



Research Paper

## Essential Actions for the Promotion of Mental Health in University Students: A Public Health Challenge

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Currently higher education students are experiencing academic, socioeconomic, and technological health challenges. This is since the Covid-19 pandemic has reconfigured the teaching-learning systems in the international context. In such a way, that the product of this adaptation leads to emotional instability that represents a risk in the academic performance of students. In this sense, Higher Education Institutions assume an important role in the search for alternatives to face these challenges. That is why the purpose of this writing is to describe the guidelines for the care of the mental health of students, based on a basic protocol that integrates the essential actions from a health promotion approach.

Health promotion is defined by the WHO<sup>1</sup> as that accumulation of strategies that allows the population to have control of their own health. On the other hand, Muñoz refers that mental health is integrated by the correct balance between the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being of the individual<sup>2</sup>. However, the lack of training in virtual platforms, the disorganization in the planning of academic activities and the accumulation of theoretical and practical knowledge for the accreditation of learning, lead students to express their apathy and sensitivity to these new challenges that it brings. Learning from home and in front of a computer for more than 8 hours a day. Consequently, clinical manifestations such as headache, postural pain, eye fatigue, weight gain, stress and anxiety begin to be experienced.

That said, a series of essential actions are proposed for mental health self-care in university students:

- **Student assessment through tutorial action:** this will allow identifying risk factors from a person-centered perspective.
- **Identification of mental health disorders:** it is essential to know if the student already has a history of mental illness and if they have been increasing because of stress and anxiety.
- **Integration of the socio-sanitary diagnosis:** it is an optimal section to establish the health and social needs of each of the students.
- **Design of an action plan to promote collective mental health:** provide students with the necessary tools and information. As well as the organization of mutual aid groups, to reduce the risk of stress and anxiety that develop depression.
- **Evaluate the action plan:** know if the implementation of these essential actions has contributed to improving academic performance as well as eliminating the psychosocial risk factors of each student.

Finally, the implementation of this action plan regarding health promotion not only represents a benefit for students. But also, for teachers and family members who promote the adequate mental health of young people in university training.

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