

Community Awareness  
Mental Health and the Pandemic  
Targeting an audience of teenagers and young adults  
50 participating members of target audience  
Irene Jayesh  
Dhillon Advano  
San Antonio HOSA Post Secondary/Collegiate (1048)  
University of Texas at San Antonio

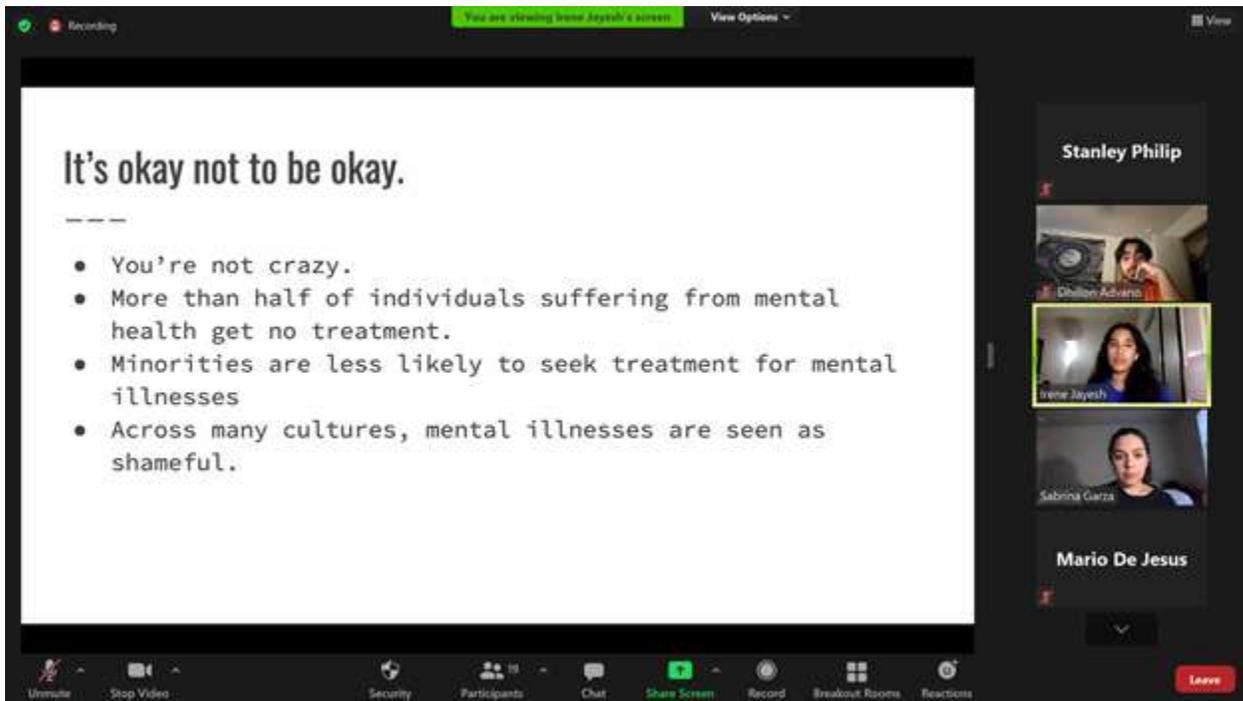
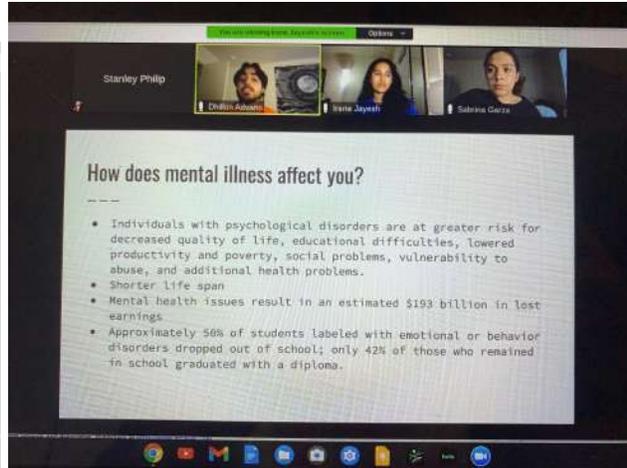
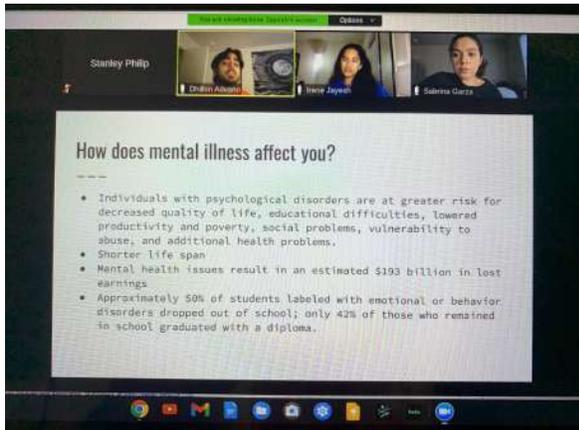
Since the beginning of the pandemic, the mental health of Americans across the country has been in decline. Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 10 adults had reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder. Today, 4 in 10 adults have been reporting symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder. Studies have shown that there have been reported increases in alcohol consumption and substance abuse, as well as increases in difficulties sleeping and eating. Many are suffering from unemployment, the loss of loved ones and homelessness, combined with the social isolation from “lockdown”, this has had devastating consequences for the mental health of individuals living in the U.S.

The pandemic has had severe consequences for the mental health of young adults, and college students in particular. One study found that 71% of college students had indicated that their stress and anxiety had increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of the rise of mental illnesses across college campuses and the country as a whole, Irene Jayesh and Dhillon Advano decided to raise awareness for mental health and mental illnesses. The Community Awareness Team, aimed to inform the community about mental health, put an end to the stigma associated with mental illness and provide mental health resources to those who need them. By virtually promoting programs and presentations across The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and the San Antonio community, the team successfully raised awareness for Mental Health. Firstly, a presentation about mental health and the pandemic was presented to the UTSA organization, Community Support Team (CST). CST is a pre-health organization aimed at helping students become certified to perform different medical tasks such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation. During the presentation, an open forum was created for participants to discuss their own struggles with mental health, ask questions about mental illness and ultimately learn more about the resources available to help them take care of their mental health. The presentation was also given to the local HOSA chapter at UTSA. Additionally, the presentation was given to several Resident Assistants across different on-campus housing communities so that they could further understand mental illness and how to support students under their supervision.

Dhillon Advano was also able to collaborate with El Bari Community Health Center, a local free clinic and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA) to help create a presentation aimed at educating the community about coping with social isolation. The presentation was then presented by doctors and psychology students from UTHSCSA.

Dhillon Advano, also created different flyers that included a wide range of resources for those struggling with mental illness and distributed them across campus. Not only this, but Irene helped to distribute different emergency hotline cards across campus so that students would have someone to talk to in times of crisis. Dhillon and Irene hope to continue informing the UTSA community about the different resources available to help individuals maintain and improve their mental health.

The pandemic has had significant consequences for the mental health of not only college students, but Americans across the country, thus it is incredibly important to raise awareness about mental illnesses and the impact they can have on one's life. The campaign launched by Dhillon and Irene was able to successfully inform the San Antonio community about the importance of mental health, the impacts of mental illness and most importantly, how to reach out and ask for support when needed.



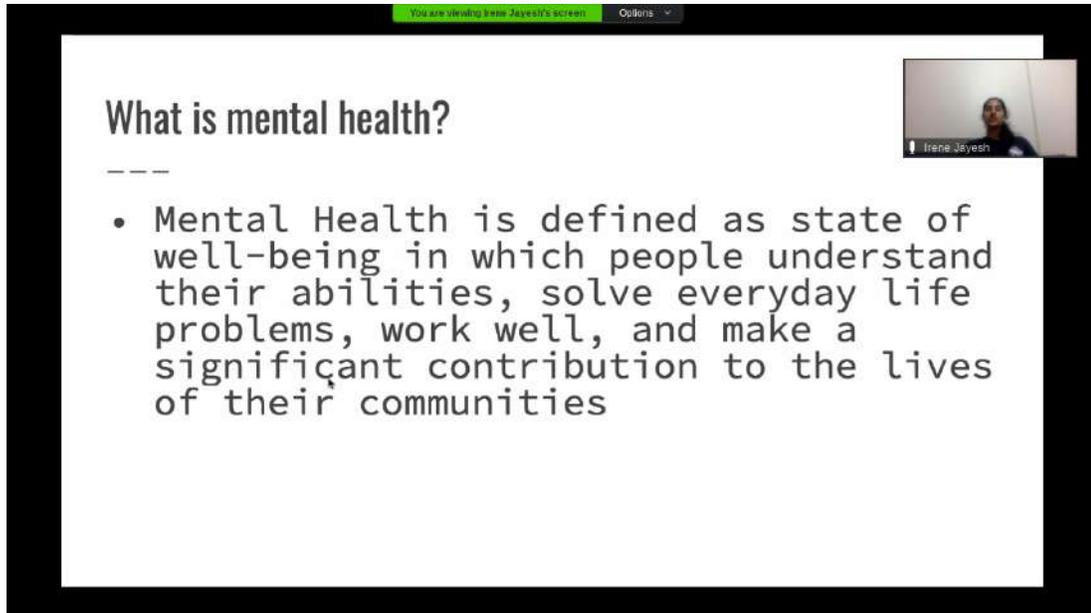
Above: Presenting to Community Support Team at UTSA about mental health awareness

You are viewing Irene Jayesh's screen Options

## What is mental health?

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- Mental Health is defined as state of well-being in which people understand their abilities, solve everyday life problems, work well, and make a significant contribution to the lives of their communities



Zoom You are viewing Irene Jayesh's screen Options

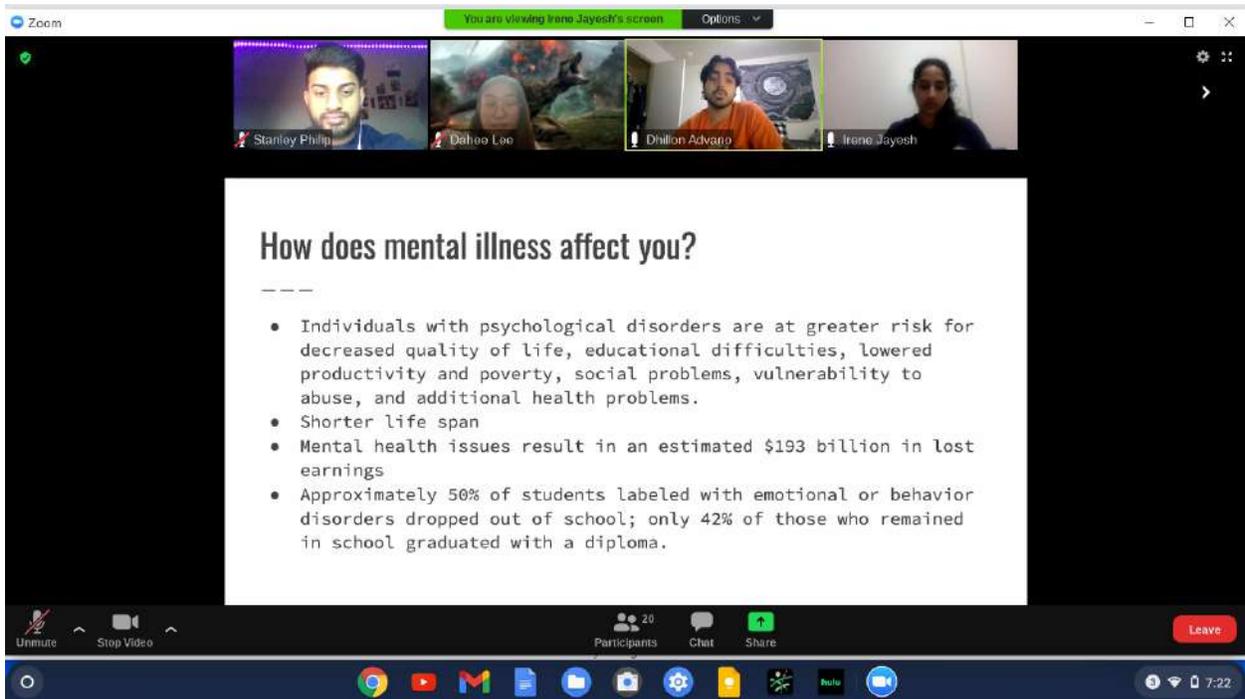
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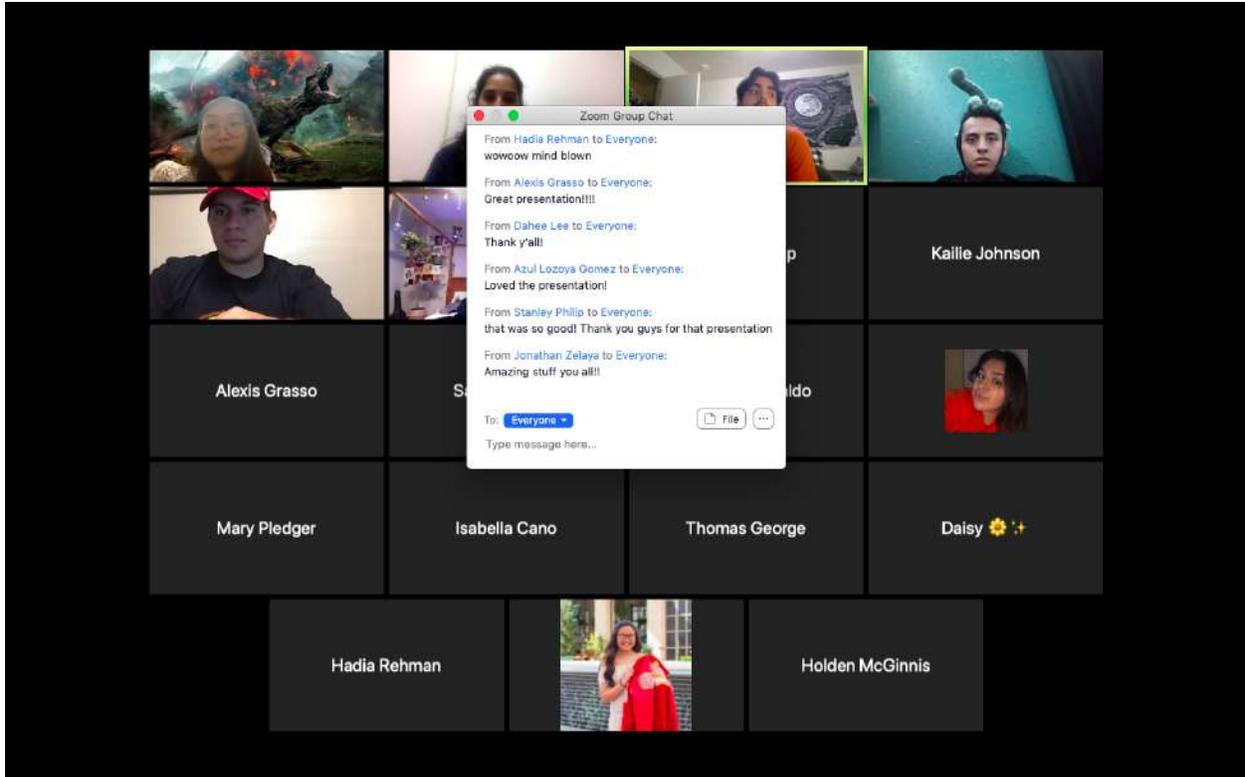
## How does mental illness affect you?

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- Individuals with psychological disorders are at greater risk for decreased quality of life, educational difficulties, lowered productivity and poverty, social problems, vulnerability to abuse, and additional health problems.
- Shorter life span
- Mental health issues result in an estimated \$193 billion in lost earnings
- Approximately 50% of students labeled with emotional or behavior disorders dropped out of school; only 42% of those who remained in school graduated with a diploma.

Unmute Stop Video Participants 20 Chat Share Leave

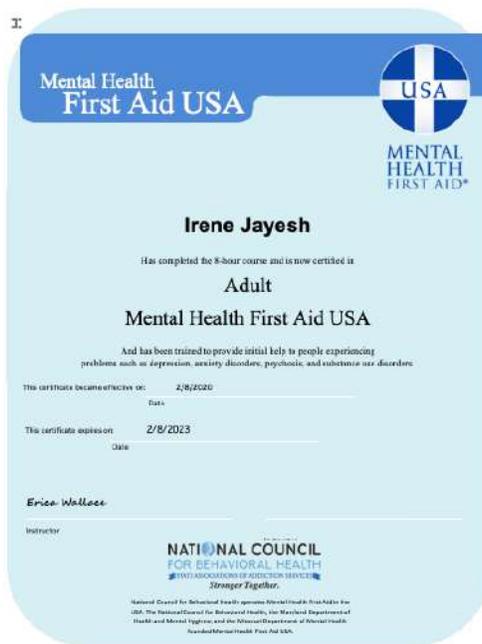




Above: Presenting to UTSA HOSA chapter about mental health followed by an open discussion



Left: Flyers with mental health resource information that was distributed on campus.



Above: Irene became certified in Mental Health First Aid last year to better understand mental health and be more knowledgeable on the topic before presenting it to our audience.

The Lifeline is **FREE**, confidential, and always available.

**HELP** a loved one, a friend, or yourself.

Community crisis centers answer Lifeline calls.



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OMHS-SVP-0126

**NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

**Learn the Warning Signs.**

### Suicide Warning Signs

These signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- ♦ Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- ♦ Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- ♦ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- ♦ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- ♦ Talking about being a burden to others.
- ♦ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- ♦ Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.
- ♦ Sleeping too little or too much.
- ♦ Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
- ♦ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- ♦ Displaying extreme mood swings.

**Suicide Is Preventable.**

**Call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).**

**With Help Comes Hope**

shown above is the suicide wallet card that was distributed to housing students on campus.

## Mental Health and the Pandemic

Dhillon Advano, Sabrina Garza, Irene Jayesh

### What is mental health?

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- Mental Health is defined as state of well-being in which people understand their abilities, solve everyday life problems, work well, and make a significant contribution to the lives of their communities

### How to seek help.

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- Suicide Prevention hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- Rape Crisis Center SA: 24/7 Call: 210-349-7273
- Primary care provider
- Licensed Psychologist/Professional Counselor
- UTSA Health Services

### Recognizing mental illness

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- Withdraw from normal activities.
- Insomnia/tired.
- Excessive fear, worry or anxiety.
- Changes in eating habits
- Distance from loved ones

### How to take care of your mental health.

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- Work Out
- Focus on a hobby
- Take deep breaths, stretch, meditate
- Journal
- Spend time with the people you love
- Take a break from social media

### It's okay not to be okay.

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- You're not crazy.
- More than half of individuals suffering from mental health get no treatment.
- Minorities are less likely to seek treatment for mental illnesses
- Across many cultures, mental illnesses are seen as shameful.

Above: Mental Health presentation slides used in CST and HOSA presentation



Above: Social Isolation Presentation Dhillon Advano collaborated with El Bari and UTHSCSA on.

## Reference

- Texas Judicial Council. (2016, October). MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS. Retrieved from <https://hogg.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/report-and-recommendations-of-tjc-mental-health-committee-final-w-cover.pdf>
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