

## Executive Summary:

We are one of four groups at Western Kentucky University (WKU) who are competing in the 2017 PRSSA Bateman Case Study Competition. For this year's competition, we crafted our localized campaign using elements designed by the consultants from Change Direction and Give an Hour, which are two national campaigns focused on evolving perceptions surrounding mental health. Our group, also known as "The Corner Group," focused our campaigning efforts on students living in Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes Campbell Hall on WKU's campus.

The goal for this campaign was to educate and inform students living in international residence halls at WKU about mental health and how best to address it. A large part of our secondary audience was international students who lived in these dorms. The ultimate objective was to change the stigma surrounding mental health and generate openness on WKU's campus.

Our client, The Campaign to Change Direction, strives to promote a healthy state of mind and educate people about the five signs of emotional suffering. This campaign was completed using tools like social media, community events, and informational meetings. We attempted to change the stigma about mental health awareness among students in Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes Campbell Hall. In the month we had to change the opinions of our target audiences, we planned to inform students about common mental health/emotional issues people face, while also directing them to locations on campus that offer assistance. Using the material the Campaign to Change Direction made available to us, we aspired to help students understand the importance of fortified mental health.

## Situation Analysis:

Mental health in the United States is a taboo subject and is often difficult for people to openly talk about, even though 18 percent of Americans have a mental health condition according to [changedirection.org](http://changedirection.org). The World Health Organization reports that nearly two-thirds of people with a known mental health disorder will never seek help from a health professional. Mental health affects people of all ages, races, and genders, but college students are especially susceptible. Students may be experiencing emotional distress and not know the resources they have available to them. A survey conducted by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) showed that 73 percent of students have experienced a mental health crisis. The crises were attributed to homesickness, course load stress, extreme feelings of depression/panic, and more. Also, a student's peer may be experiencing emotional distress and that student might not recognize the symptoms. First-year students at WKU are going through a huge transition and adapting to college life.

We anticipated problems such as language barriers, primarily with international students, and student participation prior to the start of the campaign. Since mental health is a sensitive subject, we expected that students may not be as motivated to participate in events involving it. From our focus group, we also learned that international student participation at events would be difficult because some women from other countries are discouraged from going out after dark. We tried to avoid this conflict by scheduling most of our events mid-day to increase involvement. We used all of our resources on campus in order to communicate efficiently and make the campaign as convenient and approachable as possible.

### **Primary Research Overview:**

We chose to focus on two residence halls: Barnes Campbell Hall and Bemis Lawrence Hall at WKU. We also chose to focus on international students, since there was a mass population of students living in the two previous stated residence halls. We issued a survey to the two dorms to get a sense of their attitudes and understanding of mental health. Our survey showed that students do not believe they have a strong knowledge of the signs of emotional pain. In fact, only 22 percent of respondents strongly agreed that they could recognize the signs of emotional pain. The responses also showed that 37 percent of respondents thought it would be beneficial for someone experiencing emotional pain to seek assistance. According to NAMI, 1 in 5 adults experience a mental illness. This means there is a high likelihood that students living in the dorm either have a mental illness or someone on their floor has a mental illness. We thought that compared to the numbers from NAMI, our survey numbers were low in terms of awareness and attitude for mental health. For our campaign, we focused on increasing awareness of the signs of emotional pain and changing the attitude toward seeking assistance for emotional concerns.

### **Secondary Research Overview:**

Being that a secondary audience is international students, we wanted to be inclusive. We conducted a focus group to gauge the international student's perceptions of mental health. We wanted to ensure inclusiveness to the international students and wanted to know the best way to get them involved. After the focus group, we gained access to an audience on campus who has different perceptions about mental health and may not be aware of the resources WKU offers. When asked what they associated with mental health, the students looked around and were silent. After some prompting, one student said he associated it with stressing over finals and the rest of the group nodded in agreement, but they couldn't articulate exactly what "mental health" is. Out of eight students, one spoke up and related mental health to being healthy and having an overall healthy composition. During our focus group, we noticed that further explanation of information was often necessary and students frequently collaborated their thoughts instead of individualizing their perspective. The focus group led us to determine that international students at WKU may not clearly understand mental health or it may be similarly stigmatized in other cultures. This helped us get a closer look at a portion of our secondary audience.

Our team researched mental health awareness and related issues on the web. In a 2016 issue of WKU's newspaper, *The Herald*, an article about students open discussion on mental health was included. The article featured a sophomore at WKU who suffers from anxiety caused by the many activities she is involved in on campus. The student in the article said, "College makes self-care more difficult because I have no time to focus on it." Since poor self-care is one of the five signs of emotional pain, it was evident that this was an issue facing students on our campus. This was just one student, but there are many more students who feel the same way.

Our goal was to determine ways to establish a comfortability with self-expression and establish a more positive attitude toward mental health issues. One of the students in our focus group said mental health was, "stressing out over exams and projects." From our research, we know it is more than test anxiety. We wanted to emphasize that mental health is more than just stressing out over exams. We also determined through research, that hosting events in the Honors College and International Center, Barnes Campbell Hall, and Bemis Lawrence Hall were the best ways to reach our audience in order to include all demographics we were targeting.

## **Target Audience Overview:**

### **Primary Target Audience**

- Residents of Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes Campbell Hall at WKU

### **Secondary Target Audience**

- Friends of students living in Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes Campbell Hall
- Resident Assistants and Hall Directors living in these dorms
- International students living in these dorms

We chose students living in Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes Campbell Hall because there is a large student population in these buildings, and the buildings are open year-round. At WKU, the dorms are mostly filled with freshmen students. A survey done by the NAMI shows freshmen could be vulnerable to emotional pain or mental health issues because they are adjusting to a new routine and environment. Bemis Lawrence Hall is an all-girls dorm and Barnes Campbell Hall is an all-boys dorm. Our secondary target audience was international students, the resident assistants and hall directors, and guests of residents.

## **Organizational Goal:**

The organizational goal is to change the culture in America surrounding mental health and emotional issues and subsequently create an environment that recognizes signs of emotional suffering. We want to bring this change in mental health culture to the dorms of Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes Campbell Hall at WKU.

## Objectives, Strategies, Tactics and Evaluation:

**Objective 1:** To increase recognition of the five signs of emotional pain (personality change, agitation, withdrawal, poor self-care, hopelessness) by 5 percent among the target audience by March 15, 2017.

**Strategy 1:** Engage students living in Barnes Campbell and Bemis Lawrence Hall through a collaborative event.

**Objective 2:** To increase the favorability rating of seeking on-campus assistance for mental health/emotional pain at WKU by 5 percent by March 15, 2017.

**Strategy 1:** Promote the importance and benefits of seeking help by hosting informational events that educate and inform about mental health assistance at WKU

**Tactic 1:** We hosted a film festival event at Bemis Lawrence and Barnes Campbell to educate students on the importance of mental health awareness by showing films that address the five signs established by the Campaign to Change Direction. The films we picked were *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012) which addresses personality change, *Fight Club* (1999) which concerns poor self care, *Inside Out* (2015) addresses hopelessness, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012) illustrates withdrawal and depression, and *Babadook* (2014) portrays an agitated character suffering from grief. All movies were produced within the last 20 years, so they are relevant to our generation and the target audience. Our goal was to give plenty of opportunities for students to attend the festival and gain an understanding of what mental illness can look like. The film festival took place February 20 through February 22 in Bemis Lawrence and February 27 through March 1 in Barnes Campbell. We focused on movies and days that would be the most appealing and convenient to our target audience. After each movie, we discussed how the movie related to one of the five signs of emotional pain. We also communicated events through on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Bemis Lawrence Hall	Barnes Campbell Hall
<i>Silver Linings Playbook</i> - February 20	<i>Fight Club</i> - February 27
<i>Inside Out</i> - February 21	<i>Babadook</i> - March 1
<i>Babadook</i> - February 22	

**Tactic 2:** As a group, we had four opportunities to showcase, present, and discuss mental health topics with students at various locations on campus. There was an open and free discussion concerning the five signs between us and students; we encouraged them to make the pledge to change direction. The form to pledge is available on the Campaign to Change Direction's website. We supplied multiple laptops for students to pledge at the event for convenience. Our goal was to get 50 students to pledge to change mental health culture. We also printed leaflets with the five signs for students to take as a reference. Our tabling events took place throughout our campaign in order to increase overall awareness of mental health issues. By setting up in the lobby of the dorms, we made ourselves approachable to students and established prevalent familiarity with our campaign. We actively participated in conversation with the students; they were free to ask questions and we gave them the proper information, and they were free to share their experiences and freely discuss mental health issues.

**Tactic 3:** We invited the WKU Counseling and Testing Center (CTC) to assist us in educating students about resources available to them on campus. We supplied infographics, brochures and cards with information about on-campus assistance for mental health issues. We partnered with the WKU CTC on February 16 in the international center lobby to kick off the campaign. We hosted another event with WKU CTC on March 9 in the lobby of Bemis Lawrence as a finale to our month-long campaign. At both events, the WKU CTC brought Star, an Aussie-Doodle therapy dog. Many students stopped to pet Star and we were able to talk to them about the services that the WKU CTC offered. We also provided candy to attract students to our table.

**Strategy 2:** Use informative material to promote awareness of the five signs of emotional pain.

**Tactic 1:** Our team placed posters of the five signs of emotional pain from the Campaign to Change Direction's website. The material showed the five faces as well as each emotion associated respectively. The posters were hung in the lobbies and on the entrance doors of Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes Campbell Hall. We also placed posters in the Honors College and International Center, Mass Media and Technology Hall, and Downing Student Union because these are popular places on campus and proximal to the dorms. The research from our focus group showed that these locations are where international students, who were a large concentration in these dorms, spend most of their time. We kept the posters up for the extent of campaign in order to effectively reach our target audience.

We utilized the mailboxes for each room in each dorm of our target audience to share information regarding the campaign. The materials included schedules for the film festival, our social media handles, and the downloadable

poster from the Campaign to Change Direction's website. This poster provides detailed information on the five signs of emotional suffering. We filled each mailbox with these materials in Bemis Lawrence and Barnes Campbell to give direct contact and materials to the residents.

**Strategy 3:** Use media platforms to interact and inform the target audience of on-campus assistance for mental health/emotional pain at WKU.

**Tactic 1:** We created Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts. The Facebook page was titled "Five Signs on the Hill," Instagram was titled @5signsonthehill and Twitter was titled @5signsonthehill. We utilized these social media accounts to encourage residents to visit the WKU CTC if they are experiencing any concerns of mental health/emotional pain. The social media posts included information on the services WKU has to offer, statistics regarding emotional health and events we hosted on campus. By using social media, we went to where students are already very active. We established ourselves as part of the conversation and made our campaign noticeable to students who actively use social media.

Twitter Impressions:	15.3 thousand
Twitter Profile Visits:	649
Instagram Impressions:	770
Instagram Profile Views:	471
Facebook Profile Overall Impressions:	114.3 thousand
Facebook Profile Total Reach:	38.7 thousand

**Tactic 2:** We reached out to local news outlets, specifically WBKO and WNKY, to cover our efforts in changing direction on mental health on WKU's campus. By using this outlet, we were able to reach more students who did not come to our tabling events across campus. Though the campus as a whole was not our targeted audience, we felt that this was a necessary way to reach students more effectively.

**Objective 1 Evaluation SUCCESS!:** To determine if our campaign was successful, we wanted an increase in percentage of respondents to answer that they strongly agreed or agreed that seeking help for mental/emotional pain would be beneficial when we reissued the survey. We measured an increase of 16 percent, which was above our goal of 10 percent.

**Objective 2 Evaluation SUCCESS!:** We measured the percent of people who answered “strongly agree” or “agree.” Our evaluation survey showed the recognition of the five signs of emotional pain increased by 5 percent, which met our goal of 5 percent. Our team was also able to collect 70 pledges to the Campaign to Change Direction, which was above our 50 pledge goal.

### **Conclusion:**

- Increased awareness on the five signs of emotional pain from 64 percent to 69 percent. In our campaign, we increased awareness among our target audience by 5 percent based on the analytics of our surveys.
- Increased recognition of seeking on-campus services for mental/emotional pain from 72 percent to 88 percent. Our target audience awareness has increased by 15 percent during our campaign.
- We used local news, specifically WBKO and WNKY networks, to bring attention to our mission, and help communicate the need to start a conversation about mental health on campus. Although all of WKU is not our target audience, we hoped that by using local news that we may reach more than just Bemis Lawrence and Barnes Campbell Halls. WKU's official facebook page shared our interview on View from the Hill with Amy DeCesare to promote what current students are doing on campus.
- Through connecting with the WKU CTC, we motivated students to become educated about the five signs of emotional suffering and handed out literature on healthy coping mechanisms.
- During the film festival, we started a conversation with students between each movie and its significant connection to mental health as well as ways to recognize the signs of emotional suffering among themselves and others.

### **Impact of the Campaign:**

We believe that our campaign impacted the students who live within Bemis Lawrence Hall and Barnes Campbell Hall. Many students did not have knowledge of the services WKU provides to help cope with various mental health illnesses. Through our campaign, we increased the awareness and helped the WKU CTC spread its mission among students and let them know that they are readily available to help those who need. Between our tabling events and handing out literature, students felt more comfortable about starting a conversation, helping others know the five signs of emotional suffering and utilizing the CTC. Our group spoke with students, let them know what our mission was and gave them the proper tools to further communicate our message. We met and got to know several students. We were successful in increasing student's knowledge of the five signs of emotional suffering by 5 percent. We were also successful in changing student's attitude about seeking assistance for mental health issues by 15 percent.