

The CDC Recommends that During This Time Students Should ...

- ✚ Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate
- ✚ Eat well balanced meals
- ✚ Increase physical activity and limit screen time
- ✚ Get plenty of sleep
- ✚ Stick to a schedule
- ✚ Avoid excessive use of alcohol and drug use
- ✚ Connect with people you trust

American
Council on
Education
Suggests



Universities Should ...

- ❖ Recommend faculty to check in with students and provide reasonable flexibility and accommodations
- ❖ Seek out communication channels for underrepresented students who face greater stigma about seeking assistance
- ❖ Provide alternative, personalized grading & guide students on how it might affect their future educational & career prospects
- ❖ Share powerful messages with the students regarding overall wellness
- ❖ Support the faculty and staff mentally. Realign expectations for productivity and increase flexibility. Supporting faculty and staff mental health can directly impact the student experience
- ❖ Campus leaders should establish or update their plan to assess mental health in their student populations
- ❖ Develop strategies to include students with diverse needs in the data collection

COVID-19 and its accompanying effects will continue impacting collegiate mental health and wellbeing profoundly. Higher educational institutions need to keep mental health a priority by communicating consistently and clearly, supporting faculty and staff as they respond to student needs, assessing and planning for sustained mental health support, and keep equity at the forefront of all efforts. (American Council on Education, 2020)

Resources for You or Someone You Know in Need

- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- <https://www.crisistextline.org/>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/>
- <https://adaa.org/>
- <https://www.dbsalliance.org/>

References:

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3. Jeremy F. Huckins et al., "Mental Health and Behavior of College Students During the Early Phases of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Longitudinal Smartphone and Ecological Momentary Assessment Study," *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 22, no. 6 (2020): e20185, <https://doi.org/10.2196/20185>.
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Mental Health Effects of COVID-19 on College Students

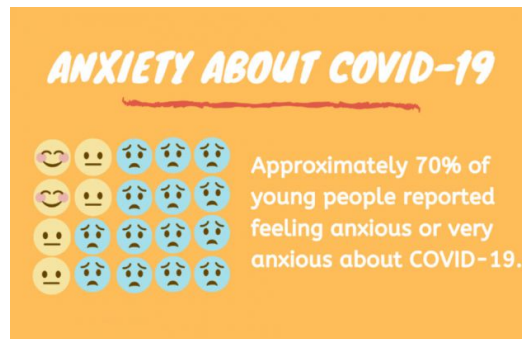


The novel coronavirus caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus emerged in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. It is a severe acute respiratory syndrome with symptoms including cough, fever, shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of smell or taste, among many others.¹ On March 11th, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic.³ Growing concern about the pandemic led to universities hastily taking extensive measures to protect its students and staff by closing down institutions, switching to online learning, cancelling all campus events including sports, conferences, and even graduations, and forcing its students to depart from campus.

Prior to COVID-19 ...

- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among college students⁶
- 39% of students in college experience a significant mental health issue⁶
- 2/3 students with anxiety or depression don't seek treatment⁶
- 8 out of 10 presidents indicated that student mental health had become more of a priority on their campus than it was three years ago (Chessman and Taylor 2019)

1 IN 5 STUDENTS REPORT THAT COVID-19 HAS SIGNIFICANTLY WORSENERED THEIR MENTAL HEALTH



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Universities' decision to suspend in-person classes and evacuate students has led to some students feeling frustrated, anxious, and betrayal as they struggle with loneliness and isolation from their friends and campus.² Some students suffer from poor mental health due to the disruption of an academic routine. A lot of college students have also had disruptions in their research projects and internships which can disrupt their program of study, graduation, and job market plans, ultimately fueling anxiety. Due to the pandemic many college students have lost their jobs which causes financial stress on several students. International students who are far from home also worry about the health and safety of their families abroad.⁴ The pandemic itself adds fear and uncertainty in students' lives which contributes to the trauma they undergo.

Dartmouth College



Dr. Jeremy F Huckins from the Department of Psychological and Brain Science at Dartmouth College along with other colleagues at Dartmouth, conducted a study where they collected longitudinal data in a cohort of 217 college students to demonstrate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and behavior.³

They sought to answer two questions: have the behaviors and mental health of the participants changed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic compared to previous time periods? Second, are these behavior and mental health changes associated with the relative news coverage of COVID-19 in the US media? All data in the study was obtained from the second iteration of the StudentLife study.⁷

They found that during the Winter 2020 academic term (the time when coronavirus impacted American life drastically) there was increased depression, anxiety, and sedentary behavior. These numbers were well above what would normally be observed during a typical term.³

They also found that as COVID-19 news reporting intensified, there was an increase in sedentary behavior, duration of phone usage, anxiety, and depression.³

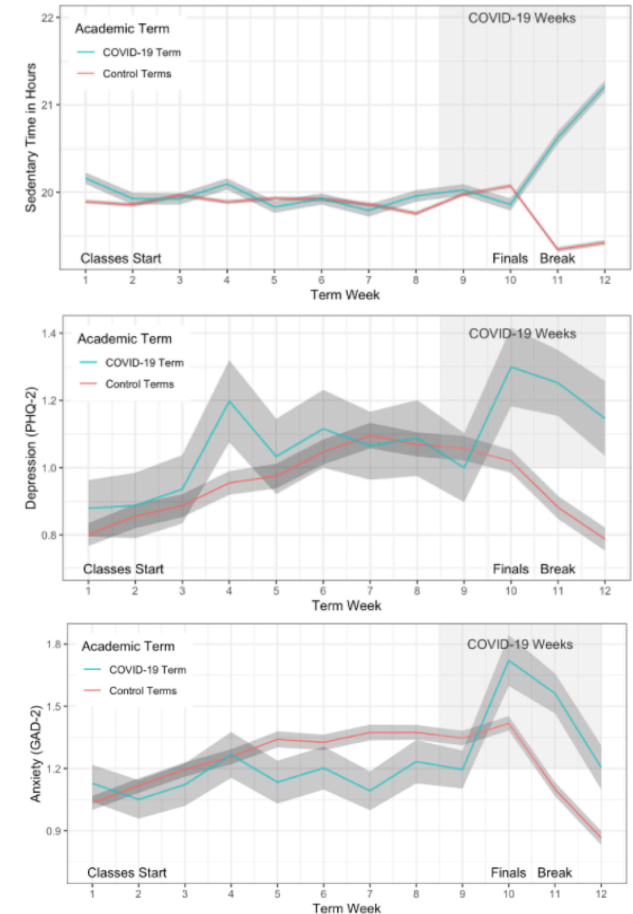


Figure 1.0 Recorded sedentary time (top), depression (middle), and anxiety (bottom) across an academic term with 2 weeks of break. The shaded grey ribbon represents standard error. The red line represents control terms and the blue line represents COVID-19 term. (Huckins, 2020)