

# ***Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and Violence: Findings from an Urban Community College and Implications for Practice***

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# Bronx Community College of the City University of New York



# Who are BCC students?

- Population: 11,500
- Gender: 58% women 42 % men
- Ethnicity: 61% Latino/Hispanic, 33% Black, non-Hispanic
- Age: 34% over 25 years old
- Socioeconomic Status: 45% household income < \$15,000
- Marital Status: 16% married or domestic partner
- Parental Obligations: 31% support children  $\leq 18$  years
- Care Provider: 60% provide care to other people 1 or more hrs/wk
- Work for pay: 45% work for pay 1 or more hrs/wk



# ACHA Data Collection

- Spring 2012 semester
- Randomized class sections from MTH 05, ART 11 and MUS 11
- 58 classes surveyed (85 contacted, 68% response rate)
- 1062 students participated (1363 recruited, 78% response rate)
- Trained research assistants collected data from individual classes



# BCC vs. National Reference Group

## Spring 2012

### BCC

n= 1,081

Average age = 24.12

Sex = 50.8% female  
27.6% male

Race/Ethnicity

52.5% Hispanic/Latino  
19.7% black/African  
American  
4.3% white

### National

N= 90,666

Average age = 22.59

Sex = 64.2% female  
33.5% male

Race/Ethnicity

8.4%% Hispanic/Latino  
6.4% black/African  
American  
72.6% white

# Health Behaviors

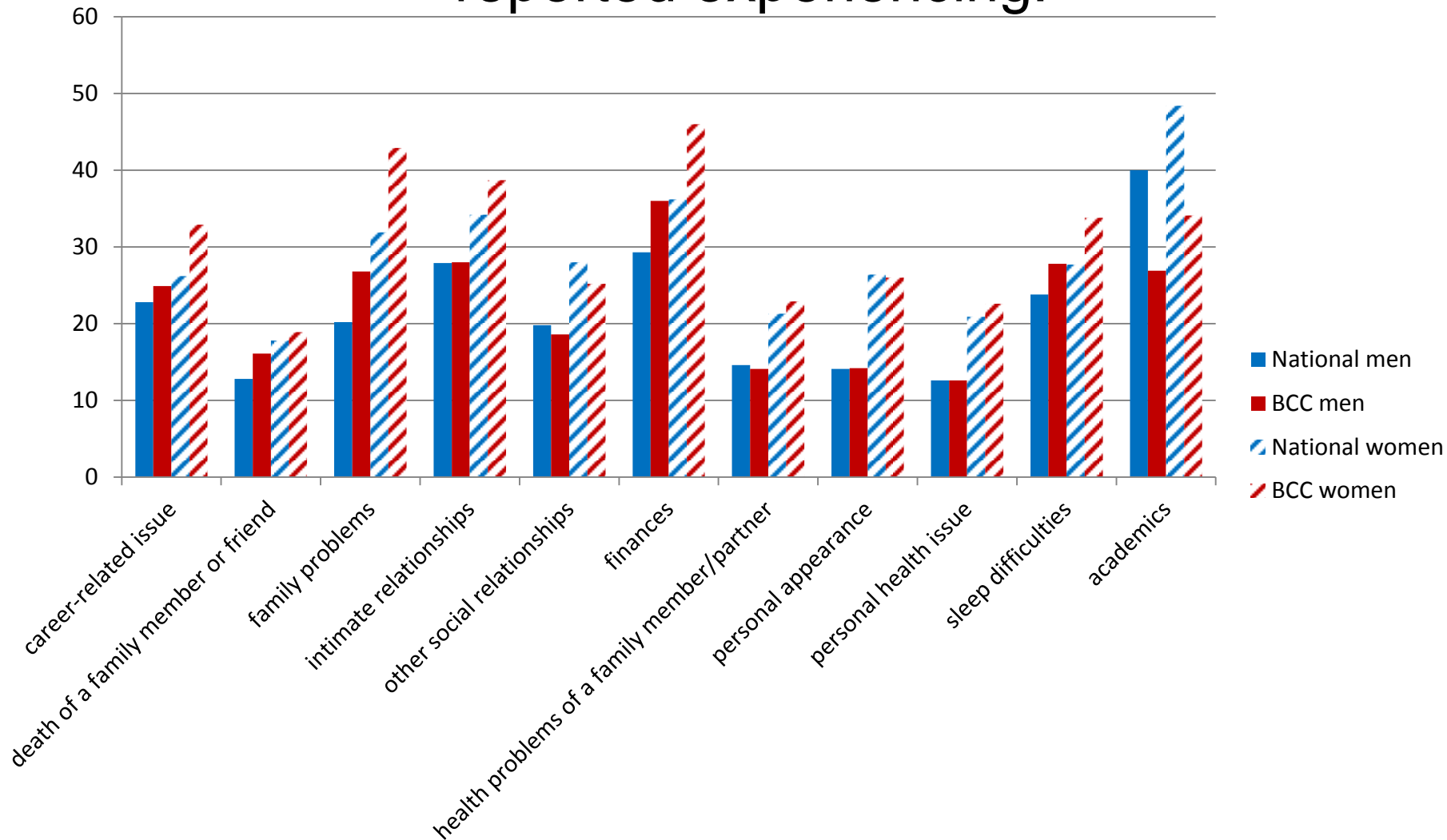
- 36% of females reported **using condom or other protective barrier** within last 30 days during vaginal intercourse compared with 49% nationally.
- 9 times as likely to experience **unplanned pregnancy** compared to national reference group.
- 33% of females and 49% of males meet **national fitness guidelines**.
- 3 times as many students reported eating **no servings of fruits and vegetables** each day compared to national reference group.
- 50% of females and males consider themselves **overweight**.
- 63% have **tested for HIV** compared to 27% nationally.



# Trauma, Violence, Mental Health Symptoms and Stress

# Trauma or Difficulties

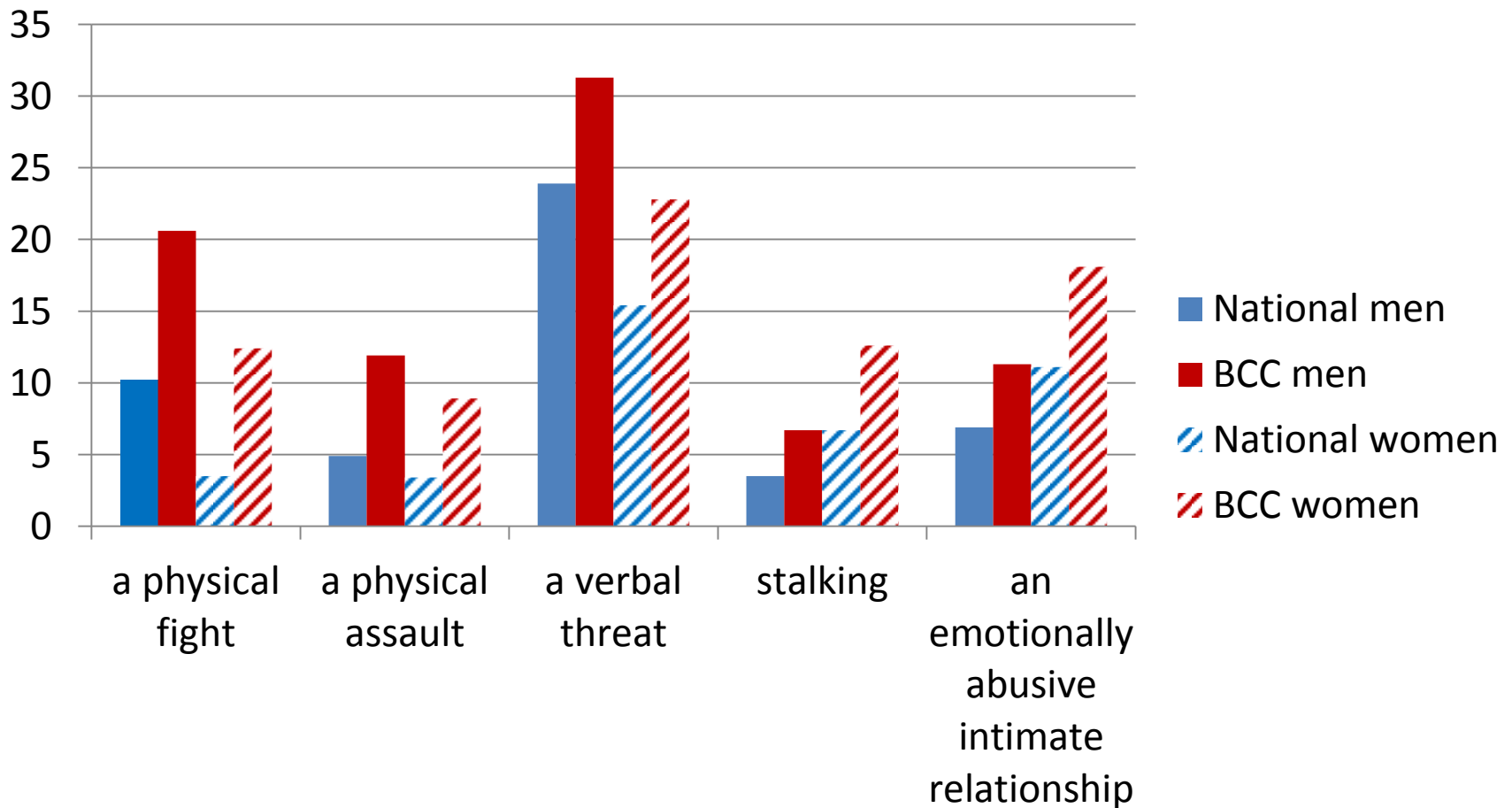
Within the last 12 months, college students reported experiencing:





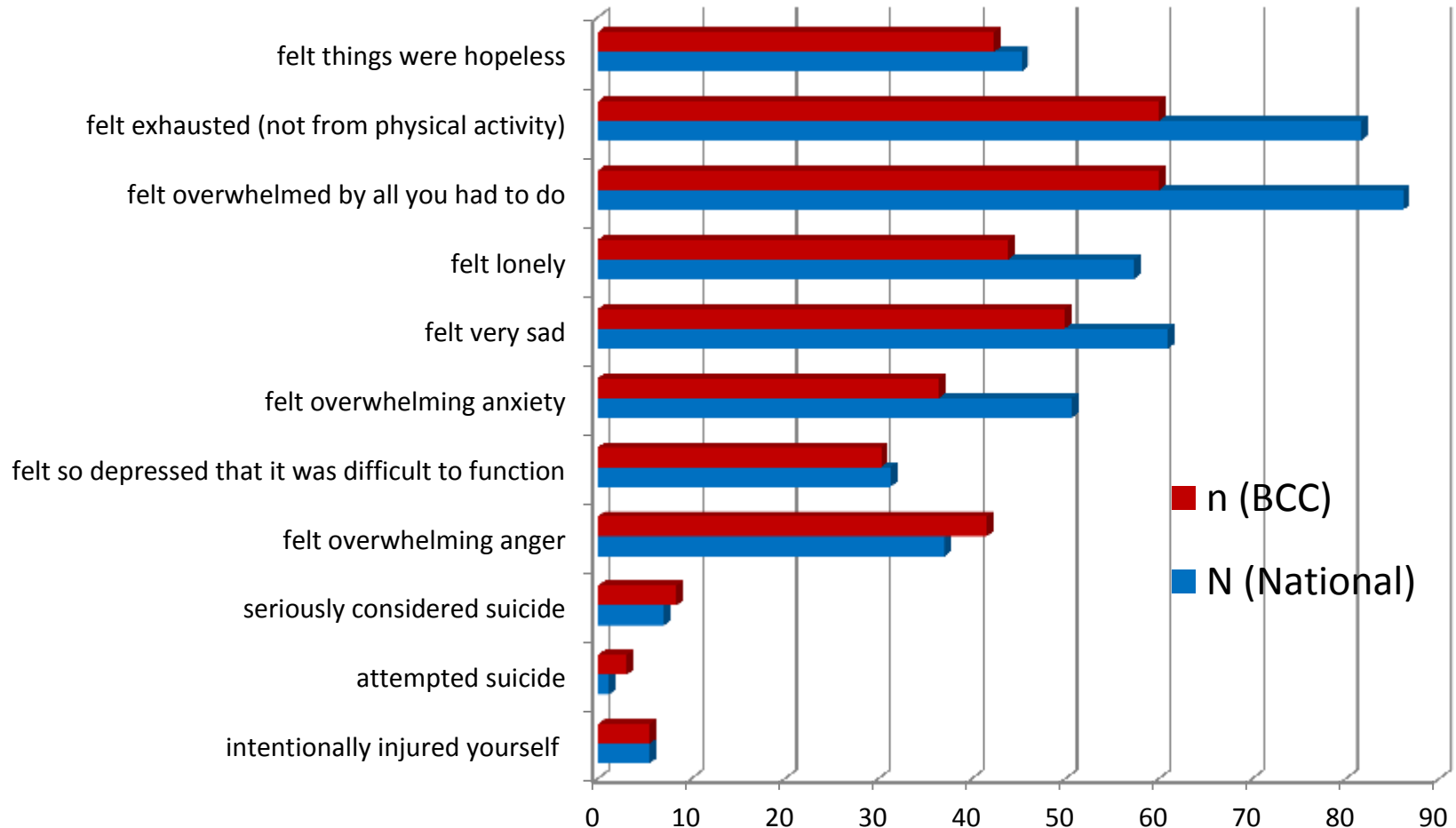
# Violence

Within the last 12 months, college students reported experiencing:



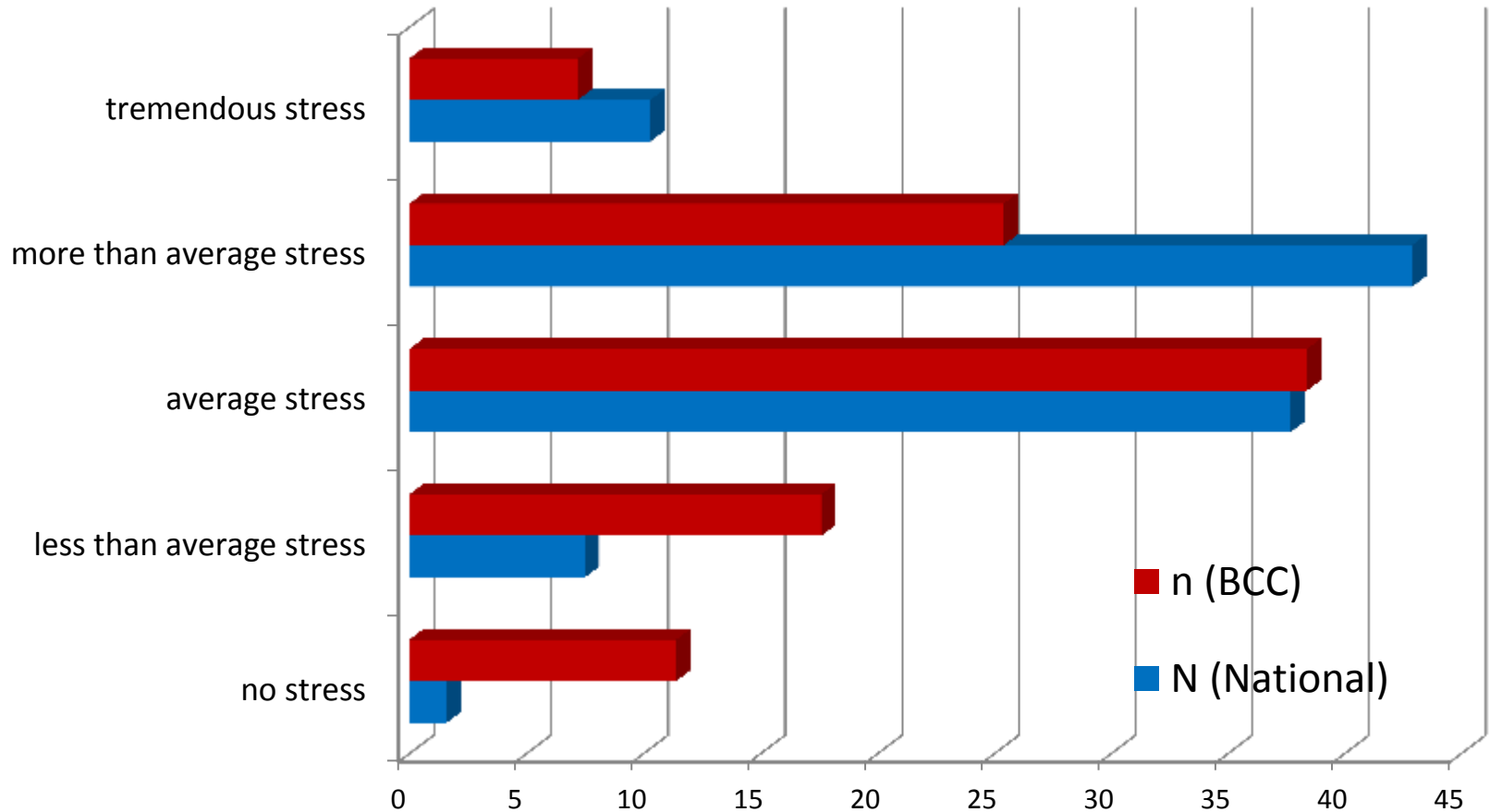
# Mental Health

Students reported experiencing the following within the last 12 months:



# Stress

Within the last 12 months how would you rate the overall level of stress experienced?



# Fishing Expedition



## Exploratory Analysis of Data:

- Chi-square calculations of associations between independent variables and dependent variables.
- Independent variables: gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship status, enrollment status (full-time/part-time).
- Dependent variables: stress, mental health symptoms, violence.

# Stress

(no stress, some stress, high stress)

Independent Variables	Stress – statistically significant associations
Gender	Females higher (36% vs. 26% males)
Age	No differences
Race	Bi-racial/multiracial most likely to report high stress (59%)
Ethnicity	No differences
Relationship status	No differences
Full-time/part-time student	No differences

# Mental Health Symptoms

- Hopeless
- Overwhelmed
- Exhausted
- Sad
- Depressed
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Injured self
- Considered suicide
- Attempted suicide



# Mental Health Symptoms

Independent Variables	Statistically significant associations
Gender	<u>Females</u> : hopeless, overwhelmed, exhausted, lonely, sad, depressed and anxiety
Age	<u>Ages 18-20</u> : injured self, considered suicide <u>Ages 21-24</u> : hopeless, lonely, depressed, anxiety, anger, injured self, considered suicide
Race	<u>Bi-racial/mulitracial</u> : considered suicide
Ethnicity	No differences
Relationship status	<u>Not in a relationship</u> : anger, considered suicide, depressed, lonely, sad
Full-time/part-time student	No differences

# Violence Variables

In the last 12 months experienced:

- Physical fight
- Physically assaulted
- Verbally assaulted
- Sexually touched without consent
- Sexual penetration without consent
- Victim of stalking
- Emotionally abusive relationship
- Physically abusive relationship
- Sexually abusive relationship

# Violence

Independent Variables	Statistically significant associations
Gender	<p><u>Males</u>: physical fight, physically assaulted, verbally threatened</p> <p><u>Females</u>: sexual penetration attempted without consent, victim of stalking, emotionally abusive relationship, physically abusive relationship, sexually abusive relationship</p>
Age	<p><u>Ages 21-24</u>: verbally threatened, victim of stalking, emotionally abusive relationship, physically abusive relationship</p>
Race	No differences
Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic: physically assaulted
Relationship status	No differences
Full-time/part-time student	<p><u>Part-time student</u>: sexually touched without consent, sexual penetration attempted without consent, sexual penetration without consent</p>

**Why** do students report low levels  
of stress and other mental health  
indicators for anxiety and  
depression ?



# Hypotheses

1. Stress and mental health symptoms may be manifest as physical health symptoms rather than perceived as a mental health problem.
2. The perception of stress and mental health may be different in BCC students due to culture.
3. Mental health symptoms may be under-reported due to cultural prohibitions.
4. There may be protective effects or resilience related to school or culture that serves to reduce levels of stress and mental health symptoms.

# Violence, Stress, and Somatic Syndrome

- Studies have show a connection between women's health problems and DV in such conditions as Stress Related Somatic Syndrome characterized by pain, fatigue, mood disorder, cognitive dysfunction, and sleep disturbance.
- These syndromes include but are not limited to fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, temporomandibular disorder, and irritable bowel syndrome.
- Exposure to the stressor of violence is likely to create a state of vulnerability for the stress-related somatic syndromes and also to contribute to symptom expression and severity.
- Understanding the relationship between violence, stress, and somatic syndromes will help in clarifying the consequences of violence exposure to long-term health and health-related quality of life.
- Crofford, L.J ( 2007) Violence, Stress, and Somatic Syndromes. Trauma Violence Abuse. 2007 Jul;8(3):299-313.
- Jordan, C.E ( 2007) The Health Implications Of Violence Against Women: Untangling the Complexities of Acute and Chronic Effects: A Two-Part Special Issue. Trauma Violence Abuse. 2007 Jul;8(3):243



# Depression, Anxiety and Allergies

- The research into allergies and depression anxiety, clearly demonstrates another of the many physical causes of depression anxiety, and backs up the thesis that depression anxiety is a physical condition which affects the body, brain, mood and behavior.
- Besides allergies, other physical causes of depression anxiety include antibiotics, alcohol, junk food, and pollution.

# Allergens

- Allergens enter your body and bloodstream triggering an inflammatory immune histamine response, which in turn releases cytokines that can enter the brain and cause inflammation, leading to depression and anxiety.
- Allergies indirectly cause depression and anxiety.
- **Impact of allergy treatment on the association between allergies and mood and anxiety in a population sample.**
- [Goodwin RD, Galea S, Perzanowski M, Jacobi F.](#)
- **Source**
- Department of Psychology, Queens College, City University of New York (CUNY), Flushing, NY, USA.  
rdg66@columbia.ed

# Percentage of Respondents Who Reported Physical Health Symptom by Each Mental Health Symptom (N = 1081)

	Allergies	Asthma	Back pain	Migraines
Hopeless	25.6%*	13.7%	21.2%**	14.9%***
Overwhelmed	26.6%***	13.3%	20.7%***	13.9%***
Exhausted	26.3%***	14.0%**	21.9%***	13.8%***
Lonely	25.0%*	13.4%	21.6%**	15.6%***
Sad	25.0%*	13.9%*	22.0%***	15.7%***
Depressed	25.5%*	12.2%	24.3%***	16.5%***
Anxiety	27.5%**	15.9%**	24.0%***	15.9%***
Anger	26.3%**	13.9%	22.1%**	14.7%**
Intentional injury	25.5%	23.9%*	31.1%*	19.6%*
Considered suicide	17.9%	10.4%	22.4%	15.6%
Attempted suicide	33.3%	20.8%	29.2%	17.4%

\* p value < .05

\*\* p value < .01

\*\*\*p value <.001

# Implications & Recommendations

- Domestic Violence is a serious public health issue that occurs within the context of a family, or in other situations such as dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- DV requires a comprehensive understanding and interventions.

# Implications ...

- Increasing education and awareness –
  - Identifying Warning signs in dating relationships that may lead to later violence.
  - Increase understanding of the health consequences of DV.
  - Address many of our students view about violence against women.
- Some students believe DV is mainly physical – Not aware of emotional, mental, and other forms of abuse.
- Others believe the emotional abuse more serious than the physical abuse.

# Implications...

- Encourage young adults to build relationship based on trust.
- Encourage them to avoid relationships that confuse “love” with power, control and jealousy.
- Increase awareness with educational posters.
- Provide resource brochure that list services available on and off camps with a “plan for quick escape”.



# Implications ...

- Screen for IPV
  - Titanium Schedule – Data Base web based intake CCAPS measures college assessment of psychological symptoms –depression, hostility and sleep disturbance screen for IPV.
  - Decided – Screen for IPV at every intake.
  - Searched for short IPV screening and we HITS (Hurts/Insults/Threatens/Screams.)
  - [http://www.orchd.com/violence/documents/HITS\\_eng.pdf](http://www.orchd.com/violence/documents/HITS_eng.pdf)

# Implications...

- Awareness and Education via creative methods
  - Psycho-educational Workshops
    - Community Resources – Majors Office
    - Multi-cultural Resources – inviting to college
    - Drama Club – skits on DV from a diverse perspective
  - Digital Story Telling and DV (Silence Speaks)
  - The Dream Table – reaching all student and increasing awareness on many issue – DV was the issue this week.

# Implications ...

- Stress Reduction, Self esteem and Emotion Regulation – Via groups and workshops using DBT strategies, Mindfulness and Acceptance Based workshops
  - Mindfulness (to facilitate attention control, reduce judgments toward the self and others, and to build self-awareness and self-management skills);
  - Interpersonal effectiveness (to help reduce chaos and invalidation and build social support);
  - Emotion regulation (to reduce emotional vulnerability, reactivity, and misery, and to facilitate emotion modulation and self-management);
  - Distress tolerance (to interrupt negative emotion escalation and urges to engage in out-of-control behavior, and to “accept” things in life that are very undesirable but unchangeable).
- <http://www.newharbinger.com/news/dialectical-behavior-therapy-college-students>
- ACT – for Depression Workshop

# Mindfulness and Acceptance

## MINDFULNESS & ACCEPTANCE FOR COUNSELING COLLEGE STUDENTS



Theory and Practical Applications for  
Intervention, Prevention & Outreach

- In Mindfulness and Acceptance for Counseling College Students, clinical researcher Jacqueline Pistorello explores how mindfulness and acceptance-based approaches such as acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT), mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) are being utilized in higher education settings around the world to treat student mental health problems like severe depression, substance abuse, and eating disorders, and/or to help students thrive both in and out of the classroom.

# References

- Crofford, L.J ( 2007) Violence, Stress, and Somatic Syndromes. *Trauma Violence Abuse*. 2007 Jul;8(3):299-313.
- Jordan, C.E ( 2007) The Health Implications Of Violence Against Women: Untangling the Complexities of Acute and Chronic Effects: A Two-Part Special Issue. *Trauma Violence Abuse*. Jul;8(3):243-253.
- Goodwin, R.D., Galea, S., Perzanowski, M., Jacobi, F. (2012) Impact of allergy treatment on the association between allergies and mood and anxiety in a population sample. *Clinical & Experimental Allergy*, Dec. 42(12): 1765-1771.

# Brandy





# Duke, Kingston, Suki

