

DEFINE

Introduction:

My problem of practice stems from my own experience as a student who suffers from anxiety. I always felt as if I wasn't performing to the best of my abilities but it wasn't due to a lack of desire, it was due to my mental illness and me not understanding how to properly handle it. I think that awareness needs to be raised about anxiety in students, so that faculty, family, and friends will be able to support the student throughout their time struggling with their illness. The root cause of anxiety is unknown, it is believed that anxiety is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain but studies have also shown that people who have food allergies and food intolerances can show signs of anxiety if they consume the foods in which their bodies are rejecting.

Raising Awareness:

I feel there is a stigma attached to mental illness that leaves other people viewing those who suffer from it as "weak" and "crazy," when that is simply not the case. There needs to be an awareness brought to deans, professors, principals, teachers, and any other faculty that comes into contact with these students, so that they can try and assist the students in their learning process, instead of just writing them off and viewing them as students who just don't value their education. I believe awareness should also be brought to family members and friends, so that they will have an understanding of how to effectively help their loved one. Anxiety is not something that is left in the classroom or other places where a person may have a trigger, it stays with them everywhere they go. While a student may feel safer at home, that does not mean that something can't or won't trigger them into having a panic attack there.

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Why Nutrition Matters:

Nutrition is also important for students with anxiety and any mental illness for that matter. It's not just in the aspect of adopting a healthier diet will make you feel better but to figure out if food is making your illness worse. The best way for a person to find out if they have a food allergy is to have a scratch test done by their physician but the scratch test will not inform a person if they have a food intolerance. This is where students with anxiety (or any mental illness) should be proactive in their own treatment and do some experimenting with different foods to see what may be making them worse. Students should eliminate one of the common foods, (gluten, dairy, soy, corn) that can cause a worsening in mental illness, one at a time and do so for at least a month. Then they can slowly reintroduce these foods and find out if the exacerbate anxiety symptoms or not.

My Vision:

My vision for my problem of practice is to instate a class or classes that teachers, professors, parents, friends, and students themselves should take part in, if they are suffering from anxiety or other mental illnesses. I feel these classes should be mandatory for everyone (though I know that you can't make a person do something they don't want to) but I do believe they absolutely should be a must for instructors. Raising awareness about this problem is so imperative to a student's success and I feel that they only way for people to understand the problem is to be required to educate themselves on it.