



7-1-2024

Promoting Mental Wellness in First-Generation College Students

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Promoting Mental Wellness in First- Generation College Students



Presented By: George Cardenas

Site Mentor: Rosie Montes, SUCCESS TRiO Program Director

Faculty Mentor: Felicia Markfield OTD, OTR/L



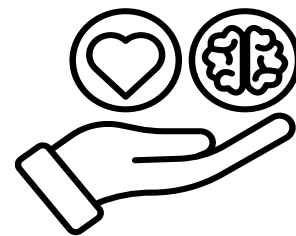
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Background

Mental Wellness

- Internal resource that helps to
 - Think
 - Feel Connected
 - Function
- Helps to build resilience, grow, and flourish



(Mental Wellness, n.d.)

First Generation College Students (FGCS)

- Are the first in their immediate family to attend college
 - Tend to have ethnic minority backgrounds
 - Working class families



(Chang et al., 2020; Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; House et al., 2019; Jenkins et al., 2013)



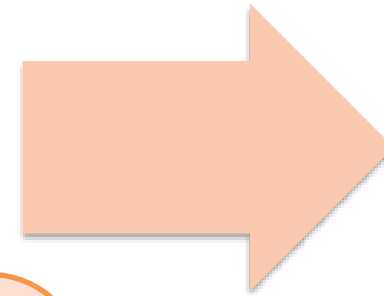
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Literature Review

FGCS Experience

- Cultural stressors
- Imposter syndrome
- Fear of failure
- Guilt
- Decreased rate of seeking support



Impact on Education

- Increased dropout rates
- Lower grades
- Feelings of isolation



(Amirkhan et al., 2023; Canning et al., 2020; Chang et al., 2020; Corona et al., 2017; Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; House et al., 2019; Jenkins et al., 2013; Laajala-Lozano & Jenkins, 2022; Mikell & Davis, 2022; Stebleton et al., 2014)



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Capstone Site Purpose

Capstone Site location at The University of
the Pacific SUCCESS TRiO



The TRiO program offers services to 200-
FGCS

- Tutoring
- Financial & Academic Assistance
- Financial, Personal, & Career Counseling



(SUCCESS TRiO & Upward Bound TRiO | University of the Pacific, n.d.)



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Needs Assessment

Optional & anonymous survey questionnaire for TRiO students

Student Findings

10 participants

60%

- Confident in recognizing their stressors

50%

- Somewhat likely to utilize stress management techniques

10%

- Access the Mental Wellness modules

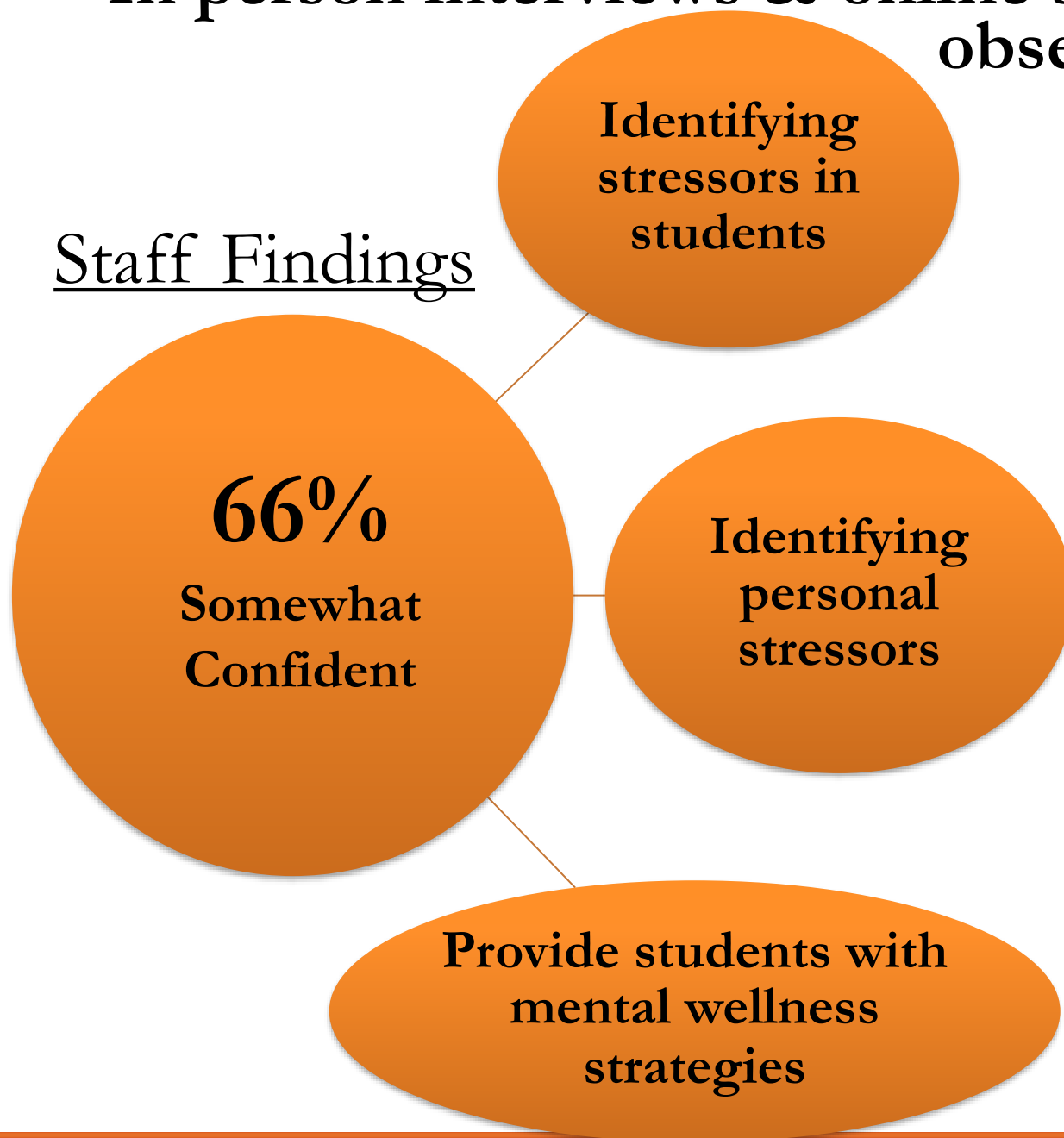


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Needs Assessment

In person interviews & online survey questionnaires with three TRiO staff members & observational environmental scan



Interview & Environmental Findings

- Report high levels of stress during end of semesters
- Increased chances of students not seeking mental health support
- Easy access to the TRiO support system
- Private spaces for counseling meetings

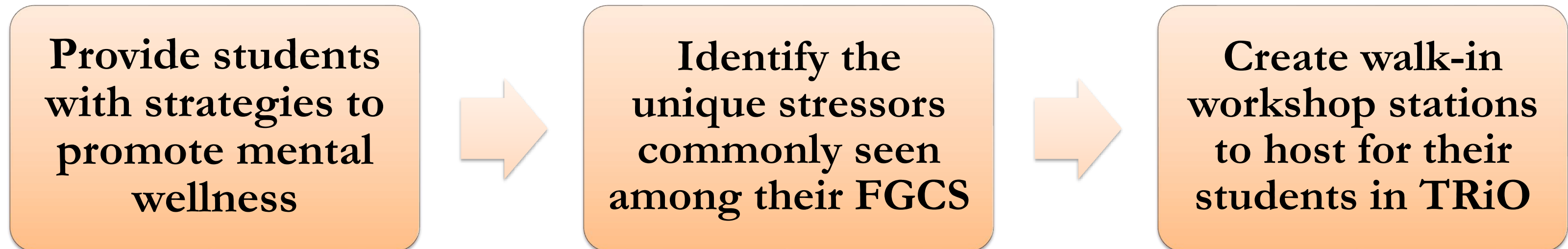


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Program Purpose

Through presentation deliverables & resource guides, the TRiO staff will...



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Guiding Theory



Client-Centered Strategies Framework

- Collaborate with staff to identify barriers
 - Implement strategies from a variety of perspectives
 - Create environments and contexts that facilitate client-centered practice

(Restall et al., 2003)



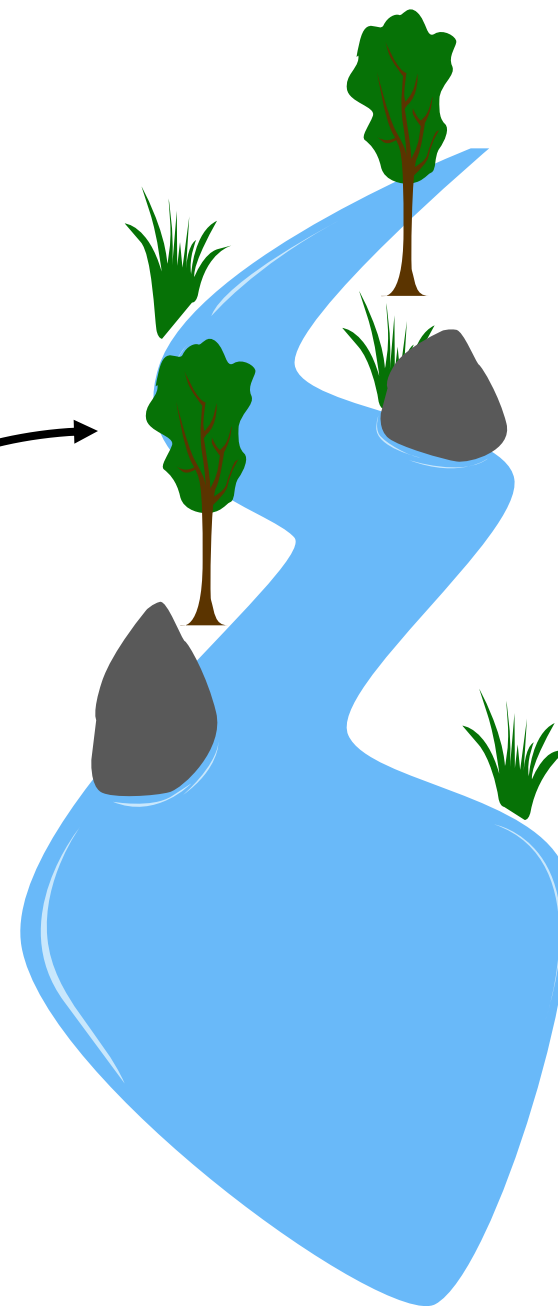
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Guiding Theory

Kawa Model

- Metaphor of a river to depict a person's life journey



1

River

Life flow and
overall
occupations

2

Riverbank

Environment,
social, &
physical

3

Rocks

Blocks life
flow

4

Driftwood

Resources that
can be assets
or liabilities

(Kawa Model, n.d.)



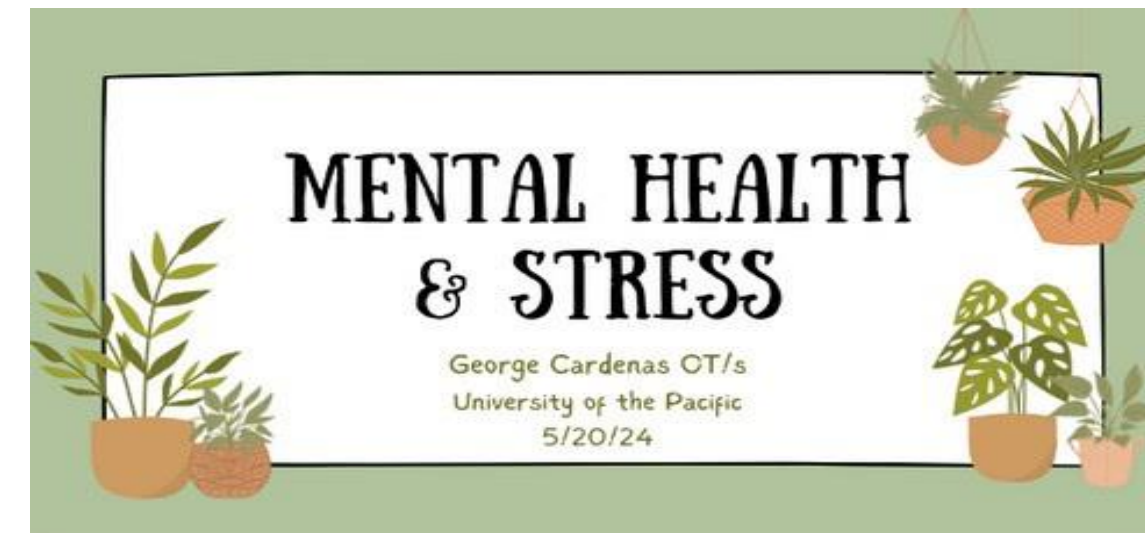
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Outcomes

Deliverables

1. Mental Health & Stress Presentation
2. Stress Management Presentation & Handout
3. Mindfulness & Stress Management Workshop & Resource Guide

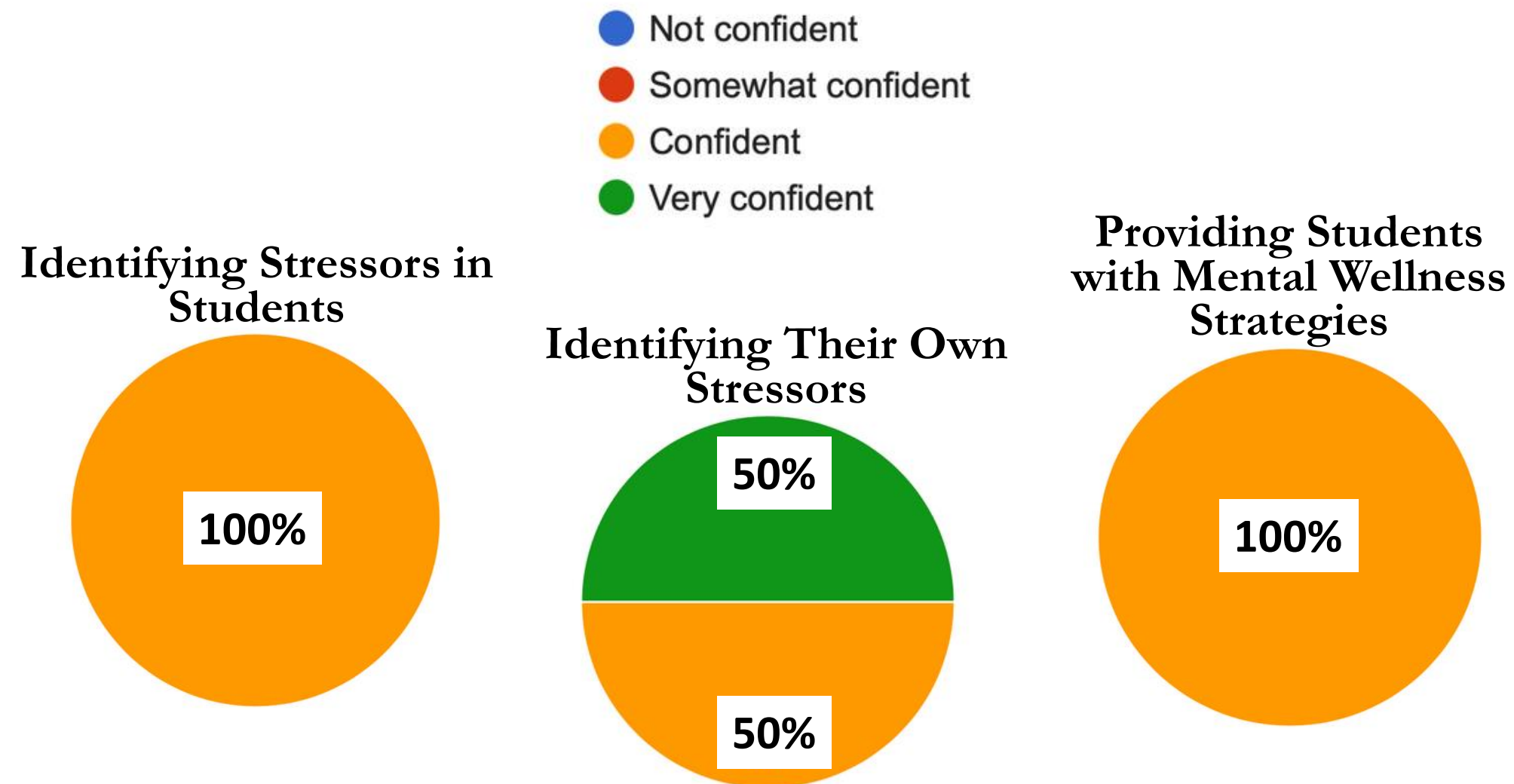


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Outcomes

Post Survey Questionnaire & Interview with TRiO Staff



Staff Reported On...

- Importance of recognizing signs of stress
- Importance of implementing stress managements techniques through different approaches



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Discussion

Incorporating **Occupational Therapy** approaches has shown **benefits** at the SUCCESS TRiO site

Lead to an increase staff **occupational performance**

- By promoting staff mental wellness
 - Recognize stressors
 - Implementing & suggesting mental wellness strategies



Benefits to **occupational balance**

- Stress importance of balancing work and life balance



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Impact

Continuing to use the occupational therapy lens to **promote mental wellness** in first generation college students through a variety of strategies

Posting
presentations on
canvas

Having physical
handouts in lobby

Educating staff
on importance
maintaining their
mental health



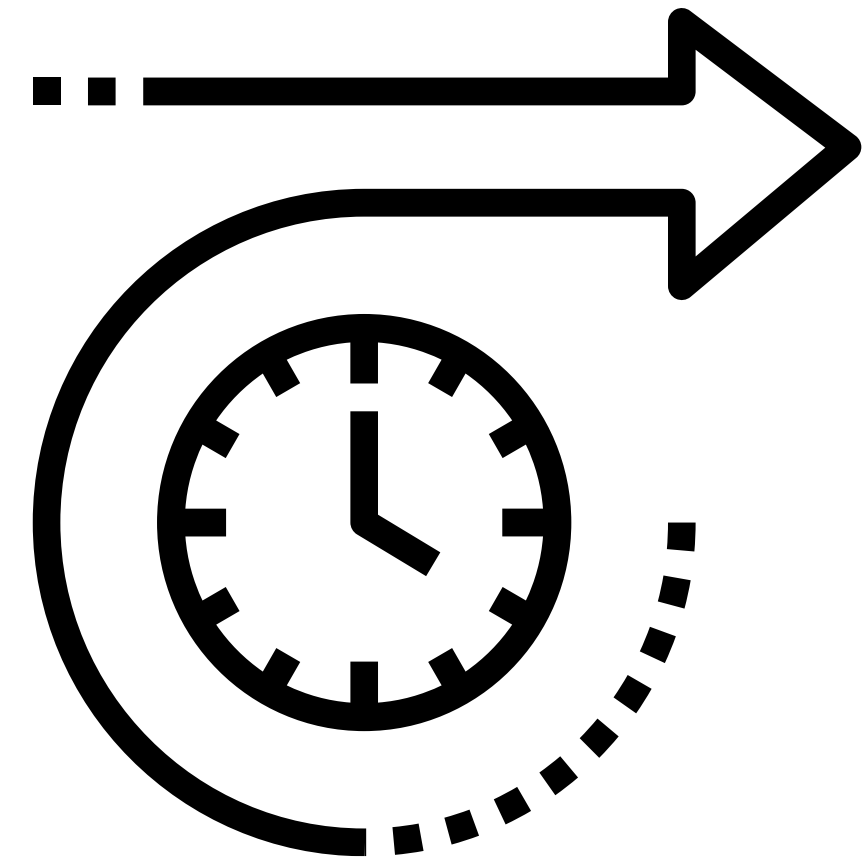
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Future Implications

Continue OTD collaboration with TRiO program

- Burnout education tips for staff
- Parent education on mental health
- Continue evaluating occupational balance in FGCS



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Acknowledgments

THANK YOU!!

Rosie Montes, Jacqueline De La Paz, Angie Perez, & TRiO students

Felicia Markfield OTD, OTR/L

My Wife: Melissa Cardenas

My Parents & Brother



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