

Exploring The Impact of Mental Health on Black Students in SUNY: A Research Study

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Mental health issues have been a growing concern for higher education institutions, with Black students being particularly affected. Studies have shown that Black students are more prone to mental health problems than other racial and ethnic groups. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges faced by black students, such as food insecurity, difficulty finding housing, affordability of college, mental health, and disruptions in enrollment. These issues have led to an increase in mental health issues among Black students. Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of mental health on Black students in SUNY.

My research question aims to explore the impact of mental health on black students in SUNY. The chapter will begin by discussing the background of the study, followed by the research question, objectives, and hypotheses. The study will use a qualitative research approach to collect data from the selected participants. In the next sections, the study's sampling strategy, data collection, and data analysis techniques will be discussed in detail.

This thesis paper aims to investigate the impact of mental health on black students in the State University of New York (SUNY). The study seeks to identify the challenges faced by Black students concerning mental health, such as food insecurity, childcare, housing solutions, and enrollment disruptions, particularly during the pandemic. The paper will begin by discussing the background and significance of the study, followed by the research question, objectives, and hypotheses. The study's methodology, including the sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis techniques, will be presented in detail. The findings of the research will contribute to the existing literature on mental health and black students in higher education, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for improving mental health services for black students in SUNY.

Background:

Black students in higher education face various challenges, such as discrimination, racism, financial constraints, and academic stress. These challenges can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems. Studies have shown that black students are less likely to seek mental health services due to stigma and cultural barriers. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought additional challenges to black students, such as job loss, financial strain, and social isolation. These factors can worsen mental health problems and hinder academic success.

Research Question, Objectives, and Hypotheses:

The research question for this study is "What is the impact of mental health on black students in SUNY?" The study's objectives are to (1) identify the challenges faced by black students concerning mental health, (2) explore the impact of mental health on academic success and retention, and (3) assess the effectiveness of mental health services provided to black students in SUNY. The hypotheses for this study are that (1) black students in SUNY face significant mental health challenges that affect their academic success and retention, (2) mental health services provided to black students in SUNY are inadequate, and (3) improving mental health services for black students in SUNY will lead to improved academic success and retention rates.

Methodology:

This study will employ qualitative approach to gather data from selected participants. The study's sampling strategy will involve purposive sampling to select black students who have experienced mental health challenges in SUNY. Data will be collected through semi-structured interview, with questions designed to explore the research objectives and hypotheses. The data collected will be analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis technique.

This thesis paper aims to investigate the impact of mental health on black students in SUNY. The study's findings will contribute to the existing literature on mental health and black students in higher education, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for improving mental health services for black students in SUNY. The study's implications for policy and practice will also be discussed. It is hoped that the research will promote greater awareness of mental health issues among black students in SUNY and encourage the development of more effective mental health services that meet the needs of this student population.

Rationale

Mental health is a critical issue affecting millions of individuals worldwide, and it is particularly relevant among college students. Studies show that college students experience high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression due to academic pressures, social pressures, and financial stressors. However, research indicates that Black students may experience even higher levels of mental health challenges due to systemic racism, discrimination, and other unique stressors.

The State University of New York (SUNY) is the largest comprehensive university system in the United States, with over 64 campuses serving over 1.3 million students. Given the large number of Black students enrolled in SUNY, it is essential to explore the impact of mental health on this population. By conducting a qualitative study, we can gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of Black students regarding mental health.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of mental health on Black students in SUNY and to identify strategies to support their mental health needs. By understanding the unique experiences and challenges faced by Black students, we can develop culturally sensitive and effective interventions that promote mental health and well-being among this population.

This study is particularly relevant given the recent events highlighting the impact of systemic racism and discrimination on Black individuals' mental health. By shedding light on the experiences of Black students in SUNY, we can raise awareness of the impact of racism and discrimination on mental health and advocate for policies and interventions that address these issues.

This qualitative study on the impact of mental health on Black students in SUNY is essential to promote their well-being, reduce mental health stigma, and develop culturally sensitive interventions that address their unique needs. It is our hope that this study will contribute to the growing body of

literature on mental health among Black students in higher education and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in the SUNY system.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Mental health is a significant concern among college students, and it affects their academic performance, relationships, and overall quality of life. For black students, the experience can be even more challenging due to factors such as systemic racism, discrimination, and lack of representation in higher education. The State University of New York (SUNY) is one of the largest university systems in the United States, and it enrolls a significant number of black students. This research study aims to explore the impact of mental health on black students in SUNY, including the factors that contribute to their mental health concerns and the resources available to support their well-being.

Food Insecurity and Mental Health

One of the biggest barriers to accessing mental health care in the Black community is the stigma surrounding mental illness. This stigma is rooted in cultural and historical factors, including the legacy of slavery and discrimination, as well as the strong emphasis on self-reliance and independence. As a result, many Black students in SUNY may feel ashamed or embarrassed to seek help for mental health issues.

The study's goals in *Burden of Food Insecurity and Mental Health Symptoms Among Adults with Cardiometabolic Conditions During the COVID-19 Pandemic* were to (1) determine the national prevalence and patterns of food insecurity among adults with and without a history of CMCs, and (2) determine associations between food insecurity and mental health outcomes among adults with CMCs during the early COVID-19 pandemic period (April to June 2020). They used Poisson regression with robust estimates of standard errors to find differences in food insecurity reporting across demographic

categories and by CMC history. Between food insecurity and self-reported mental health symptoms in individuals with CMCs. Overall, this source provides reliable and relevant information that can be used to understand the burden of food insecurity and mental health symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2019-20 Postsecondary Student Aid Study (Cameron et al. 2021) is a large report of data gathered by the United States Department of Education. The data showed that in many categories, Black students were being impacted negatively at higher rates than White students. Some of the categories were food insecurity, access to childcare, housing solutions, and enrollment disruptions. “Black students, Hispanic or Latino students, American Indian or Alaska Native students, and students of two or more races had difficulty accessing food or paying for food at higher rates (10 to 14 percent) than either White or Asian students (7 percent)” (Cameron et al. 2021) This data was very useful to my study because it gave hard numbers for student outcomes in the pandemic divided by racial categories. This data is reliable because it comes from a large study by professionals working for the US government.

Early research discovered that the rate of mental health disorders in university students was relatively high. We wanted to investigate the incidence of mental illnesses and the factors that contribute to them in university students. Methods: Between February 2020 and June 2021, they conducted a cross-sectional descriptive study at the Supara mental health service at the Faculty of Medicine Vajira Hospital (Kirdchok et al., 2022). The prevalence of psychiatric diagnosis was the primary outcome. Detecting and screening these characteristics may assist the university in providing students with early detection and treatment. The most common mental health conditions were depressive illnesses. Females, poor GPAs, and a family history of mental illness were all associated with moderate to severe mental health problems.

This provides insights into the prevalence of mental health disorders among university students and the factors that contribute to them. The study's findings may be useful in understanding the experiences of Black students, who may face unique stressors related to systemic racism and discrimination.

Jason Salemi, an associate professor of epidemiology at the University of South Florida, that explains why COVID-19 death rates were higher for Blacks and other racial and ethnic groups that typically have lower incomes and educational levels (*Salemi et al., 2021*) Nearly 70,000 adults, aged 25 to 64, who passed away from COVID-19 were examined by researchers. The research team discovered that low socioeconomic position (SEP) adults working in labor, service, and retail jobs that required on-site presence and extended close contact with others accounted for 68% of COVID-19 deaths in the first year of the pandemic.

Discusses the relationship between socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and COVID-19 mortality in the United States. Although it does not directly address mental health, it can help readers understand the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on minority communities and the potential social and economic factors that may contribute to mental health disparities.

Racial discrimination and Mental Health

Black students in SUNY may also be experiencing racial discrimination, which can have a significant impact on mental health. Racial discrimination refers to the psychological and emotional harm caused by experiences of racism and discrimination. Black students may face discrimination on campus or in their communities, which can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression.

This volume provides the most recent study on racial identity, focusing on the wide spectrum of perspectives Black people use to make meaning of their Blackness. The first portion delves into meaning-making, or the significance of holding one form of racial-cultural identity over another (Sullivan & Cross, 2016). It examines a variety of issues, such as stereotypes, spirituality, appearance, gender and intersectionality's, masculinity, and others. The second portion investigates the various manifestations of internalized racism that emerge when the pressure of oppression is too high, including subjects such as identity orientations, self-esteem, colorism, and connected fate. The research given here, based on psychology, presents the argument for seeing Black identity as broad in content, open to numerous interpretations, and linked to both healthy mental health and various forms of internalized racism.

This source explores the relationship between Black identity, racism, and mental health. Specifically, the article focuses on meaning-making and internalized racism, which are both relevant factors to consider when examining the experiences of Black students in predominantly white institutions.

Intersectionality and Mental Health

Intersectionality is a framework that recognizes that individuals can experience multiple forms of oppression simultaneously. Black students in SUNY may face not only racism, but also discrimination based on their gender, sexual orientation, and/or socioeconomic status. These intersecting forms of oppression can have a profound impact on mental health, as they can lead to feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, and disempowerment.

In a sample of 218 Black college students, this study looked at ethnic identification, racial centrality, minority status stress, and imposter sentiments as determinants of mental health (*McClain et al., 2016*) Minority status stress and imposter sentiments were revealed to be substantial negative determinants of mental health, but ethnic identity was found to be a significantly good predictor. Although ethnic identification was the most powerful predictor of mental health, racial centrality was a non-significant, negative predictor. The ramifications of counseling for Black college students are highlighted.

The study findings suggest that minority status stress and imposter feelings have a negative impact on mental health, while ethnic identification is a significant positive predictor of mental health. The study highlights the importance of counseling for Black college students, which may have implications for mental health support programs at SUNY. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the factors that impact the mental health of Black college students and can inform future research and interventions in this area.

Black Identity and Internalized Racism

Communities marginalized by racism, heterosexism, and other oppressive systems have a history of being aggressively policed, and researchers have found links between a variety of negative experiences with police and poor physical, mental, and behavioral health outcomes in those contexts

(Thompson et al.,2021). Previous studies, however, were constrained in that police interaction experiences were aggregated at the local level, and if police contacts were self-reported, the sample was not representative.

Although this article is not directly related to the mental health of Black students in SUNY, it provides relevant insights into the impact of police contact and discrimination on the health outcomes of a representative sample of adults in New York City. The authors acknowledge the negative effects of oppressive systems on marginalized communities, and they have conducted a rigorous study that addresses the limitations of previous research. The study's findings suggest that negative experiences with the police and courts are associated with poor physical, mental, and behavioral health outcomes. Therefore, this article can be considered a good source for understanding the potential impact of systemic racism and discriminatory practices on the mental health of Black students in SUNY.

Black Women's Mental Health: Balancing

This book takes a fresh, interdisciplinary, and in-depth look at the obstacles and potential of Black women's battle for inner peace and mental health. It brings together experts from psychology, sociology, law, medicine, and the humanities to debate topics ranging from stress, sexual assault, healing, self-care, and contemplative practice to health policy and parenting. The book creates a new paradigm for approaching Black women's wellness to provide real solutions by combining theory and practice with personal tales and public policy. The anthology reflects feminist praxis by rejecting both "superwoman" clichés and "victim" caricatures (Evans et al.,2017).

The book discusses mental health issues faced by Black women, which is relevant to the topic of mental health in Black students. The book's interdisciplinary approach also indicates that it covers a wide range of issues that could be useful for the research study.

COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the Black community as well as college students. Studies on this topic have taken a broad perspective, and hence do not explore how the effects of the pandemic differ and may be aggravated across different student groups. The current study filled a gap in the literature by investigating the psychological impact of COVID-19 on Black college students. A group of Black college students were interviewed and asked to discuss their emotional reactions to COVID-19 as well as their coping mechanisms in the face of the epidemic. A consensual qualitative research approach was used to examine interview data. According to the findings, most students had a negative emotional reaction to the pandemic and a tiny percentage of students had a positive emotional response (*Jones et al., 2022*). Furthermore, students primarily dealt with the pandemic through involvement and social support coping mechanisms. We examine the ramifications of our findings and make recommendations for how institutions might better support the mental health of Black college students during the current pandemic.

Firstly, the study examines the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of Black college students, which is a relevant issue for all college students, including those in SUNY. The study provides empirical evidence on the psychological impact of the pandemic on Black students and identifies coping mechanisms that were used by the students. The findings of the study can help SUNY administrators, faculty, and staff better understand the mental health needs of Black students during times of crisis.

The negative correlation between perceived racial/ethnic discrimination and health is not well comprehended, and this study aims to address this gap. Specifically, the study examines the relationship between perceived discrimination and self-reported health, identifies discriminatory dimensions that affect this relationship, and explores psychological mediators. The sample includes Asian, Black, and Latino(a) adults who completed measures of perceived discrimination, self-reported

health, depression, anxiety, and cynical hostility. Results show that perceived discrimination is significantly associated with poor self-reported health across all racial/ethnic subgroups (*Brondolo et al., 2011*).

Additionally, race-related social exclusion and threat/harassment are unique contributors to poor health for all groups. While depression, anxiety, and cynical hostility fully mediate the effect of social exclusion on health, they do not fully explain the effect of threat. Therefore, the study suggests that race-related exclusion and threat have detrimental effects on health, and these effects may operate through different mechanisms, regardless of discriminatory experiences. The study examines the relationship between perceived discrimination and self-reported health, including sadness and anxiety, which are relevant to the topic of mental health in black students. The study focuses on the experiences of black individuals, which is relevant to the specific population of black students in SUNY.

Coping Mechanisms and Mental Health

Coping mechanisms refer to the various strategies or techniques that individuals use to deal with stressful or difficult situations. Coping mechanisms can be positive or negative and can have a significant impact on an individual's mental health. For Black students in the SUNY (State University of New York) system, coping mechanisms can be especially important due to the unique challenges and stressors that they may face. Black students may experience discrimination, bias, and microaggressions on campus, as well as challenges related to academic performance, financial stress, and social isolation.

One positive coping mechanism that Black students in SUNY can utilize is seeking out supportive networks and resources. This can include connecting with other Black students on campus, joining cultural organizations or affinity groups, and accessing mental health services and resources provided by the university. Another effective coping mechanism is self-care, which can include engaging in activities that promote physical and mental well-being, such as exercise, meditation, and

mindfulness practices. Setting aside time for self-care activities can help Black students in SUNY manage stress and promote mental health.

However, it's important to note that not all coping mechanisms are healthy or effective. Negative coping mechanisms such as substance use, self-harm, and avoidance can worsen mental health and contribute to further stress and anxiety. Therefore, it's essential for Black students in SUNY to seek out positive coping mechanisms and to avoid harmful behaviors. This can include seeking support from mental health professionals, friends, and family members, as well as developing a personalized self-care plan that promotes overall well-being. By utilizing positive coping mechanisms, Black students in SUNY can help maintain their mental health and well-being, and successfully navigate the challenges they may encounter during their academic journey.

In conclusion, the impact of mental health on Black students in the State University of New York (SUNY) system is a pressing issue that requires urgent attention. Black students in SUNY are disproportionately affected by mental health challenges, which can negatively affect their academic performance, career prospects, and overall well-being. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes increased access to mental health resources, culturally sensitive counseling services, and educational programs that raise awareness about the unique mental health challenges faced by Black students. By taking these steps, SUNY can help to improve the mental health outcomes of its Black students and create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment for all.

Chapter 3: Methods

This research methodology chapter aims to investigate the impact of mental health on black students in SUNY through the lens of journalist interview research. The chapter will commence by delving into the background of the study, followed by the exploration of the research question, objectives, and hypotheses. The method employed for data collection will involve conducting journalist interviews with selected participants.

Background:

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone's mental health, but research has shown that Black students are more susceptible to mental health issues than other groups. The pandemic has brought a lot of challenges such as food insecurity, access to childcare, housing solutions, and enrollment disruptions, which have contributed to the increase in mental health problems among black students. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the impact of mental health on black students in SUNY, considering the COVID-19 pandemic's effect.

Research Question:

What is the impact of mental health on black students in SUNY?

Objectives:

- To explore the factors that contribute to mental health problems among black students in SUNY.
- To examine the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of black students in SUNY.
- To investigate the coping mechanisms adopted by black students in SUNY to deal with mental health problems.

Hypotheses:

H1: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health of black students in SUNY.

H2: Food insecurity, access to childcare, housing solutions, and enrollment disruptions have contributed to the increase in mental health problems among black students in SUNY.

H3: Black students in SUNY adopt different coping mechanisms to deal with mental health problems.

Research Approach:

The study will use a journalistic research approach to collect data from the selected participants. The qualitative research approach is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the research questions and objectives. The study will use semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate because they allow the researcher to explore participants' perspectives while still maintaining some control over the interview's direction.

Sampling Strategy:

The study will use purposive sampling to select participants. Purposive sampling is appropriate because it allows the researcher to select participants based on specific criteria. The study will select black students from SUNY who have experienced mental health problems during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Collection:

The study will use semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or virtually depending on the participants' preference. Before the interviews, the researcher will seek informed consent from the participants. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis:

The study will use thematic analysis to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is appropriate because it allows the researcher to identify themes and patterns in the data. The study will follow the six-step

process of thematic analysis, which includes familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes, and producing the final report.

Connection:

The way I organized and facilitating the journalistic interview is connected with peers on campus such as peers apart of EOP. Which is an education opportunity program for students from disadvantage communities and who were underprepared for college. Most of the topics I will be covering in this paper such as such as food insecurity, difficulty finding housing, affordability of college, mental health, and disruptions in enrollment. Hearing their different perspectives of how their circumstances and Covid-19 effected their college experience.

Conclusion:

This research methodology chapter has provided an overview of the research approach, sampling strategy, data collection, and data analysis techniques that will be used in the study. The study aims to explore the impact of mental health on black students in SUNY using existing literature. The findings from the study will provide insight into the factors that contribute to mental health problems among black students in SUNY, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental health, and the coping mechanisms adopted by black students in SUNY to deal with mental health problems.

Chapter 4: Findings

Based on the provided interview transcripts, several key findings can be observed that support the topic of the impact of mental health on Black students in SUNY, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here are some key points from the interviews:

The exploration into the effects of quarantine on Black students within the State University of New York reveals a spectrum of emotions experienced during this period. Initially marked by a sense of enjoyment, these sentiments gradually transformed into frustration and feelings of isolation. Socially, participants grappled with challenges in reconnecting with their academic communities, facing difficulties in reaching out to new acquaintances and sustaining existing friendships. Emotionally, the protracted isolation and diminished social interactions took a toll, manifesting in heightened feelings of loneliness and frustration.

Amidst these personal challenges, notable shifts unfolded in the academic and professional lives of participants throughout the pandemic. The transition to online learning and remote work brought about a multitude of hurdles, including the struggle to maintain motivation, manage time effectively, and grapple with a pervasive sense of purposelessness, particularly in the realm of virtual academia and employment.

The interviews further unveiled alterations in participants' career perspectives prompted by the pandemic's uncertainties. One participant contemplated a potential career change, influenced by concerns regarding heightened COVID-19 exposure in their current work environment. Another interviewee revealed considerations of alternative career paths during this tumultuous period, highlighting the profound impact of external circumstances on individual career decision-making.

Financial strain emerged as a prevalent theme, with participants expressing apprehensions about job security, financial hardships, and the imperative need for government assistance, especially within minority communities. The pandemic-induced changes were not confined to emotional and financial realms; participants also alluded to shifts in their physical well-being. Changes in daily routines, weight gain, and the inherent challenges in maintaining physical activity levels underscored the holistic impact of the pandemic on the health and lifestyle of Black students in SUNY.

Amidst these challenges, the significance of community and support became increasingly apparent. Participants emphasized the crucial role of community ties, particularly for minority students, viewing the pandemic as a catalyst for communal solidarity. While acknowledging the hurdles in maintaining motivation and an active lifestyle, participants found solace in the sense of community that emerged, portraying it as a positive aspect of their overall experience.

Opinions regarding government support during the pandemic exhibited a spectrum of perspectives among participants. While some acknowledged receiving beneficial assistance, others expressed skepticism about the adequacy of the support provided, shedding light on systemic challenges faced by minority communities.

Collectively, these multifaceted findings unravel the lived experiences of Black students during the COVID-19 pandemic within SUNY. The insights derived from these interviews contribute to a holistic understanding of the intricate challenges encountered, aligning with the overarching objectives and research questions of the study.

Transcript

Interview 1

Speaker 1: [00:00:07] How was your experience during quarantine? [00:00:09][1.2]

Speaker 2: [00:00:12] At first it was like I was fine with it because I'm an introvert and I wanted to be home and I didn't want to go back to finish school. But by the end of that year, it was like very mentally draining, just staying inside, doing the same thing every day. I didn't enjoy online school as much, and it was frustrating because I felt like I had no way to interact with new people like in college because I didn't know anybody. [00:00:41][29.5]

Speaker 1: [00:00:46] The COVID affects you socially, emotionally, physically and or financially? If so, how socially? [00:00:53][7.7]

Speaker 2: [00:00:54] I felt really isolated because starting a new school, I didn't know how to, like, reach out to people without feeling weird or making it weird. And then I just felt like a lot of my friendships from high school didn't follow me into college, so I felt really isolated for a while. And then you said emotionally. I don't remember. [00:01:22][27.4]

Speaker 1: [00:01:24] Well, physically and financially. [00:01:25][1.3]

Speaker 2: [00:01:28] It didn't. [00:01:33][5.0]

Speaker 1: [00:01:34] Did COVID 19 have any positive or negative effects on your schedule or work life? If so, how? [00:01:39][5.5]

Speaker 2: [00:01:43] Because we were quarantined. It affected my schedule because I was just waking up and then going on Zoom classes and then going back to sleep. And so, it felt like I had no like, life in a way or structured as well because I was like it felt like I was just existing. Like I had no purpose. [00:02:05][22.1]

Speaker 1: [00:02:12] How did the transition of attending back?
“to school or work was like for you? [00:02:15][3.5]

Speaker 2: [00:02:18] The transition back to school, it was very different because after not socializing for so long, it was hard for me to like again to reach out to people or like just make friends with strangers. Because in high school I was just used to like seeing the same people every day. So, I didn't have to put in the work to actually reach out to people or maintain friendships. [00:02:46][27.8]

Speaker 1: [00:02:49] How did COVID 19 change how you foresee your career or your future career?
[00:03:05][16.2]

Speaker 2: [00:03:06] When I first applied to college, I was thinking of economics and then I'm not sure how it changed, but I ended up in psychology and I managed it simply because of the math. I don't think it had anything to do with COVID, though. [00:03:24][17.2]

Speaker 1: [00:03:29] Do you believe the government did enough to support minority communities during the period of COVID 19? [00:03:33][4.5]

Speaker 2: [00:03:39] Can you repeat that? [00:03:40][0.6]

Speaker 1: [00:03:41] Do you believe the government did enough to support communities of minorities during the period of COVID 19? [00:03:47][6.5]

Speaker 2: [00:03:49] Honestly, I don't think so, because I think a lot of families were struggling. Yeah, they did give out the I think it was loans and there was some things that they did give out, but like there was also a lot of mentally ill people on the streets and I think that like increased as well due to COVID and those people weren't getting the help that they needed, like just being outside on their own. So. [00:04:16][27.2]

Speaker 1: [00:04:21] What lessons, if any, have you learned during the pandemic? [00:04:23][2.3]

Speaker 2: [00:04:27] I've learned that it's important to take risks and push yourself out of your comfort zone because you never know, like what can come out of those things unless you try. [00:04:36][9.0]

Speaker 1: [00:04:42] And we're done. [00:04:42][0.0]

[214.3]

Interview 2

Speaker 1: [00:00:03] How was your experience in quarantine? [00:00:08][4.9]

Speaker 2: [00:00:09] My experience in quarantine was actually very interesting because I was working through the pandemic. I was an essential worker. [00:00:25][16.1]

Speaker 1: [00:00:29] How did COVID 19 change how you foresee your career? [00:00:32][2.8]

Speaker 2: [00:00:35] COVID 19 really made me want to change career paths because of, you know, just working and being around so many people and always being in fear of just like, you know, catching COVID and, you know, getting sick. Like, these were things that I struggled with a lot. Like, I used to spray myself with bleach when I entered the house. So, you know, for me, I don't really know if I can go back to working around people. I'm really trying to get more remote jobs. [00:01:07][32.6]

Speaker 1: [00:01:17] Did Covid 19 have any positive or negative effects on your schedule or work life? If so, how? [00:01:22][5.0]

Speaker 2: [00:01:22] I would definitely say that, if anything, COVID 19 has made me more lazier because after I left my job, I focused more on school. But it was like finding that balance was so hard because I could do everything from bed, but I like it out. It's so easy to just be lazy and just stay home and not do anything. That's the bottom line. [00:01:57][34.8]

Speaker 1: [00:01:58] When working or attending school remotely, how did you manage your day? [00:02:02][3.7]

Speaker 2: [00:02:04] Um, honestly, I managed my day with, like, assignments. I had a lot of things, like because I'm a visual arts major. So, you know, we did a lot of art pieces and whatever and just things where you have to manage time to do them. And I would say that every day I woke up and I got

tasks done. It's just that, you know, the truth is you don't always feel more productive when you're always inside. You know? So, yeah. But for the most part, I was pretty productive in those regards. Outside of that, I wasn't very active and I was actually very antisocial. [00:02:44][40.5]

Speaker 1: [00:02:55] How did the transition with a new back to school or work was like for you? [00:02:58][3.0]

Speaker 2: [00:03:03] The transition back to work and school. Honestly, I would say my mood has boosted because there's more people around. But I will say that it's a bit overwhelming, especially like just, you know, thinking back to some of the experiences that I've dealt with that were, you know. Here, [00:03:30][27.7]

[171.2]

Speaker 1: [00:00:00] What lessons, if any, have you learned during the pandemic?

Speaker 2: I guess one major lesson I've learned over the pandemic is the idea of greed. I would say definitely that I've seen a bit of rough things in the hospital, like have not to compromise my integrity or anything, but pretty much I was like, okay. So, in the hospital, people who worked with COVID patients are pretty much like, get like extra money, like a stipend. Yeah, like it's kind of weird. But anyways, I guess they did this to like, you know, incentivize like more like paced, like, you know, nurses working with patients. But pretty much what would happen instead sometimes like for example, like one time there was this guy, he died from a motorcycle, motorcycle accident and one of the nurses put that he died from COVID. And that was a bit weird cause he died in an accident.

Speaker 1: Would you see that happen a lot in the hospitals?

Speaker 2: Honestly, I've seen it happen a couple of times, so yeah, like it's happened a lot of times where they'll just add COVID to these reports. Um, it kind of made me look at the numbers of, like, the rise in cases, a little funny, but it was also like, you know, I thought it was only certain hospitals doing this. [00:00:00][0.0]

Speaker 1: [00:00:00] How did covid socially, emotionally, or physically impact you?

Speaker 2: I would definitely say COVID definitely socially impacted me because I became a bit more anti-social. I didn't want to be around as many people because, you know, I became a little bit less trusting emotionally. I feel like I've remained the same. If anything, maybe it's probably built me up more because of the isolation. And like you said, like physically, I would say physically. I got fat. And you know, I feel like a lot of people did, because the truth is, like we were all sitting around doing nothing but even watching Netflix, like, you know, I mean, if he wasn't working, you were collecting unemployment. Well, for anybody, do you know?

Speaker 1: And lastly, do you believe the government did enough to support minority communities during the period of COVID 19 issue?

Speaker 2: *This is a really complex question because the truth is the government did the most that they could with what they had in general for society. But is it ever enough for black folks? Is it ever enough for people of color? Because it's not like they give us the bare minimum anyways. So for me personally, I just feel like, yes, a lot of people were receiving relief money. A lot of people were, you know, getting like leans and pushed, getting their rents pushed back. But at the end of the day, we still got to pay that back. These things were only temporary things that were only temporary measures of relief. Relief. There's people homeless now. People black people in our communities are kind of worse off because of the pandemic. And it's not. I'm not going to put that particularly on the government. But like in crisis is where you know, the minority group does not have a lot of power. We're always going to fall.*

Interview 3

Speaker 1: [00:00:05] How was your experience in quarantine? [00:00:06][1.1]

Speaker 2: [00:00:07] My experience in quarantine at first, I loved it. But then I started to hate it because all that solitude, I didn't feel like I was outside being engaged anymore. [00:00:18][11.1]

Speaker 1: [00:00:20] How did COVID 19 change how you foresee your career? [00:00:23][2.7]

Speaker 2: [00:00:27] It didn't change how I can say that. It made me see alternatives for my career. [00:00:36][8.8]

Speaker 1: [00:00:39] Did COVID 19 have a positive or negative effect on your schedule or work life? If so, how? [00:00:44][5.4]

Speaker 2: [00:00:46] Positive effect on my work life because unemployment was a thing. [00:00:49][2.9]

Speaker 1: [00:00:51] Well, what's your schedule? [00:00:52][0.4]

Speaker 2: [00:00:53] Oh, schedule. Well, I was always in the house, so it was like everything was virtual. So, it was easy just to, like, tap, tap, tap. [00:01:02][9.0]

Speaker 1: [00:01:03] when working or attending school remotely. How did you manage your day to day? [00:01:08][5.0]

Speaker 2: [00:01:11] Well, when I had school remotely, I was just literally waking up, getting on zoom still laying down and sleeping during class sometimes. And I don't know, just like spending time with family in the house. [00:01:29][18.0]

Speaker 1: [00:01:31] How did the transition returning back to school or work was like for you? [00:01:35][4.2]

Speaker 2: [00:01:37] It was kind of stressful because it was like you had to find a community again to like be engaged with while at school. [00:01:43] [5.8]

Speaker 1: [00:01:47] What lessons, if any, have you learned during the pandemic? [00:01:50] [2.8]

Speaker 2: [00:01:52] Um, I think I really learned the lesson of making community. [00:01:56] [3.9]

Speaker 1: [00:01:58] Do you believe the government did enough to support minority communities during the period of COVID 19? [00:02:03] [5.1]

Speaker 2: [00:02:04] Personally, I was seeing a lot of people getting things, even though some people were losing their jobs. They were getting beneficial things. So, in my opinion, I do think that the minority company had some good things. [00:02:19] [15.8]

Speaker 1: [00:02:21] And then last question. Do you think COVID socially, emotionally, and physically impacted the minority students on college campuses? [00:02:28] [6.5]

Speaker 2: [00:02:29] I do think so. I think. Mm. Physically, I do think it was hard for some students to find motivation to like not keep themselves fit but like active. I feel like minority students during that time especially learned how to be more of a community in a way. So that was better, getting better. And socially I feel like literally just realizing that the minority community, you just have each other.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In synthesizing the wealth of insights gleaned from the interview transcripts, a comprehensive narrative emerges, shedding light on the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of Black students within the State University of New York (SUNY). The exploration into the effects of quarantine unearthed a dynamic spectrum of emotions, initially characterized by a sense of enjoyment that gradually metamorphosed into frustration and feelings of isolation. Socially, participants grappled with the intricate challenges of reconnecting within academic communities, encountering hurdles in forging new connections and sustaining existing friendships. Emotionally, the protracted isolation and diminished social interactions exacted a toll, leading to heightened feelings of loneliness and frustration.

Parallel to these personal challenges, transformative shifts unfolded in the academic and professional realms of participants. The forced transition to online learning and remote work introduced multifaceted hurdles, encompassing struggles to maintain motivation, effective time management, and a pervasive sense of purposelessness, particularly in the virtual academic and employment spheres.

The interviews also illuminated alterations in career perspectives induced by the uncertainties of the pandemic. Participants contemplated potential career changes, with heightened concerns about COVID-19 exposure influencing their decisions. The profound impact of external circumstances on individual career decision-making became evident, as interviewees revealed considerations of alternative career paths during this tumultuous period.

A prevailing theme that echoed throughout the narratives was the financial strain experienced by participants, marked by apprehensions about job security, financial hardships, and a poignant need for government assistance, especially within minority communities. The pandemic-induced changes extended beyond emotional and financial realms to encompass shifts in physical well-being. Changes

in daily routines, weight gain, and challenges in maintaining physical activity levels underscored the holistic impact of the pandemic on the health and lifestyle of Black students in SUNY.

Amidst these challenges, the significance of community and support emerged as a beacon of resilience. Participants underscored the crucial role of community ties, particularly for minority students, portraying the pandemic as a catalyst for communal solidarity. While acknowledging hurdles in maintaining motivation and an active lifestyle, participants found solace in the sense of community that emerged, depicting it as a positive aspect of their overall experience.

Opinions regarding government support during the pandemic exhibited a spectrum of perspectives among participants. While some acknowledged receiving beneficial assistance, others expressed skepticism about the adequacy of the support provided, shedding light on systemic challenges faced by minority communities.

In sum, these findings collectively unravel the lived experiences of Black students during the COVID-19 pandemic within SUNY. The insights derived from these interviews offer a nuanced and holistic understanding of the intricate challenges encountered, aligning seamlessly with the overarching objectives and research questions of the study. This narrative not only contributes to the academic discourse on mental health within higher education but also serves as a poignant call to action for more targeted and empathetic support systems for Black students navigating the complex landscape of SUNY during challenging times.

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