Building Gatekeeper Skills Among Latinx and Hispanic Students Through a Virtual Role-Play Simulation

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Disclosure

Glenn Albright reports having an employment agreement with Kognito, the company that developed the *At-Risk for University & College Students* simulation.

Wendy Ordóñez does not have any conflicts to disclose.
Agenda

• Problem
• The Simulation
• Learning Model
• Demo
• Study Outcomes
• Implementation
• Q & A
The Statistics

- LH population in the U.S. reached a record **58.9** million
  - Largest ethnic minority in the U.S. (2018)

- **40%** LH age 25+ years have college experience, **53%** for U.S. born LH (2015)

- **Acculturative Stress** (process of adopting to new culture and social patterns)
  - Higher perceived racial/ethnic discrimination
  - Higher suicidal ideation, anxiety and depression
  - College adjustment stress
  - High stigma against seeking mental health support services
    - Not in line with cultural norms
    - Lack of trust with MH professionals
The Statistics

• Untreated mental illness can significantly impact:
  • Academic attendance and success
  • Concentration
  • Test anxiety
  • Peer and family relationships
  • Self-esteem

• Barriers to Help Seeking:
  • Lack of awareness by faculty, peers, and support staff
  • Stigma associating with seeking mental health
Need for School Gatekeepers

Students can serve a critical gatekeeping function in the early identification and referral of their peers experiencing psychological distress. 

While effective at identifying externalizing disorders, people have difficulty identifying peers with internalizing disorders.

What is a Gatekeeper?

1. Identify when a student is in psychological distress
2. Approach and talk with a student about your concerns
3. Make a referral to Mental Health Support Services

2 Cunningham JM and Suldo SM. School Ment Health 2014;6(4)237-250
From Kognito’s Suite: At-Risk for University & College Students

- 2 virtual role-play scenarios
- Online and self-paced
- Est 30 min to complete
- Satisfies state requirements
- Developed with input from mental health experts and students

These simulations are listed in SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP).
Underlying Learning Methodologies for Teaching Effective Gatekeeper Skills
Learning Model

Evidence-based communication tactics drawn from components of:

• Neuroscience
• Social cognition
• Adult learning theory
• Applied game mechanics
Why Virtual Humans?

Instructional Benefits:
• Safe to self-disclose, experiment
• Increase in engagement, openness
• Decrease in transference reactions
• Decrease social evaluative threat

Other benefits:
• Personalization of experience
• Reach geographically dispersed areas
• Support multiple languages
• Reduce costs of updates
Specific Student Learning Objectives

- Increase knowledge and awareness about mental health and suicide
- Identify warning signs of psychological distress, including verbal, behavioral, and situational clues
- Build skills in how to approach a peer in a manner to motivate them to access support
- Recognize when they themselves need support
- Understand the school’s specific process for student referral and counseling services
- Know how to help a friend if they are uncomfortable talking with them about their concern
Simulation Demo
Kirkpatrick’s General Evaluation Model & Measures

- **Level 1**: Satisfaction & Reactions
- **Level 2**: Knowledge, Skills & Attitudes
- **Level 3**: Behavior
- **Level 4**: Overall impact on the Institution (Culture, ROI, etc.)
Level 1. Satisfaction

Means efficacy was used to measure individuals’ belief in the utility of the tools available for performing a job$^2$

- **Means Efficacy (6 items)** (e.g. To what extent do you think the simulation is a useful tool?)

Level 2. Attitudes

The Gatekeeper Behavior Scale (GBS) assessed educator attitudes

- **Preparedness (5 items)** (e.g. How would you rate your preparedness to recognize when a fellow student’s behavior is a sign of psychological distress?)
- **Likelihood (2 items)** (e.g. How likely are you to discuss your concerns with a student exhibiting signs of psychological distress?)
- **Self-efficacy (4 items)** (e.g. I feel confident in my ability to discuss my concerns with a fellow student exhibiting signs of psychological distress.)

Level 3. Behaviors

- Changes in behavior from pre- to follow-up (3 items) (In the past two academic months, approximately how many students have you: been concerned about; approached; referred to support services?)
Study Design: CONSORT Diagram

1. Pre-Survey (N = 6239)
2. Simulation
3. Post-Survey (N = 6239)
4. Follow-Up Survey (N = 277)

2 month time span
Demographic Breakdown (N=6,239)

Population Setting: 37 American states and 4 US territories
Participant School Profiles: 78 different academic institutions (10 community colleges, 50 public universities, 15 private universities, and 3 non-academic institutions)
Date Range: August 2012 – December 2016
Level 1 Satisfaction Measures

- 98% rated simulation as “excellent”, “very good” or “good”
- 97% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that all students in their school should take the simulation
- 93% would recommend the simulation to their peers
Part of the role of students is to connect fellow students experiencing psychological distress with mental health services.
Level 1 Means Efficacy

Means Efficacy

% Respondents Rating the Simulation from “Some Extent” to “A Very Great Extent”

- A useful tool: 97.50%
- Well constructed: 97.70%
- Easy to use: 98.00%
- Likely to help you help troubled students: 97.40%
- Based on scenarios that are relevant to you and your fellow students: 96.30%
- Aid you in getting timely help to your fellow students: 97.10%
Level 2. Attitudinal Measures Preparedness, Likelihood & Self-Efficacy Gatekeeper Behavior Scale (N=6,239; Hotelling’s $T^2$ p<.001)

**Preparedness Composite**
Preparedness to identify, approach, and talk to and refer to mental health support services

**Likelihood Composite**
Likelihood to discuss concerns and recommend support services

**Self-Efficacy Composite**
Confidence in their ability to discuss concerns, recommend support services, and help a suicidal student seek help

![Attitudinal Changes Pre to Post](image-url)
Self Help (N=6,239, p<.001)

I may seek help from the counseling center myself when feeling psychologically distressed.
School Climate (n=2,862)

Note: This data was not included in the original analyses, but was recently implemented in surveys, thus the above data are preliminary school climate attitudes.
Gatekeeper Behavioral Change (n=277)

Note: n=277 due to high level of attrition between those who took the post survey and the follow up survey
*** $p < .001$
** $p < .01$
Implementation Strategies

- What is the most important thing to keep in mind when doing Outreach?
- Biggest motivator for people?
Passive Advertisement

- Bus shelter ads
- Floor Decals
- Lawn Signs
- Flyers
- LCD posts
- Social Media (your account and other departmental ones)
- Make use of current events/pop culture
- Animations
Friends Help Friends

Worried about a friend, but don't know how to approach them? Kognito can help, and it only takes 30(ish) minutes!

Are you faculty, staff, or a student at FIU?

Have fun and learn how to help others through game-based exercises with a fully animated and emotionally responsive avatar!

Learn how to:
Recognize signs of emotional stress in a fellow Panther
Approach at-risk students/friends
Discuss their concerns
Connect them with resources on and off campus

Take advantage of it today!
(Works best on a desktop or laptop computer)

FIU.KOGNITO.COM
FRIENDS HELP FRIENDS

Wouldn't chat a trout, but don't know how to approach them? AppyPal can help, and it only takes 20 minutes!

FIU.KOGNITO.COM
Even Link needs help sometimes.

Visit CAPS
caps.fiu.edu

Even Mario needs help sometimes.

Visit CAPS
caps.fiu.edu
Active Advertisement

- Peer Education
- Paid ads on social media
- Engaging faculty and staff
- Student leaders
More Ideas

• Obtain stats from Kognito native to your campus/area
• Hold a contest with graphic/art department
• Use creative power from talented coworkers
• Use Spanglish
• Use language familiar with the population in your area
• Free software
• Ask CAPS to collect data
Keep in Mind

- Short attention span
- Get students involved
- Colorful graphics
- Catchy headline
- Competition: Parties, fun activities, AB
Limitations

- Those who dropped out have higher Preparedness, Likelihood, and Self-Efficacy scores than those who remained to complete the post-test.
- Self-reported data.
- Gaining access to the schools’ support services (counseling) referral records would have allowed us to further measure the impact of the intervention.
- Within-group design.
Conclusions

• Innovative learning tool to support mental health and wellness in Latinx/Hispanic populations
• Easy to access
• Online 24/7
• Cost-effectively reaches large numbers of geographically dispersed student populations
• Effective across racial/ethnic demographics
Q&A

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