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Checking In! A Mental Health Podcast

76% of Americans think mental health is just as important as physical health. 56% of young adults, during the pandemic, report symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder. Also, 46% of Americans would not know where to go to seek mental health services. With Covid-19 pandemic and isolation created a new experience for students where we have more isolation, more online learning, stress, anxiety, and depression which resulted in more issues with mental health.

I am creating the podcast to share student experiences dealing with mental health struggles following the COVID-19 pandemic and share resources available on campus and online. My media will be a podcast with two episodes. The episodes will cover an interview with Mental Health Counselor from UT and a conversation with UT undergrad telling their experience and mental health struggles. More episodes will focus on anxiety and depression.

The target audience for this media project is undergraduate students (Gen Z) of UT who during COVID-19 pandemic have suffered from mental health struggles. In my audience research it was obvious that “Gen Z faces chronic stress from many factors including school shootings, student debt, joblessness and even politics.” Additionally, “Gen Z were more likely to report their mental health as fair or poor (27%) compared to their older counterpart generations, namely Millennials (15%) and Gen X (13%).” “58% of Gen Z reported 2 or more unmet social needs, compared with 16% of people from older generations.”

My audience persona would be Maya Student. She is an undergrad student at UT who is struggling financially and feels lonely and depressed most days due to stress from work, school and financial responsibilities. She is 20 years old and an introvert. She wants to graduate with honors, pay off her student debt, and get a well-paying job in the city. She struggles with mental health and lack of education around it due to stigma. Her preferred way of consuming media would be through social media. She follows her favorite influencers, brands, and bloggers online such as Emma Chamberlain, Sephora, and Patrick Starr.

In my research for this project through competitor analysis I found 2 podcasts run by students with similar objectives and target audiences. For example, Students of Mind A Mental Health Podcast and Hear Me Out U of SC Student Health Services podcasts. Hear Me Out Podcast with its target audience as University of South Carolina students. They have a social media presence on Twitter, Instagram, Spotify, and Apple Podcast. The most noticeable is on Instagram with 280 posts and 974 followers. On the other hand, Students of Mind podcast has the target audience is Gen Z. Similarly, they outreach through social media through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Spotify. Most specifically, on Instagram they have 96 posts and 254 followers. Something I noticed about this podcast is that it does not have a specific target audience like Hear Me Out podcast.

In my project, I would like to reach 100 followers from UT students on Instagram in 3 months. My strategy would be to create an educational podcast targeting undergraduate students. I would create a podcast series with one episode interviewing an undergraduate student who shares mental health journey as a student at UT and another

episode interviewing with Mental Health Counselor at Dickey Health Center who shares tips and resources for University of Tampa students. The podcast will be advertised on Instagram and posted on Spotify. The total cost of the project will be around \$1500. The budget will cover equipment for recording.

Evaluating my research will be through Instagram KPIs which will be measured monthly. I will use reach growth rate, follower growth rate, engagement rate, number of impressions, and number of comments.

I am grateful for my experience at UT in the MASEM program and the help of my professors and classmates. I learned about producing, editing, creating, and researching for such an amazing project of this capacity. My professors and classmates helped boost my confidence in my skills and taught me more about the creative process.

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