

Summary of *Healthy Minds Study* (University of Michigan) Administered at ECC in Spring 2015

.....

Survey Respondent Cohort:

approximately 600 students responded to the online survey → 43% in year 1 of school, 46% in year 2 of school; 69% female, 31% male; 50% African American/black, 29% Hispanic/Latino, 11% White/Caucasian; 92% U.S. citizen or permanent resident; 89% heterosexual, 11% gay/lesbian, bisexual, or not sure; 97% never served in the military at all

Academic Items:

Academic Progress & Goals:

50% of respondents indicated they first began taking college courses in 2013 or 2014; 58% of respondents did not take any breaks from college (not including winter or summer terms) since they first began. 67% and 64% stated they had to take developmental math or developmental English, respectively.

The main reasons students are taking college courses are 1) “to take courses related to a future job or work” or “to transfer to a 4-year college” (both 61%); 2) to obtain an Associate’s degree (51%); and 3) “for personal enrichment or self-improvement” (41%). Only 3% responded “no definite purpose in mind.”

Students see themselves attaining higher degrees. In fact, 35% intend to complete a Master’s Degree, 27% intend to complete a Bachelor’s degree, and 21% intend to complete a Doctorate degree. Only 7% indicated they would stop after completing an Associate’s Degree. Most respondents’ parents completed only high school (29%); 20% completed an Associate’s, Bachelor’s, or graduate degree; 13% completed only 8th grade or lower.

Students self-report their study habits as follows: 21% spend 2 hours/day, 18% spend 3 hours/day, and 14% spend 4 hours/day on average doing school work. 5% indicated they spend less than 1 hour/day on school work. The mean number of hours self-reported doing school work is 4.72 hours/day.

65% of respondents self-reported their status as full-time (12 or more credits). Most students (52%) reported taking 3 or 4 courses in Spring 2015 for credit. 22% indicated they were taking only 1 or 2 courses for credit. 84% were pursuing an Associate’s Degree, 2% a technical or vocational certificate, and 9% no program at all. Respondents self-reported their gpa in the past academic year as B+ (23%), B (22%), or A (18%). 6% “didn’t know” their gpa.

Paying for College:

The main way the respondents pay for college are 1) “I get financial aid” (77%); 2) “I work” (64%); 3) “I get help from family or friends” (48%). Only 8% indicated “My employer pays.” Regarding how difficult it is for students to pay for various things while in college, most difficulty came from affording childcare, food, and health care, in that order. The “easiest” things to pay for are textbooks and course materials, transportation, and school, in that order. 49% report their financial situation as being “a struggle,” 47% say “it’s tight, but I’m doing fine,” and only 4% report “finances aren’t really a problem.”

Financial Situation:

Public Assistance:

Respondents indicate that they or their family have received a public benefit program in the last 6 months as follows: tax refunds (47%), Medicaid or public health insurance (34%), SNAP/food stamps (30%), and utility assistance (22%). Only 4% reported receiving veterans' benefits or SSI (supplemental social disability income). Many who responded reported not liking to rely on government assistance (47%), the application process for public benefits is too difficult (32%), and the requirements associated with public benefits program are too difficult (32%). Only 17% reported having had a bad experience with a government program.

Financial Struggles:

Respondents, when asked what impact financial difficulties had on them in the past year, indicated the following: 1) they borrowed money from friends or family to help pay bills (45%); 2) they did not pay the full amount of gas, oil, or electricity bill (35%); and 3) they did not pay the full amount of rent or mortgage payments (28%). Only 2% revealed they had stayed for at least one night at a shelter or in an abandoned building, an automobile, or any other place not meant for regular housing. 3% indicated being evicted from their home.

Housing/Living Situations:

49% of respondents live in an apartment and 34% live in a house. 79% pay rent, and 10% own their home or make mortgage payments. Rent or mortgage monthly payments for respondents range from \$38/month to \$2060/month (average = \$946/month, median = \$925/month). 2% do not have any home (e.g., rent a room, shelter, car, halfway house, stay with someone, pending foreclosure). 11% live in a public housing project owned by a local housing authority or other public agency, 7% receive Section 8 or another public housing voucher, and 85% live with others (i.e., not alone). 49% and 23% live with their biological mother or father, respectively. 77% stated there is someplace in their home where they can be alone to read or study. 79% have lived in their residence for one or more years, and 12% moved once within the last 12 months. While more than half (51%) felt "very safe" or "extremely safe" in their current home, 18% felt "a little bit safe" or "not at all safe." 6% and 5% left their home because they felt unsafe or were thrown out of their home by someone else in the household within the last year, respectively. 61% were not claimed by their parents as "dependent" for tax purposes within the last year.

Work Status:

59% of respondents work; 64% reported looking for work in the last month; and 32% work more than one job. Descriptive statistics related to those who work is as follows: average 31 hours/week; median 32 hours/week; minimum 2 hours/week; maximum 89.5 hours/week; 47% work 35 or more hours/week; 7% work 50 or more hours/week; and 11% work 14 or fewer hours/week. 65% work between the hours of 12:00 pm and 6:00 pm, 58% work between 8:00 am and 12:00 pm, and 41% work between 6:00 pm and 10:00 pm. 52% self-reported earning less than \$15,000 in the last year; the average yearly income was approximately \$23,400.

Family Situation:

Relationships & Children:

63% of respondents indicated they are single, 19% are in a relationship, and 15% are married.

27% have children. Although 20% of respondents provide 80 or more hours caring for their own children in a typical week, 41% provide 20 or fewer hours doing so. The average number of hours spent caring for their own children is 44 hours/week. When students are at college or work, 47% of their children are in school, 32% have a non-parent family member provide childcare, and 26% have another parent provide childcare. Only 4% reported having their children cared for by the college daycare facility. 23% indicated the number of hours of childcare is too little for them and their child. While 59% respondents pay nothing for childcare, others report spending as much as \$20 to \$750 per week for childcare for all of their children (average for all = \$64/week; median for all = \$ 0/week)

Health Items:

General Life Satisfaction Levels:

20% of respondents indicated they were “not very” or “not at all” satisfied with their life as a whole; 41% were “somewhat satisfied.” 24% self-reported “feeling tired or having little energy,” 21% self-reported having “trouble falling or staying asleep or sleeping too much,” and 15% self-reported having a “poor appetite or overeating.” 8% self-reported “moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed; or the opposite – being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual,” and 6% self-reported having “thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way.” 43% of these self-reporters indicated that their problems have made it very or extremely difficult to do their work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people. 17% felt that they worried too much about different things nearly every day.

Mental Health Status & Health Habits:

26% of respondents agreed with the statement “In the past 12 months, I needed help for emotional or mental health problems such as feeling sad, blue, anxious or nervous.” 10% of respondents have received mental health counseling from a health professional, and 5%, 4%, and 4% revealed they are on anti-anxiety medications, antidepressants, or sleep medications, respectively, in the last year. Although only 2 respondents total were receiving “counseling or therapy from an ECC on-campus resource,” 59% indicated feeling that “at my school,...students’ mental and emotional well-being is a priority.” 12% of respondents talked with academic personnel (e.g., instructors, advisors) about mental health problems that were affecting their academic performance, and the majority of these students (86%) were satisfied with the level of support given by the academic personnel with whom they spoke.

While 77% did not indicate having been diagnosed with any mental health conditions, 11% and 10% had been diagnosed by a health professional with depression or other mood disorders (e.g., major depressive disorder, bipolar/manic depression) or anxiety (e.g., generalized anxiety disorder, OCD, PTSD, phobias), respectively. Of those who reported having mental health disorders, 34% indicated they had major depressive disorder; 28% indicated they had bipolar/manic depression; and 25% reported that emotional or mental difficulties hurt their academic performance on only 1 or 2 days in 4 weeks. Only 7% of all survey respondents ever seriously thought about attempting suicide in the past year, and only 1% actually attempted suicide.

Recent self-reported substance/drug use, which was very low among respondents, was as follows: 11%, 6%, 5%, and 5% used cigarettes, marijuana/hashish, prescription opiate-type pain relievers, and waterpipe smoking/hookah, respectively, within the last 30 days. 22% self-reported having 4 or more drinks in a row at least once in the last 2 weeks.

14% responded that they have made themselves sick because they felt uncomfortably full, 20% worry that they have lost control over how much they eat, and 14% say that food dominates their lives. 34% cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food, and 27% were hungry but did not eat because there was not enough money or food.

Recent self-reported exercise habits revealed the following: 46% spent less than 1 hour/ week, 24% spent between 1 and 2 hours/week, and 13% spent more than 5 hours per week exercising.

33% of survey respondents agreed that if they needed to seek professional help for their mental or emotional health while attending ECC, they would know where to go. 38% indicated they feel a stigma associated with mental health treatment by agreeing with the statement that most people think less of a person who has receive mental health treatment. 63% have visited any medical provider (e.g., primary care or other doctor) for a check-up or any other medical reasons in the past year. Regarding health insurance, 31% are covered by Medicaid or other governmental insurance, 26% are uncovered, and 17% have insurance through their parent(s) or their employer.

61 students also wrote **additional comments**. Specific information that was shared fell into the following categories:

- treatment of students by ECC staff, un-motivating environment, lack of caring, need to focus on customer service
- medical challenges including mental health struggles such as PTSD, depression, and substance abuse
- family problems, especially lack of support, witnessing domestic violence and alcohol abuse
- visa status
- everyday worries
- difficulty balancing school, work, and family – feeling overwhelmed
- financial struggles and unemployment