at once, which can cause students to become anxious. A fourth reason is due to a mental state or other issues. Many students do not only struggle with anxiety, but can possibly struggle with many other mental issues that may cause/affect anxiety. Someone who stresses a lot may experience anxiety attacks. The last reason is due to being worried about their grades or possible deadlines. In University there are so many things due, and it may be hard to keep track of everything. Making sure grades are where they need to be can make someone anxious and not sleep properly at night. In University many students do not get much sleep due to many reasons, and this can have a huge domino effect on their health and emotional state. Sleep deprivation increases the likelihood teens will suffer myriad negative consequences, including an inability to concentrate, poor grades, drowsy-driving incidents, anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide and even suicide attempts ("Among teens, sleep deprivation an epidemic," 2015). Many students are not getting enough sleep in University/College which may cause anxiety.

In summary, when experiencing anxiety, students in University/College battle immensely with this due to the struggle of trying not to be unrelenting, adapting to University/College life and getting an insufficient amount of sleep.

References

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