

Objective: Health professional students are at higher risk of mental health problems than the general population. Despite this, only a small percentage of students report they would seek professional help for a serious emotional problem. We implemented a small-scale, cost effective, peer-led panel for health professional students to share their stories of mental health problems and issues of stigma. The present study aimed to evaluate the short and long-term effects of the Anti-Stigma Mental Health Panel on health professional student panel attendees.

Methods: Thirty participants provided postcard consent to participate in the study. The outcome measure included eight questions that assessed participants' knowledge, attitudes and intended behaviors immediately preceding and following the panel, in addition to a six-month survey. The investigators performed three Wilcoxon signed rank tests between pre and post-intervention, post-intervention and 6-month follow-up, and pre-intervention and 6-month follow-up.

Results: There was a significant difference between pre and post-survey responses for one knowledge, one attitude, and two intended behavior measures. There were no significant differences between post-test and 6-month follow-up measure responses.

Conclusion: Investigators developed a brief, peer-led, inter-professional, and cost-effective method that reduced self-stigma among health professional students on a medical campus. A toolkit to replicate the panel and study can found on the Department of Psychiatry's webpage.