



**OBTC 2017 at Providence College
June 14th – 17th, 2017**

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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Submission Template for the 2017 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators

1) Title, Abstract & Keywords

In your abstract, please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words), and three to four keywords. If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.

Title: Supporting College Students with Emotional Illnesses: A Discussion for Management Educators

Abstract:

Not only are anxiety and depression two of the most prevalent mental health disorders in the United States, they are particularly common among college students (Falsafi, 2016). Reports of college student anxiety, depression, and emotional distress have been on the rise (Holterman, 2016). The stressors students face are evolving in alignment with changes in early child education and the broader dynamic work environment. Despite these changes, research in this area is sparse, and management educators typically do not receive any specialized training. The purpose of this session is to bring management educators together to discuss ways to help students (and each other) navigate this critical crisis of our times.

Keywords: Anxiety, depression, emotional distress, classroom management, instructor strategies

2) Teaching Implications:

What is the contribution of your session to management pedagogy/andragogy? Specifically, please include your learning objectives, and describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Also, include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.

Higher education is facing a mental health crisis and many management educators are unprepared to manage these challenges in the classroom. Stressors common during this transitional period include social isolation, difficulty balancing extracurricular activities with academic demands, challenging employer expectations, international and new culture exposures, job and internship searches, financial concerns, and romantic breakups. How well students perform depends in part, on their motivation. Because motivation is influenced by mood and overall emotional well-being, the implications that emotional illnesses have on the college student's ability to perform well in the various aspects of college life are far reaching. In addition, we know very little about individual difference and contextual variables which may play a role in when and how emotional illness plays out in the classroom environment. Therefore, understanding the

management educator's role as well as effective classroom management strategies with respect to this critical and evolving topic is of utmost importance. In particular, educators must find a way to balance student support with issues of privacy, fairness, and rigor in the classroom. They must also be aware of how students may be triggered in the classroom environment, and what this means for classroom management. Further, while the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) amended in 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) requires colleges and universities to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, these accommodations are typically narrowly focused and administered by the associated office for students with disabilities (e.g., extended test-taking time, instructor notes, etc.) rather than provided as strategies for instructors to utilize to manage the classroom. In addition, not all students report mental health challenges and/or do not receive accommodations. Furthermore, while the prevalence of anxiety, depression, and emotional distress is on the rise in college student reporting, little to no research exists to help management educators help students navigate these difficult and evolving challenges in the modern classroom while still preparing students to navigate the increasingly challenging demands of today's dynamic work environment.

3) Session Description and Plan:

What will you actually do in this session? If appropriate, please include a timeline estimating the activities will you facilitate: how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Please remember that reviewers will be evaluating how well the time request matches the activities you'd like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session's goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session.

This will be a 60 minute round-table discussion session. We will begin with a five minute introduction describing the current landscape of emotional illness in college students and management education based on our preliminary literature review. The majority of the session will be discussion based and we will present a number of questions to the audience to initiate dialogue. We will conclude with a five minute overview of the main points and potential next steps for management educators and researchers in the field.

While we have conducted a preliminary literature review on this important topic, we have not completed a study or written a formal paper at this time. Our review of the literature indicated that very little research in this area exists. Therefore, it is imperative that management educators begin a dialogue to generate research ideas and effective practical strategies for classroom management. We see OBTC as a wonderful opportunity to delve into this topic and hear from our peers in order to propel the field of management education forward with respect to the evolving landscape of college student emotional well-being.

Our specific questions for dialogue include:

1. How do we, as management educators, set high but reasonable expectations in the classroom while supporting students whose anxiety, depression and emotional distress may be triggered by such expectations?
2. How do we provide students support while balancing the issue of grade inflation?
3. How do we avoid common anxiety, depression, and emotional distress triggers?
4. How do we meet the course learning objectives and prepare students for the workplace when this may lead to increased anxiety, etc.?
5. How do address perceptions of fairness and justice?
6. How do we provide psychological safety to our students?
7. What is the management educator's role in responding to the challenges of emotional illness in college students?
8. What training do management educators need to help students navigate the challenges of emotional illness in the classroom, as well as in the workplace?
9. What important differences, if any, exist, with respect to online versus traditional classroom environments with respect to this topic?
10. How do we ensure we are not taken advantage of, as concerned management educators, when we seek to provide support? What screening may be involved and how do we deal with student privacy issues?

4) Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *Navigating the Changing Currents*?

Our session addresses the implications of the increase in anxiety, depression and emotional distress reported by college students. It recognizes that the stressors students face are evolving in alignment with changes in early childhood education and the broader dynamic work environment. Despite these changes, research in this area is sparse, and management educators typically do not receive any specialized training. The purpose of this session is to bring management educators together to discuss ways to help students (and each other) navigate this critical crisis of our times.

5) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?

We have not presented this topic previously and we do not have a proposal under review somewhere else. Our preliminary literature review found little to no relevant research in this area with respect to the college student population. We hope the session

will generate interest in this extremely important and relevant topic in order to move the field forward.

References

Falsafi, N. (2016). A randomized controlled trial of mindfulness versus yoga: Effects on depression and/or anxiety in college students. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 22(6), 483-497.

Holterman, A. (2016). Mental health problems for college students are increasing. Healthline News. Retrieved from <http://www.healthline.com/health-news/mental-health-problems-for-college-students-are-increasing-071715#1>