**IMC 585 (Health Communication) Assignment #1:**

**PROBLEM DESCRIPTION BRIEF**

**Overview**. This semester, each student will develop a health campaign plan, strategies, and promotional content for a campaign focusing on a health problem of their choice. These assignments are adapted from the [CDCynergy Social Marketing](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xtQcwBkO0U) process, which will help you identify inroads and barriers to health behavior change among different segments of your target audience. You will ultimately plan a local campaign that provides advice to help specific at-risk populations take action – or to help others reduce health consequences for people at risk. The problem description brief is the first piece of your health campaign plan.

**Instructions**: Post your D1 reply to explain your chosen health topic – and note any responses to it to help you refine your topic. Then do some online research to answer the following questions (p.1-3). Type explanatory responses under each item. You may use bullets for some items but be thorough in your answers. After you complete this assignment, retain the numbered headings but delete the instructions, examples, and rubric to create a streamlined document. Proofread and upload it to Box by 11:59 pm Sunday, Aug. 27, 2023 as a Word (.docx, .doc), rich-text (.rtf) document, or PDF.

**PART A. IDENTIFY THE HEALTH PROBLEM AND AUDIENCE SEGMENTS**

1. **Health problem.**
2. Describe your chosen *health problem* in a paragraph or so. You might use or adapt the narrative you posted in this week’s discussion thread (D1). You might choose a topic you are already passionate about, or find another topic that interests you, such as those listed here: <https://apha.org/topics-and-issues>. Choose a health problem that can be addressed at a local level, in the sense that your campaign will be community-based, not a national campaign. Choose a health issue that also could be improved through taking action or a change in behavior, knowledge, beliefs or attitudes.

Mental health is a health problem I'm very interested in fixing because I've lost friends and family members to suicide because they were unhappy with their lives. Many different types of people can see this problem. Young people between the ages of 18 and 30 often struggle with anxiety and sadness because of life changes and school stresses. About one-third of college students are affected. Professionals between the ages of 25 and 45 face burnout because of stress at work, which hurts their well-being and makes them less productive. Parents and caregivers have more stress, which makes mood problems more likely and changes how the family works. Uneven effects of the pandemic have made mental health problems worse in marginalized groups. The effort tries to deal with these effects by raising knowledge, getting people to help, and making societies healthy.

1. Why is a health campaign needed to address this problem - or *why is this issue important*/significant right now? In your answer, provide at least one recent statistic showing why it is important or urgent to address.

According to NAMI, 22.8%of U.S. adults experienced mental illness in 2021. Hence, this was around the birth is COVID-19 in the U.S. Hence, this was around the time of the birth of COVID-19 pandemic and the world basically shutting down. In the present setting, mental health has a paramount importance. The COVID-19 epidemic has brought attention to the interconnectedness of mental and physical well-being, emphasizing the need to prioritize the treatment of psychological health. The decrease in social stigma and more knowledge have fostered a greater willingness to seek assistance, highlighting the need for easily available mental health services in order to address the extensive effects on both people and communities.

1. *Who will you target* in your campaign (audiences, organizations, etc.)? Describe relevant characteristics and/or demographics about your target audience(s).

The effort will reach out to a wide range of people to make sure that everyone is involved. First, young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 will be a focus. These people often face changing hurdles, school stress, and job uncertainty. Second, working people between the ages of 25 and 45 who have to balance work and their personal lives. Also, parents and caregivers, especially those who are struggling with the stresses of parenting, will be a key group. Also, neighborhood groups, schools, and businesses will work together to make settings that are more welcoming. Lastly, the effort will try to reach out to neglected groups, recognizing that they have different mental health needs and hurdles to getting help.

1. Identify all of the health *problems or other possible health impacts* or outcomes of your chosen issue within your chosen audience. Provide supporting details, such as relevant statistics or epidemiological data about these impacts/outcomes (from CDC.gov, healthindicators.gov, etc.)

The topic of mental health that was picked for the target groups has a number of possible health effects. Studies show that worry and sadness are on the rise among young people, and one in three college students have signs. Professionals between the ages of 25 and 45 have higher levels of stress, which has led to an increase in burnout cases. The World Health Organization now recognizes burnout as a work condition. Parents and people who take care of others are often stressed out and tired, which can make them more likely to have mental problems and hurt their general health. Research shows that some marginalized groups, like racial and ethnic minorities, have a harder time getting mental health care than others. This can lead to untreated mental discomfort and worse health results. The pandemic's excessive effect on their health has also shown how common mental health problems are among these groups.

1. What specific *health advice* would you promote in this campaign - or what specific action(s) would you like them to take to help address your chosen health problem? If your target audience(s) did follow your advice, what kind of outcomes would you hope to achieve (knowledge, awareness, changes in attitudes or beliefs, action/behavior change, new long-term habits, etc.)? What consequences might occur if your target audience(s) do not follow this advice?

The campaign would encourage young people with anxiety and sadness to get professional help, with a focus on ways to deal with stress. Working professionals would be told to put self-care first and set limits to improve their mental health. Parents and caregivers would get advice on how to deal with worry and get help for their mental health. Targeted efforts for disadvantaged groups would be aimed at making it easier for them to get services that are appropriate for their culture, reducing shame, and building community support. If you follow this advice, it could lead to more knowledge, better attitudes, changes in behavior, and permanent habits. If you don't, it could lead to worse mental health, stress, unhappy families, and the same gaps between people.

1. **Segments.**
2. List 5 unique audience segments – sub-groups or different audiences that fit under the “umbrella” of your chosen audience. Focus on audiences that might consider or resist your health advice.

* Elderly People
* Single Parents
* College Students
* Minority Community
* Professionals

1. Next to each sub-group (segment) you listed above, add a bullet point that provides estimated numbers of people within this segment, such as numbers of those with relevant characteristics/demographics, numbers of people in this segment engaging in risky behaviors, have different racial or ethnic backgrounds, religiosity/church involvement, political affiliations, etc.

* 20%
* 23%
* 31%
* 48%
* 59%

1. Next to each segment above, add a bullet point that describes the news media, social media, and interpersonal communication channels that people in the segment already use to find advice, info or research about your chosen topic. You’ll need to do some online research to piece this together. For example, you might try different “attitude” keyword searches in this audience database to see if it provides relevant insights: <https://platform.yougov.com/audience>. If you reference info or statistics from the web, please cite it in your answer.

* **College Students:**

News Media: University newsletters, student newspapers, and educational websites cover mental health services and issues. Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter: Student platforms for sharing personal stories, coping tactics, and mental health awareness campaigns. Personal Communication: Campus counseling clinics, student clubs, and mental health peer support groups.

* **Professionals:**

May find articles on work-related stress, burnout, and mental health in business periodicals such as Harvard Business Review, Forbes, and The Wall Street Journal. LinkedIn for professional insights and work-life balance debates, Twitter for mental health activists, and YouTube for instructional films. Workplace wellness initiatives, industry conferences, and professional networks for mental health.

* **Single parents**:

Consider reading parenting publications, blogs, and websites like very well Family and Parenting for information on managing stress and mental health. Facebook groups and sites for single parents, Instagram for personal tales and visuals, and Pinterest for self-care. Communication: Local parental support groups, family members, and community organizations giving seminars.

* **Minority:**

News Media: Ethnic news sources, internet platforms, and community publications addressing mental health concerns in cultural settings (e.g., Asian American Psychological Association). Marginalized community mental health Facebook groups, Instagram profiles, and Twitter threads. Interpersonal Communication: Cultural centers, religious groups, and grassroots mental health programs.

* **Elderly:**

Consider media such as AARP Magazine, newspaper health sections, and websites that provide mental health information. Senior Facebook groups, YouTube channels with guided relaxation techniques, and online forums on mental health issues connected to aging. Interpersonal Communication: Senior centers, retirement complexes, and local events for mental health discussions.

1. **Segment attitudes:** Create another bulleted list of the five segments. Next to each segment name, provide your best guesses to these two questions, based on your research so far:
2. *Readiness.* On a scale of 1-10 (1-very low to 10-very high), how ready are the people in this segment to change in some way – take action, become more knowledgeable your chosen health topic, change their attitude or beliefs, follow your health advice, etc.? Next to the number you select, provide a brief explanation. That is, why are people in this segment ready or willing to change – or not?

College Students: **7**, Many students are discovering the significance of mental health owing to personal experiences or classmates' challenges, causing them to seek treatment and make adjustments.

Professionals: **6**, As workplace mental health dialogues develop, career-driven professionals are relatively ready to change, but job responsibilities and stigma may prevent fast action.

Single Parents: **5**, Given their problems, single parents are somewhat ready to change, but external support networks and resources are essential to overcome time limits and prioritize their own well-being.

Minority: **8**, Many minority populations want to reduce mental health inequities and cultural stigma, thus tailored and culturally sensitive programs will be well-received.

Elderly: **6**, Recognizing the significance of mental health in aging, elderly people are somewhat ready to seek care, although isolation and technology may hinder them.

1. *Motivations*. Identify at least one reason this segment might become *more likely* to change or follow your advice in the future. In other words, what would need to happen, to make them more ready to change, think differently, or be more likely to take action?

College Students: Peer-led mental health awareness initiatives and mental well-being education in academic curriculum may encourage students to seek help and prioritize their mental health.

Professionals: Corporate cultures that promote work-life balance and success stories of mental health programs might inspire more professionals to consider their well-being.

Single Parents: Community-driven programs that offer inexpensive and accessible childcare and respite care would help single parents find time for self-care.

Minority: Mental health organizations and community leaders working together to offer culturally sensitive assistance and mental well-being as part of cultural preservation may increase willingness to change.

older: Local senior centers and community groups offering social activities for elders, together with user-friendly technological lessons, might encourage older people to seek mental health help.

1. **Segment comparisons:** Based on your analysis in #3, answer the following questions with at least one sentence per question.
2. *Behavior change likelihood*.

* Which of the five segments seem the most likely to change – and why?

The category labeled as "Minority" seems to have the most potential for transformation. This is due to the presence of a strong incentive to overcome cultural stigmatization and inequities, which, when paired with culturally sensitive programs specifically tailored to address these issues, may provide a significant impetus for individuals within these communities to actively seek and adopt mental health assistance.

* Which segments appear to be the least likely – and why?

The category labeled as "Professionals" may have a lower propensity for change, given the interplay between occupational requirements and the possible social disapproval associated with addressing mental well-being. This might impede prompt intervention, despite the increasing recognition of the significance of achieving a harmonious equilibrium between work and personal life.

1. *Persuasion*:

* Which of the five segments would be the easiest to reach and persuade – and why?

The demographic of “Single Parents” is expected to be the most receptive and amenable to persuasion due to their existing comprehension of the difficulties they encounter. By offering readily available community services, their immediate need for self-care may be effectively met.

* Which segments would be hardest to reach and persuade – and why?

The demographic group often referred to as "Elderly" presents unique challenges in terms of outreach and persuasion due to many factors, including possible technology obstacles, social isolation, and strongly entrenched generational views that discourage frank discussions about mental health.

1. **Secondary audiences**

* *Positive influencers*: Identify and briefly describe at least 3 additional, secondaryaudiencesthat might persuade the less engaged segments to follow your health advice. A secondary audience includes people that segments already go to for health advice – such as bosses, health care providers, parents, respected peers, professors, support staff, ministers, organization leaders, etc. Which segment(s) would be positively influenced by which secondary audiences, and why?

1. Campus Counseling could influence college students because they are able to turn to them for health support and encourage students to seek help.
2. Human Resources for Professionals because they have their HR people in place at their jobs that promote work-life balance and could offer well-being initiatives to help the employee.
3. Community Leaders for the minority. These leaders play a pivotal role in the community and configuring mental health conversations and support.

* *Negative influencers*: Identify at least 3 negative secondary audiences (bad influencers) that might discourage specific segments of your primary audience from following your health advice. Which segment(s) would be positively influenced by which secondary audiences, and why?

1. “Work comes first” professionals for driven professionals because they will have them suppress their feelings and discourage them from taking self-care.
2. “Traditional elders” for the elderly because their way of life is encouraged by things they have grown up on.
3. “Misinformed family members” for minority communities because they will have this negative connotation about mental health which would result in people not seeking help.

**PART B. HEALTH PROBLEM STATEMENT –** The “health problem” is the gap between a desirable status and the current status. For these questions, think about which of your segments might suffer health problems if they do not follow the health advice that your campaign will promote.

1. *Behavioral risk factors*. Identify at least 3 specific environmental factors, health behaviors, attitudes, personal beliefs, or habits that may put any of your segments at risk of health problems if they do not follow your advice. Briefly explain which segments are at the greatest risk and which of the risk factors you listed here are involved.

Individuals in professional occupations who place a higher emphasis on work at the expense of self-care, mostly as a result of challenging work settings, have a heightened vulnerability to experiencing burnout, which may have detrimental effects on their psychological and physiological health.

Elderly adults who encounter isolation as a result of restricted social connections or reduced mobility are susceptible to developing depression and other mental health disorders.

The presence of cultural stigmatization around mental health discourse among minority populations might impede people from seeking assistance, resulting in unattended psychological discomfort and possibly exacerbating health effects.

1. *Non-behavioral risk factors*. Among the health problems that are possible, which of these problems have genetic, medical, or biological risk factors (other than behavioral/attitudinal factors) that might lead to the same health problems? Briefly explain, and identify which segment(s) could be affected by these non-behavioral factors.

**College Students:**

Genetic variables have been identified as influential in the susceptibility to anxiety and depression, rendering people more predisposed to these diseases, irrespective of their demographic characteristics, in the presence of a familial history of such disorders.

**Elderly:**

As people progress in age, cognitive decline may occur due to biological causes, which may afterwards give rise to mental health difficulties such as sadness and anxiety.

**Minority:**

The impact of social and environmental settings on epigenetic markers might lead to differences in mental health among minority populations, hence increasing the vulnerability to psychological distress.

1. *Social risk factors*. List factors within the social environment of any of your segments that may put them at greater risk of health problems. These factors might include things like social support, policy, daily routines, peer pressure, lack of resources, community culture, etc. Briefly explain which segment(s) have social risk factors and why. Also, which of these social factors seem to contribute more directly to health problems – and less directly? For instance, a culture of weekend partying on the Square might contribute more directly to binge drinking among undergraduate students than the university’s two-strike policy.

* The elderly population may encounter feelings of isolation as a result of reduced mobility and diminished social networks, while college students may experience isolation owing to the academic demands they confront. These variables play a significant role in the development of mental health issues.
* The prevalence of workplace cultures that prioritize extended working hours and excessive workloads has a more pronounced impact on the development of burnout and mental health issues associated with stress among the professional community.
* The presence of cultural stigmatization around talks on mental health has a direct influence on minority populations, resulting in a dissuasion from seeking assistance and exacerbating the prevalence of untreated psychological discomfort.
* The restricted availability of inexpensive childcare and respite care is a significant challenge for single parents, which in turn has a direct influence on their capacity to participate in self-care activities. This predicament might possibly result in the development of health concerns that are associated with stress.

1. *Protective factors*. Identify at least 3 different attitudes, beliefs, social norms, or behaviors that appear to be *protective factors* for any segments? Protective factors might include things like social support, peer education, community outreach, free transportation, easy access to health care, discreet distribution of free condoms, needles or other resources, etc. Which of the protective factors appear to be the most important and why, among different segments?

Professionals: Organizations that provide flexible work arrangements and acknowledge the significance of maintaining work-life balance contribute to the well-being of employees by assisting them in effectively managing stress, mitigating the danger of burnout, and safeguarding against potential health implications.

Minority: The provision of mental health education that is adapted to specific cultural contexts serves to demolish social stigmas around mental health, empowering communities to engage in open discussions about psychological well-being. This, in turn, enhances knowledge of the resources and support systems that are accessible, therefore playing a crucial role in safeguarding against the adverse consequences of untreated psychological distress.

Single Parents, College Students, and Elderly: The presence of strong social support networks promotes resilience and offers people opportunities to express their worries, seek guidance, and get emotional assistance. Consequently, these support systems serve as a protective barrier against the development of mental health problems.

1. *Problem statement*. Write a concise sentence that describes your broad audience, what health problem(s) they could face, and why they are at risk. (Example: “African American adolescents ages 14-18 that reside in three rural counties in the Mississippi Delta are at high risk of HIV infection mainly because of unprotected sex and lack of sex education in public schools.”)

The target demographic includes individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 who may be experiencing anxiety and depression as a result of scholastic demands, life changes, and interpersonal difficulties. These factors increase their vulnerability to compromising their mental well-being at a crucial period of personal growth.