A Review of Peer Health Education Programs Delivered in University Settings

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Furman University, a small liberal arts university located in Greenville, SC has begun a strategic initiative to intentionally promote and support a campus culture of health and well-being (HWB). Faculty, staff, and students have been exploring best practices for promoting HWB across multiple dimensions (physical, mental, social, emotional, spiritual, financial). As one component of our broad-based approach to supporting HWB, we are examining the implementation, scope, and effectiveness of peer health education (PHE) models in higher education. Drawing upon social learning theory, PHE models recognize that students may perceive their peers to hold important similarities in perspective and personal experience. PURPOSE: We performed a systematic review of the published literature documenting peer health education (PHE) programs delivered in university settings.

**Rationale, Context, Purpose**

**Literature Review Methods**

**Key Takeaways and Future Opportunities for Practical Application**

- Intervention, dose, population, and results varied widely, published articles not representative of all PHE programming.
- Peer health educators (PHE)’s can receive significant benefits from serving in leadership roles (should measure PHE benefits).
- Balance PHE autonomy and faculty/staff oversight: this balance can differ by topic (STI’s vs. mental health programming).
  - Programs should balance existing institutional structure and “fresh” PHE student generated programmatic ideas.
- Opportunities exist to improve consistent, evidence-based implementation and evaluation of PHE interventions.
- Early collaboration between university programming staff and faculty experts/evaluators is essential.
  - Programming and oversight that occurs within a health and well-being “center” can leverage resources.
- Opportunities exist for further focus on promoting well-being (sexual wellness, healthy relationships, coping skills).

**Dimensions of Health and Well-Being at Furman University**

**Database(s):** PubMed, Cochrane Review, PSYCHINFO. **Keywords:** peer educ*, peer deliv*, undergrad*, “young adult”[mesh], education[subheading], and “health promotion”[mesh]. **Date Range:** 1/2005 to 2/2020. **Articles:** 2,529 identified and screened, N=59 underwent full text review. N=21 included in the final systematic review. **Analysis:** Information extracted into summary tables created by dimension of health and well-being (physical n=3, mental/emotional n=7, sexual n=11).