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### Development and Presentation of a Lesson on Mental Health for High School Students During the 2021 COVID-19 Pandemic

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# Development and Presentation of a Lesson on Mental Health for High School Students During the 2021 COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Introduction

With the support of the HRSA, the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) was established to increase the number of students from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue careers in healthcare. HCOP combines the efforts of high school, undergraduate, and medical students in creating an original project to serve a need within the community. In this HCOP project, we aim to address the issue of mental health with high school students at two New Jersey high schools: Pennsauken and Williamstown.

## Goals of the Project

- Speak about the relationship of the COVID-19 pandemic and mental health
- Address ways to improve self-care for high school students
- Share accessible mental health resources
- Partner with community stakeholders and experts to deliver an effective mental health presentation

## Conclusion

Mental health as a teenager is crucial topic that is often not addressed properly within school systems. Many teens during high school are often misguided due to the lack of resources and knowledge available to them. With our presentation, we believe that students will be able to confidently take those steps to improve their mental health.

## Methods

### Process of Developing and Presenting the Lesson

#### 1. Research

- High School Students and Mental Health
- Conduct Surveys from Teachers and Students
- Current Events and Mental Health
- Methods of Mental Health Self-Care

#### 2. Build Relationships with Stakeholders/Community Partners

- Teachers and High School Staff
- Professors
- Community Experts

#### 3. Create the Lesson

- Apply Research Findings
- Develop Engaging Online Activities
- Process of Drafting and Refining

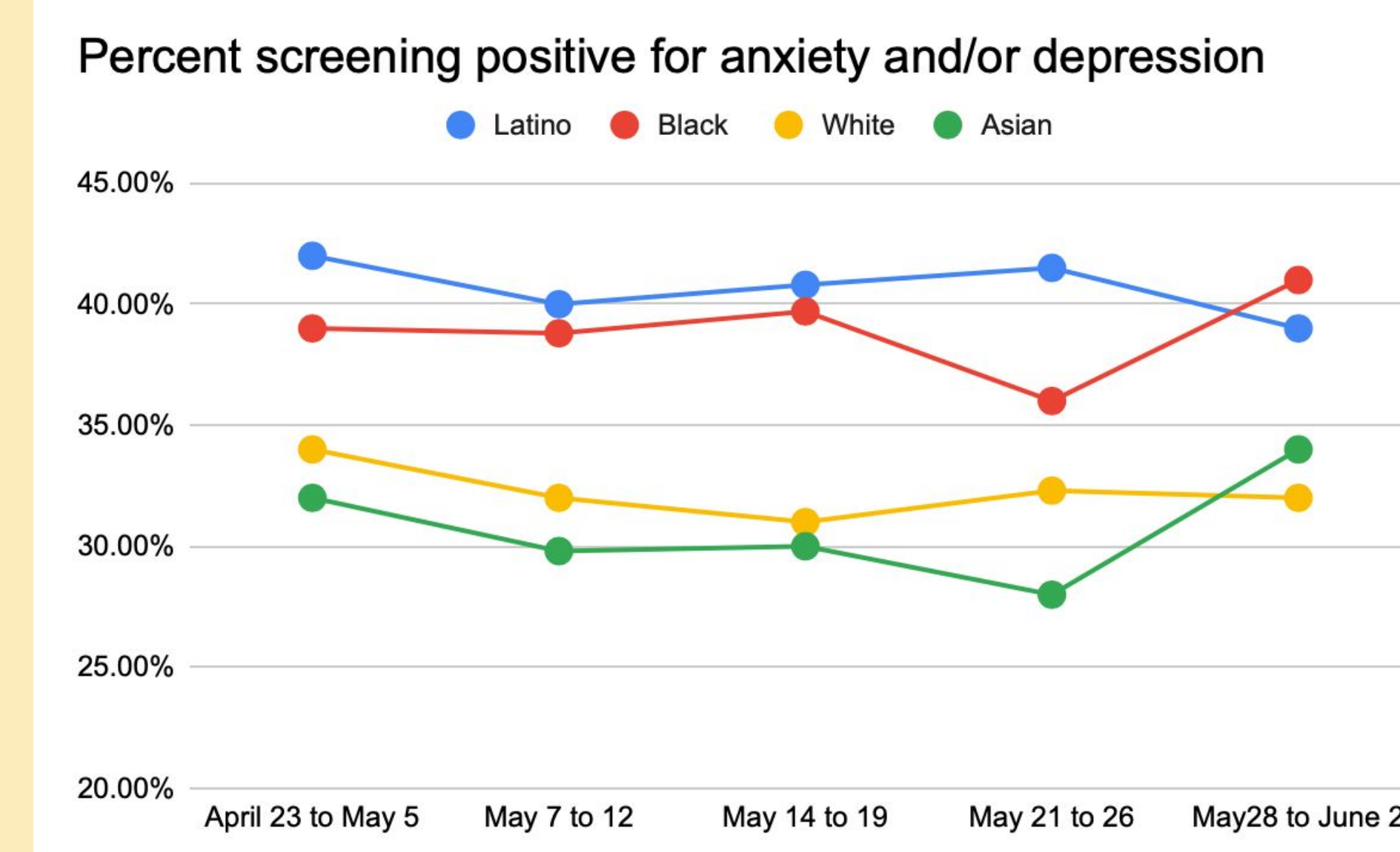
#### 4. Present the Lesson

- Practice Delivery
- Communicate with High School Teachers
- Share Findings and Mental Health Resources

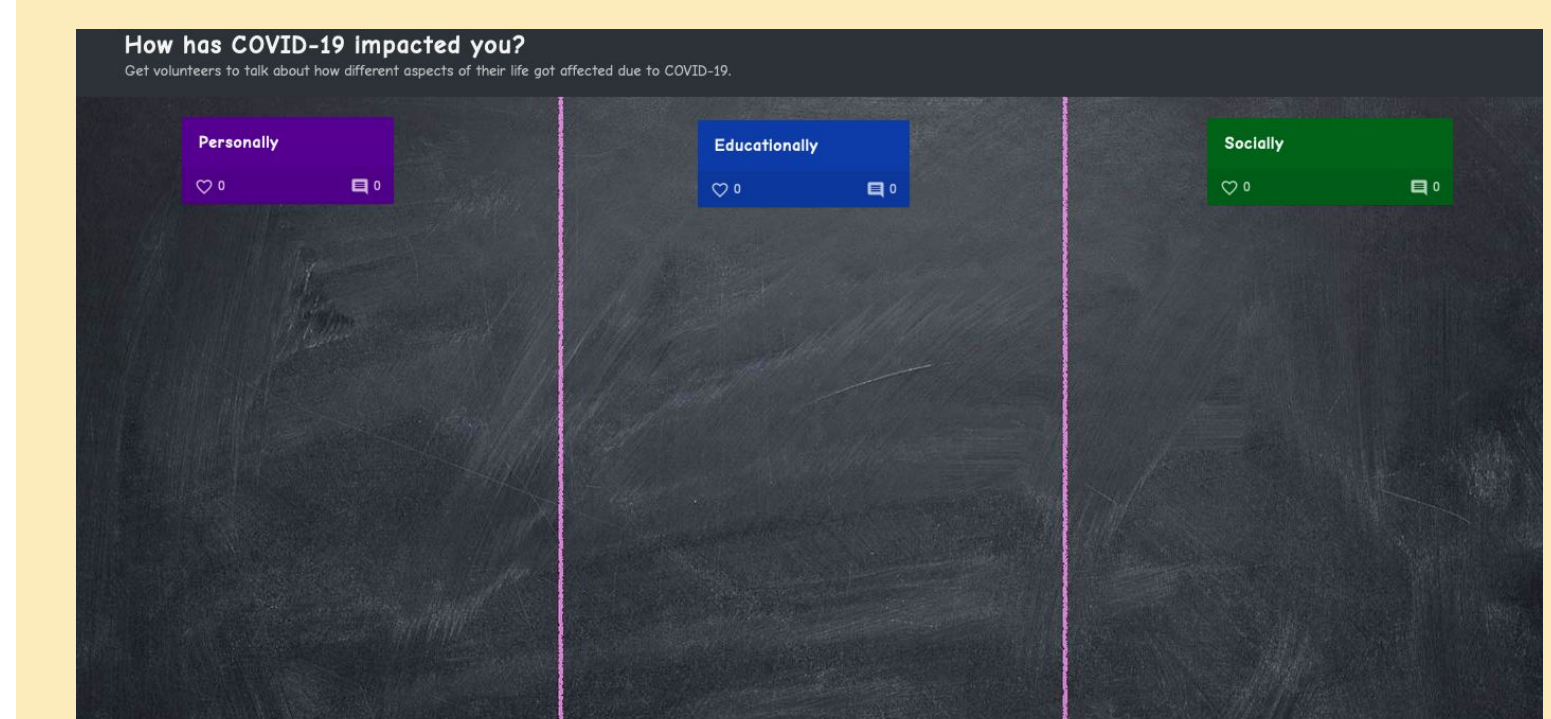
## Results

### Research Findings

#	Barrier Theme	Number of Studies
1	Public, perceived and self-stigmatising attitudes on mental health	10
2	Confidentiality and trust	6
3	Difficulty identifying the symptoms of mental illness	5
4	Concern about the characteristics of the provider	5
5	Reliance on self, do not want help	5



### Presentation Interactive Activity



### PowerPoint Slides Created from Research and Collaboration with Partners

**Journaling**

- Avoid Venting**: Creates negative emotions.
- Interpretation**: Writer is actively interpreting what happened to them.
- Positivity**: Training yourself to watch for the positive when the negative emerges.

**COVID-19 vs. Mental Health**

Share your experiences over the year and how has COVID affected your mental health

**Diversity**

Depression and Anxiety spiked among black Americans after George Floyd's death. Were these communities given resources?

- The COVID has increased the rates of depression and anxiety due to factors such as: unemployment
- Racial Battle Fatigue
- A result of a natural race-related stress response to distressing mental and emotional conditions

**How Do You Stay Motivated?**

PROGRESS PERFECTION

IT'S OKAY

- \* TO MAKE MISTAKES
- \* TO HAVE BAD DAYS
- \* TO BE LESS THAN PERFECT
- \* TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU
- \* TO BE YOURSELF

**Seeking Resources for Mental Wellness as a Minor**

Being under 18-years of age can be challenging for finding resources for mental health:

1. Find a trusted adult and tell them about your concerns
  - o Ex: family, friend, or teacher...
  - o These people should be adults that can and are willing to advocate for your needs
2. Speak with an expert
  - o Family doctor, therapist, psychologist: generally those with a professional license
  - o Verify symptoms negatively affecting mental health
3. Create a solution/plan with an expert towards mental wellness
  - o Make progress

**RESOURCES**

Williamstown High School	Pennsauken High School	Outside Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School Counselor</li> <li>- Mental Health Counselor</li> <li>- Therapist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidance counselors</li> <li>- School psychologist</li> <li>- Social worker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crisis Unit at Jefferson Hospital</li> <li>- Mobile Response and Stabilization Services</li> <li>- NJ Helpline (855-654-6735): specialists available 24/7 who offer counseling and support over phone.</li> <li>- 2nd Floor Youth Helpline (1-888-222-2228) call or text: Helpline for NJ's youth</li> </ul>

### References:

- Perceived barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking in young people: a systematic review Amelia Gulliver\* , Kathleen M Griffiths, Helen Christensen
- Fowers, Alyssa, and William Wan. "Depression and Anxiety Spiked among Black Americans after George Floyd's Death."

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