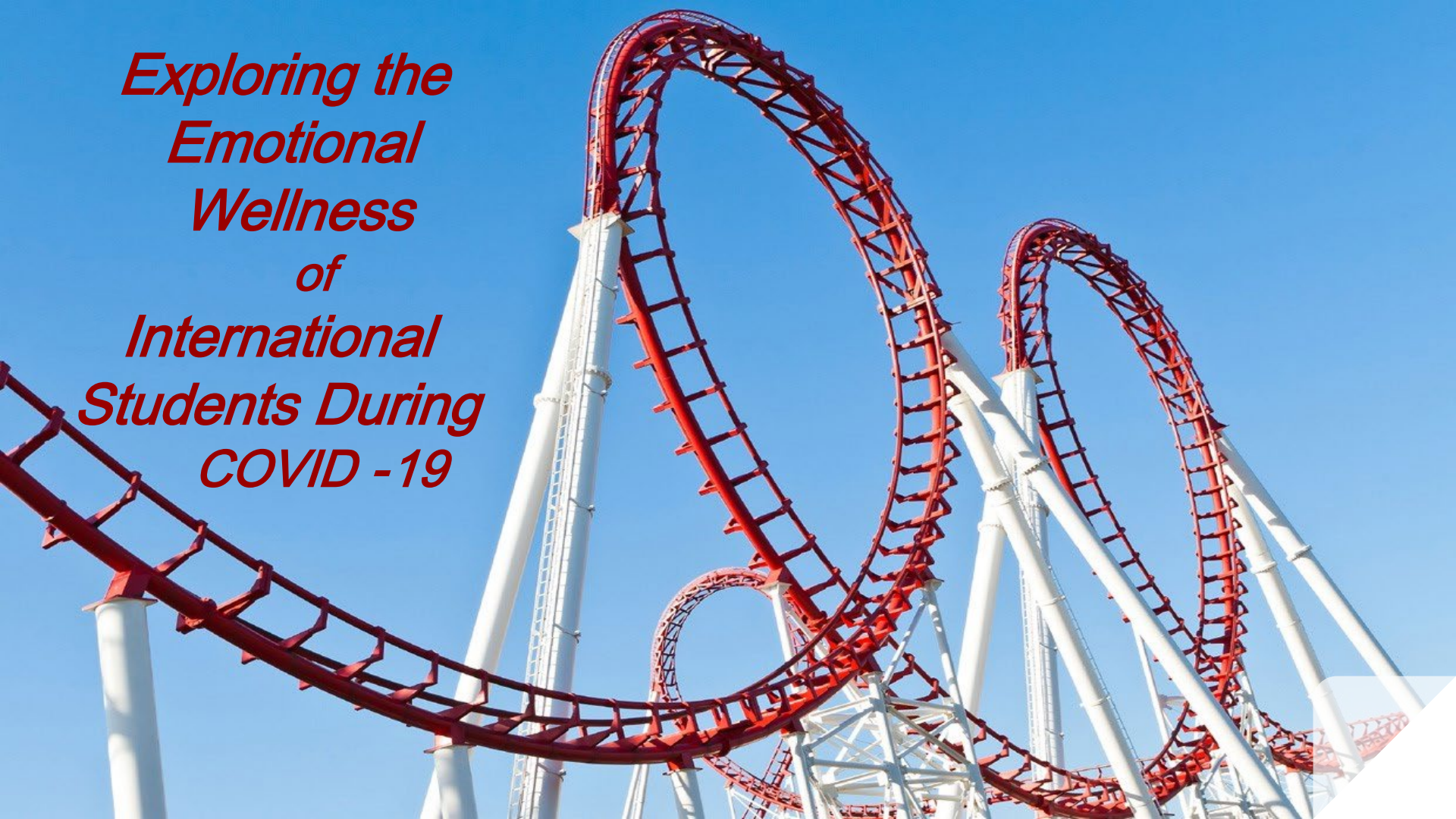


*Exploring the
Emotional
Wellness
of
International
Students During
COVID -19*



Presenters



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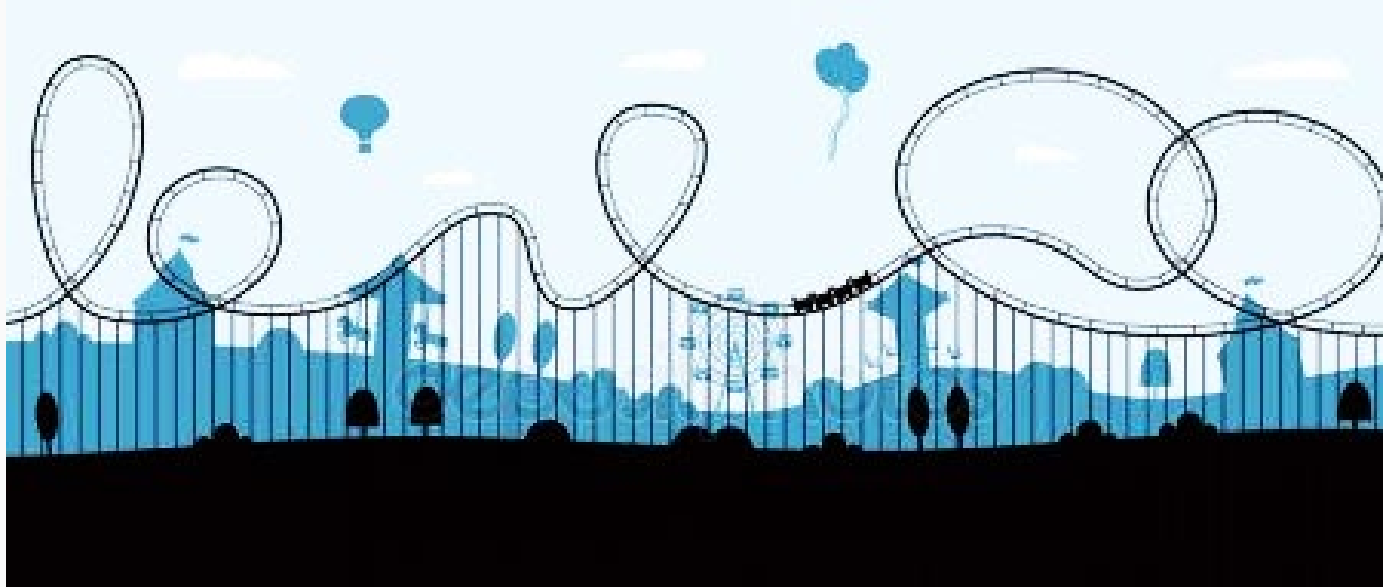


Jennifer Frankel
Director, University Relations
International Student Insurance

Agenda

- I. Understanding the challenges
- II. What students are saying
- III. Case studies
- IV. Strategies at Embry Riddle & HCC
- V. Strategies Going Forward
- VI. Resources
- VII. Q&A

Understanding the Challenges



“The American College Health Association has singled out international students as a US campus population that has been “disproportionately” affected by the coronavirus pandemic.”

Source: [Supporting Vulnerable Campus Populations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

The Strain on Mental Health

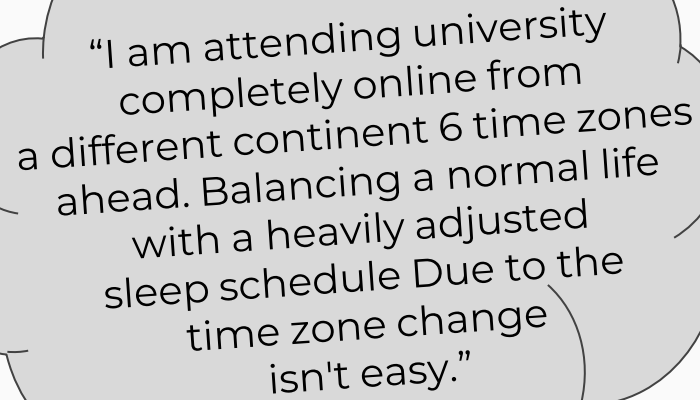
Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

- Immigration/Visas
- Finances
- Housing
- Online learning
- Making and maintaining friends
- Discrimination
- Challenges caused by mask wearing

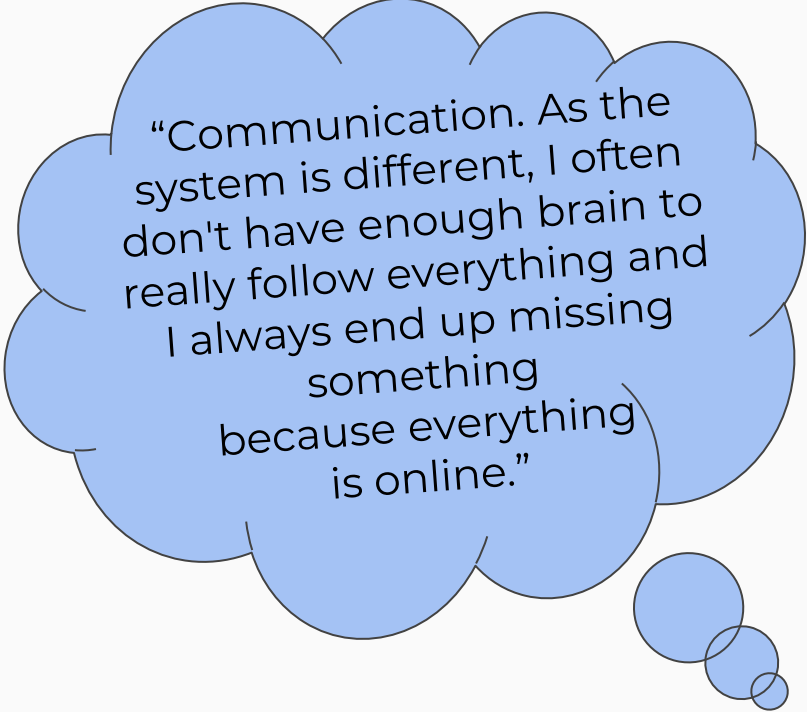
What Students Are Saying @ Embry Riddle

Q2 What has been your biggest struggle as an international student during this pandemic?





"I am attending university completely online from a different continent 6 time zones ahead. Balancing a normal life with a heavily adjusted sleep schedule Due to the time zone change isn't easy."

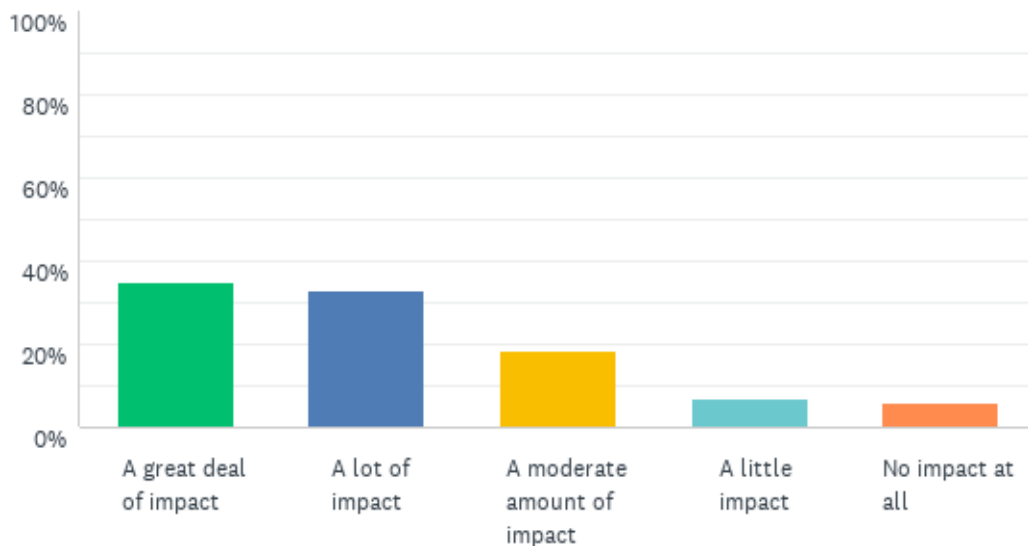


"Communication. As the system is different, I often don't have enough brain to really follow everything and I always end up missing something because everything is online."

- ERAU F1 International Students
September 2020

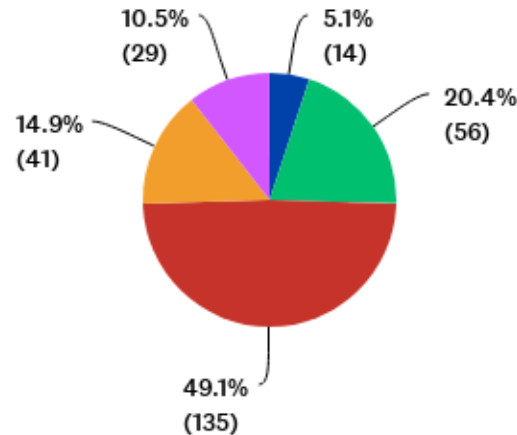
What Students Are Saying @ Embry Riddle

Q1 How much of an impact do you feel COVID has had on your status as an international student?



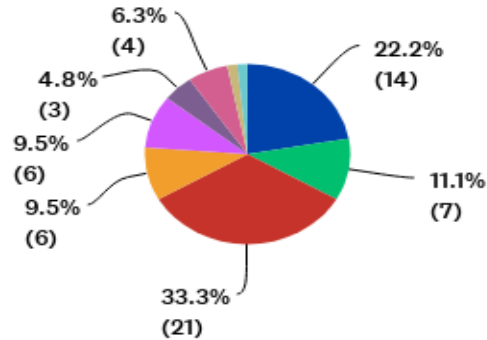
What Students Are Saying @ Embry Riddle

Q4 Overall how effective has the counseling center support programs and resources provided while you adjust to the current circumstances been?



What Students Are Saying @ Embry Riddle

Q3 Using any number from 0 to 10, what number would you use to rate your ability to deal with your emotional wellness during this pandemic?



What Students Are Saying @ Embry Riddle

Q5 How are you overcoming social distancing to form and maintain your relationships?

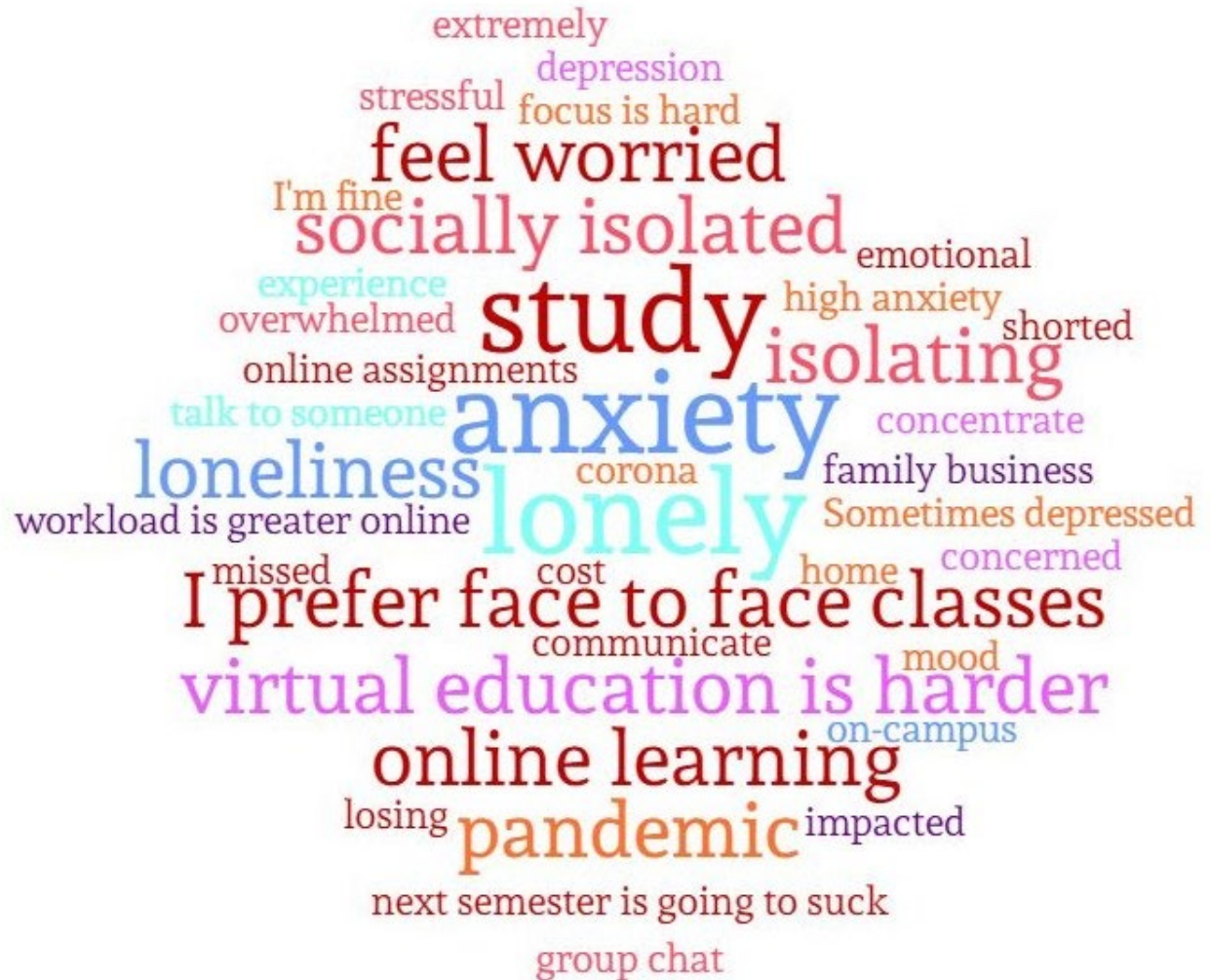


A word cloud of student responses to the question 'How are you overcoming social distancing to form and maintain your relationships?'. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape. The most prominent words are 'SOCIAL MEDIA', 'TEXT FRIENDS', 'WeChat', 'Virtual events', 'Technology', 'Virtual hangouts', 'Small groups', 'WhatsApp', 'ZOOM', and 'FaceTime'. Other words include 'videocalls' and 'Hobbies'.

videocalls
Hobbies
SOCIAL MEDIA
TEXT FRIENDS
WeChat
Virtual events
Technology
Virtual hangouts
Small groups
WhatsApp
ZOOM
FaceTime

Afraid of gathering

COVID 19 Stressors on F-1 Students @ HCC: Survey Results



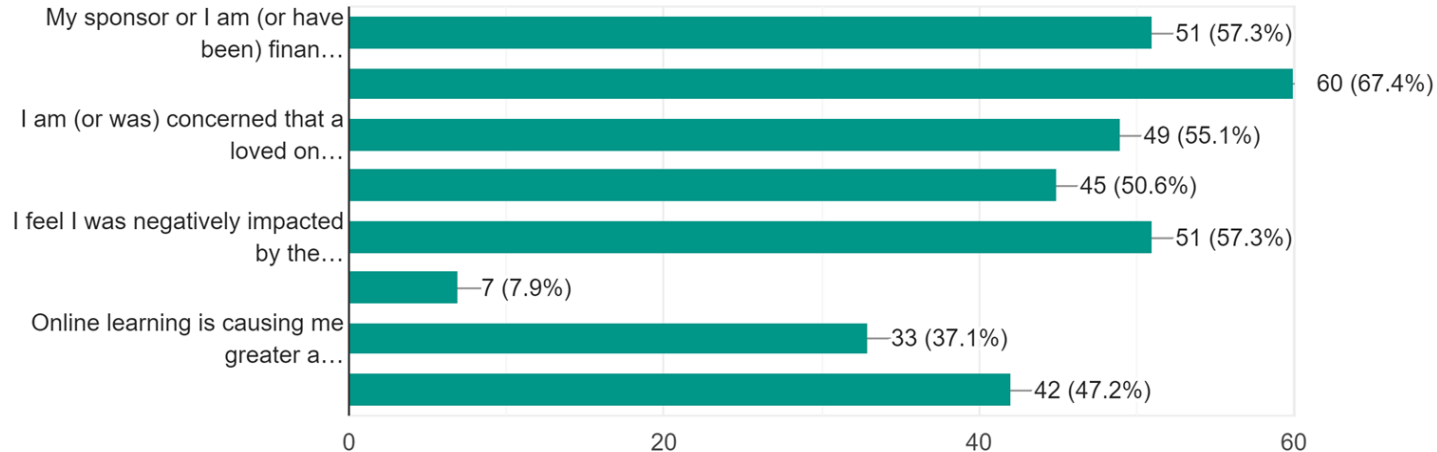
“I never really had a deep depression mood before, but I had my first experience because of this pandemic. Mainly cause of the student withdrawal, international students first couldn't go back home and do their studies abroad and that made me very despondent. I was already worried that I couldn't see my family and hoping that nothing happens to them before this pandemic is over. My depression was so bad I was in bed all day, and I didn't even want to talk to nobody even my family on the phone. Thank God the policy had a change and I was able to go back home. The relief I had was amazing.”

- HCC F-1 International Student
September 2020

What Students Are Saying @ Hillsborough Community College

Since March of 2020, please check any boxes that are true for you. Check as many as are true to your experience.

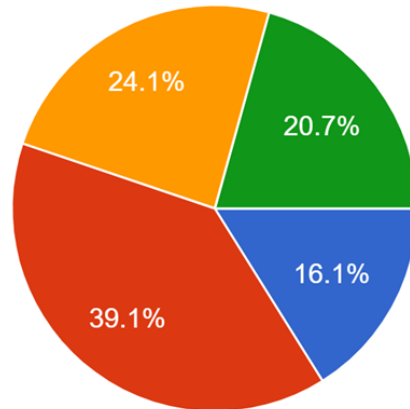
89 responses



What Students Are Saying @ Hillsborough Community College

Loneliness is an unpleasant emotional response to perceived isolation. Choose the answer that best represents your feelings right now.

87 responses

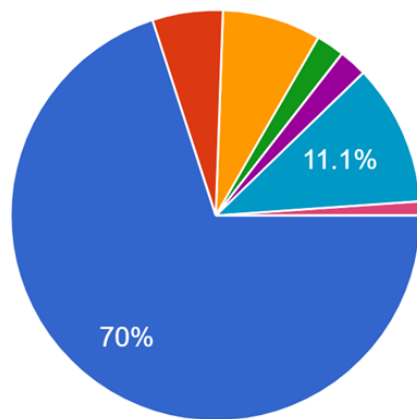


- I feel lonely most of the time.
- I feel lonely about half the time.
- Most of the time I don't feel lonely.
- I don't feel lonely at all.

What Students Are Saying @ Hillsborough Community College

If you become concerned about your mental health and feel like you should speak to someone about it, who would you most likely reach out to?

90 responses

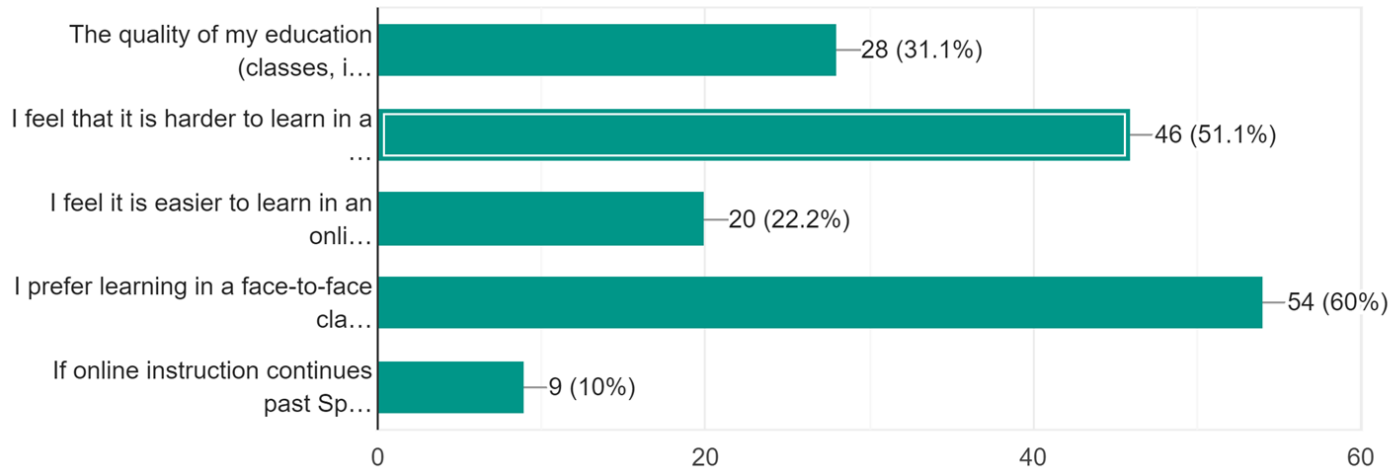


- Friend or family member
- HCC counselor
- Psychologist, psychiatrist or mental health counselor
- Religious leader
- HCC staff or faculty member
- I would not share my concerns with anyone.
- I want to speak to someone but I do not feel comfortable doing so.

What Students Are Saying @ Hillsborough Community College

The following statements relate to the quality of your current education. Check each box that you believe to be true for you.

90 responses



Barriers to Care During COVID-19

- ❖ Support services when traveling to another state or returned home
- ❖ Multilingual/multicultural staff aware of the additional stressors
- ❖ Stigma of mental health and access to care
- ❖ Understaffed counseling staff
- ❖ Engaging through new platforms

Case Studies



Case Study - Emotional Wellness

- ❖ During the summer of 2020, student was trying to determine if she would remain in U.S for the Fall 2020 term.
- ❖ She is a high performing student, who planned to enroll regardless of her location but couldn't make a decision. Stuck in a deadlock.
- ❖ At the time, there were no guidelines from SEVP regarding the fall 2020 rules. Student had all the information she needed to make the decision but needed to discuss it all with her DSO/advisor.
- ❖ The bottom line was, where would she feel the most supported and healthy. Where would she want to be during a pandemic since classes would be virtual. Student decided to return home and enroll online. College retained student and she plans to return when classes are face to face.

Case Study - Financial Impact

- ❖ Due to the economic impact of COVID-19, some sponsors have lost income which left F-1 students uncertain how they would pay future tuition bills.
- ❖ The impact has been felt in every country but students from countries which were already facing grave economic challenges, predictably, are faring worse.
- ❖ Rise in requests for Economic Hardship applications.
- ❖ Rise in requests for late start classes to allow more time to secure funds.
- ❖ Rise in scholarship inquiries.

Financial Impact - Flexible Solutions

- ❑ The 30 day reporting window allows the DSO an opportunity to retain students.
- ❑ Giving the student additional time to secure funds has proved helpful in retaining some F-1 students during these challenging economic times.
- ❑ Rather than terminating students at the end of the first week of classes, DSO's gave students the full 29 day window to be registered for classes.
- ❑ HCC offers late start classes (Sept - Oct). This option gives students more time to secure funds.
- ❑ Additionally, students who were seeing a medical doctor for stress related treatment were granted Medical Reduced Course Loads which allowed for less than 12 credit hours.

Case Study - Immigration Impact

- ❖ Student felt extreme stress and uncertainty regarding regulation changes
- ❖ Internship lined up for fall term canceled due to pandemic
- ❖ Financial constraints caused by COVID prevented student from enrolling
- ❖ Student requested leave of absence and returned home once home country's borders opened
- ❖ Student understood that emotional well being played an important role in academic success

Case Study - Immigration/ Financial Impact

- ❖ Student was on OPT but was laid off during the pandemic.
- ❖ Student has a pending STEM OPT and fearful and anxious about a possible denial since she is no longer employed
- ❖ SEVP throws in curve ball of termination and deportation for students who exceed 90 days of unemployment.
- ❖ Student had previously accrued days of unemployment
- ❖ Student is “forced” to prematurely end OPT and apply for a master’s degree since she was unsuccessful in getting another job.

Strategies Going Forward



Current Support Strategies

- ❖ Daily Let's **Teletalk**
- ❖ Virtual Book Club
- ❖ “**Reality Warrior**” - an opportunity for self-exploration to challenge unhelpful/negative feelings. How to manage anxiety, depression and self-doubt
- ❖ “Cost of COVID” - Managing the losses that COVID has brought to our lives
- ❖ International student “buddy”/ **mentorship program**
- ❖ A few additions to the Counseling Centers virtual services. They have added several new social media sites since the pandemic and introduced a more virtual forms of engaging with students
- ❖ **Project call a student.** We got staff and alumni to call all international students both in the US and abroad and basically check on them. We collaborated with the retention committee for this project
- ❖ **Meditation Mondays;** students are guided through a 15 minute mindful meditation
- ❖ Zumba dance party; when times get tough, we dance through it together. Both in person and virtual option

Current Support Strategies

- ❖ HCC's **Student Assistance Program** offers resources tailored to student life, providing you with the right tools to help you through some of life's toughest challenges. HCC has partnered with **BayCare Life Management** to provide FREE professional and confidential counseling services.
- ❖ **SGA phone App** provides students easy access to all campus activities. All activities have moved to Zoom. Students can pick up supplies at the SGA office for art activities and game nights and then join Zoom. Activities include: virtual Book Club, Coffee Conversations, Peer Mentorship, Game nights (Bingo) and more.
- ❖ International Student Ambassadors create socially engaging events including: Mental Health Workshop, Manage Stress through exercise and more.
- ❖ Counseling Centers virtual services and in person.
- ❖ Food Pantry - provides food for students facing food insecurity. Students may volunteer to bag food. Students used to be able to "shop for free" but due to COVID, items are bagged and provided in designated areas around campus.

Resources



References and Resources

The American College Health Association, <https://www.acha.org/>, has many valuable resources available on their website:

Supporting Vulnerable Campus Populations During the COVID-19 Pandemic. (2020, August). *American College Health Association*. Retrieved September 15, 2020, from https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_Supporting_Vulnerable_Populations_During_the_COVID-19_Pandemic_August2020.pdf?utm_campaign=latitude%28s%29&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Revue%20newslett%20er

Preparing for COVID-19. (2020, March). *American College Health Association*. Retrieved September 15, 2020, from https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_Preparing_for_COVID-19_March-3-2020.pdf

“The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on ESL Learners and TESOL Practitioners in the United States”
<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:fd97f9de-cdf1-427b-a875-ed0378f4b2b6>

[Supporting International Students During COVID-19](#) article by NAFSA

[Addressing Mental Health Issues Affecting Intl Students](#) book by NAFSA

Emotional Wellness During the COVID -19 Outbreak — For — International Students

The infographic features a header with a network diagram background. The main content is divided into two columns: a light grey column on the left and a dark blue column on the right. The left column contains a paragraph about the importance of healthy habits and a list of emotions. The right column contains definitions for social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. A footer section at the bottom lists various emotions in a grid.

Emotional Wellness During the COVID-19 Outbreak — For — International Students

As the world faces the **Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**, it's important to embrace healthy habits to help maintain your overall well-being. If you are an international student in the US or if you have returned home, here are some tips and tricks to get through this uncertain time.

Common Terms Defined During COVID-19 Outbreak

What is Social Distancing?
Social distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread the virus.

What is Quarantine?
Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who may have been exposed to a virus to see if they become sick.

What Is Isolation?
Isolation prevents the spread of an infectious disease by separating people who are sick from those who are not.

Everyone handles stress differently during these uncertain times. It is common for many people to isolate, quarantine or social distance themselves from others and it may make you feel:

▶ Anxious	▶ Resentful	▶ Lonely	▶ Depressed
▶ Fearful	▶ Uncertain	▶ Angry	▶ Insecure
▶ Concerned	▶ Frustrated	▶ Ambivalent	▶ Stressed

<https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/>

Emotional & Mental Health Training Programs



Powerpoint Presentation

Professionally designed presentation to walk your students through the training.



Video Content

Two videos on mental health awareness and student perceptions on culture shock and stress from around the world.



Student Handout

A downloadable student guide take-away, or we can supply hard copies, to distribute to students.



Interactive Activities

Activities that encourage dialogue on many of the larger issues such as myths surround seeking help.



Proctor Guide

Complete guide to walk you or your staff through the training, including a full script and talking points.



<https://administrators.internationalstudentinsurance.com/resources/>



Q&A

“Every hand that we don’t shake must become a phone call that we place. Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern.”

— Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky