

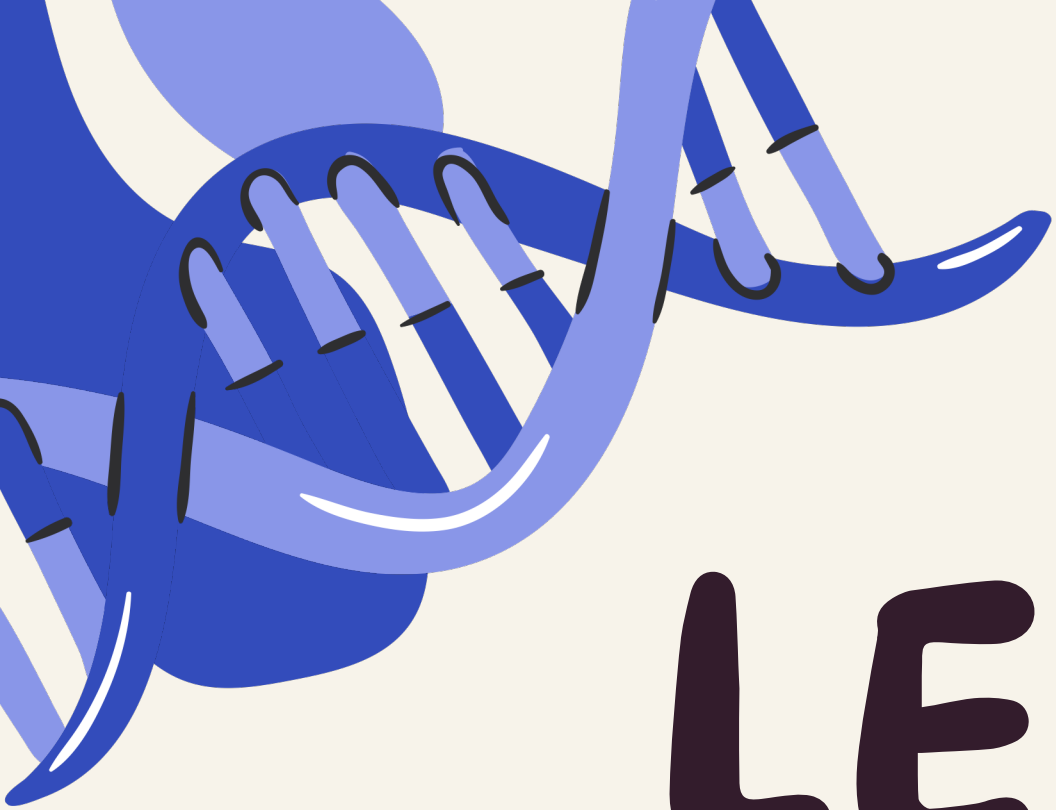


HSTEM
Being Human in STEM

LET'S EXPRESS OUR STRESS!

**SCI 3900/HONOR 3990
BEING A HUMAN IN STEM**

University of Utah | Spring 2024



INTRODUCTIONS



Maren (*she/her*)
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING, 2026



Alayna (*she/her*)
BIOLOGY, 2025



Marynn (*she/her*)
UNDECIDED, 2027



Bailey (*he/him*)
BIOLOGY, 2024



Elizabeth (*she/her*)
CHEMICAL ENGINEERING, 2027

Being a student is hard!

- The college “experience”
 - Discovery, novelty, growth
 - Academic and financial struggles
- The experience in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)
 - Rigorous coursework
 - Competitive culture
- The mental health culture in STEM
 - “It’s supposed to be hard”
 - Discourages proper mental health hygiene
- What needs to change?

Students Struggle

- College students are more likely to be depressed and anxious than the average adult
 - *"College students are often viewed as a privileged population, but they are not immune to the suffering and disability associated with mental illness"*
 - *"41% of students showing signs of anxiety and 39% moderate to severe depression"*

STEM Students Struggle

- STEM students are more likely to be depressed than other college students
 - Students in STEM majors are a distinctive group of college students who face unique risks for developing mental health issues

STEM students aren't talking about it

- STEM students are less likely to seek mental health support when they are struggling
 - *“When compared to their non-STEM counterparts, STEM students are less likely to recognize warning signs of mental distress, and they access mental health support services at lower rates than their peers”*

What We Did

Goal: Get people talking!

- Hold events during the semester aimed at increasing mental health dialogue between STEM students
- Conduct a survey to assess the mental health climate on our campus

Another Motivation

- Gabe Brown spoke to our class
 - Introduced us to some helpful anxiety tips
 - Shared some statistics across campus about mental health



Gabe Brown, Social Work Intern
University Counseling Center

Just Dance It Out!

- Fun environment for students to dance out their stress
- Warhead test anxiety strategy



Warheads

To Help STRESS?!

Have you ever felt so
overwhelmed you can't think?

They have helped me!

The sour takes your mind off
your stressors and helps you
ground yourself.

**Take One
and
Just Dance!**



Just Dance It Out: Takeaways

What went well:

- Students said they felt less stressed after dancing
- Students connected
- New test anxiety strategy

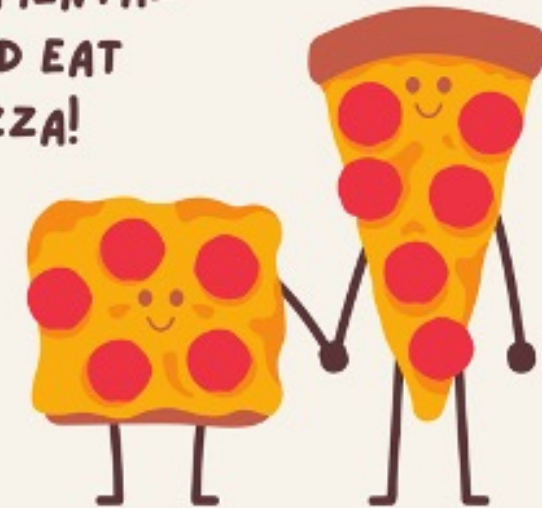
What we learned:

- Better advertisement
- Room location is important
- Dancing can be intimidating!

Pizza & Personal Health

- Free pizza
- Opportunity for students to discuss their mental health with each other
- Mental health survey

TALK ABOUT MENTAL
HEALTH AND EAT
SOME PIZZA!



PIZZA AND
PERSONAL HEALTH

APRIL 11TH @ 12-2PM

CROCKER SCIENCE CENTER ROOM #108

HOSTED BY STUDENTS IN HUMAN IN STEM

Pizza & Personal Health: Takeaways

What went well:

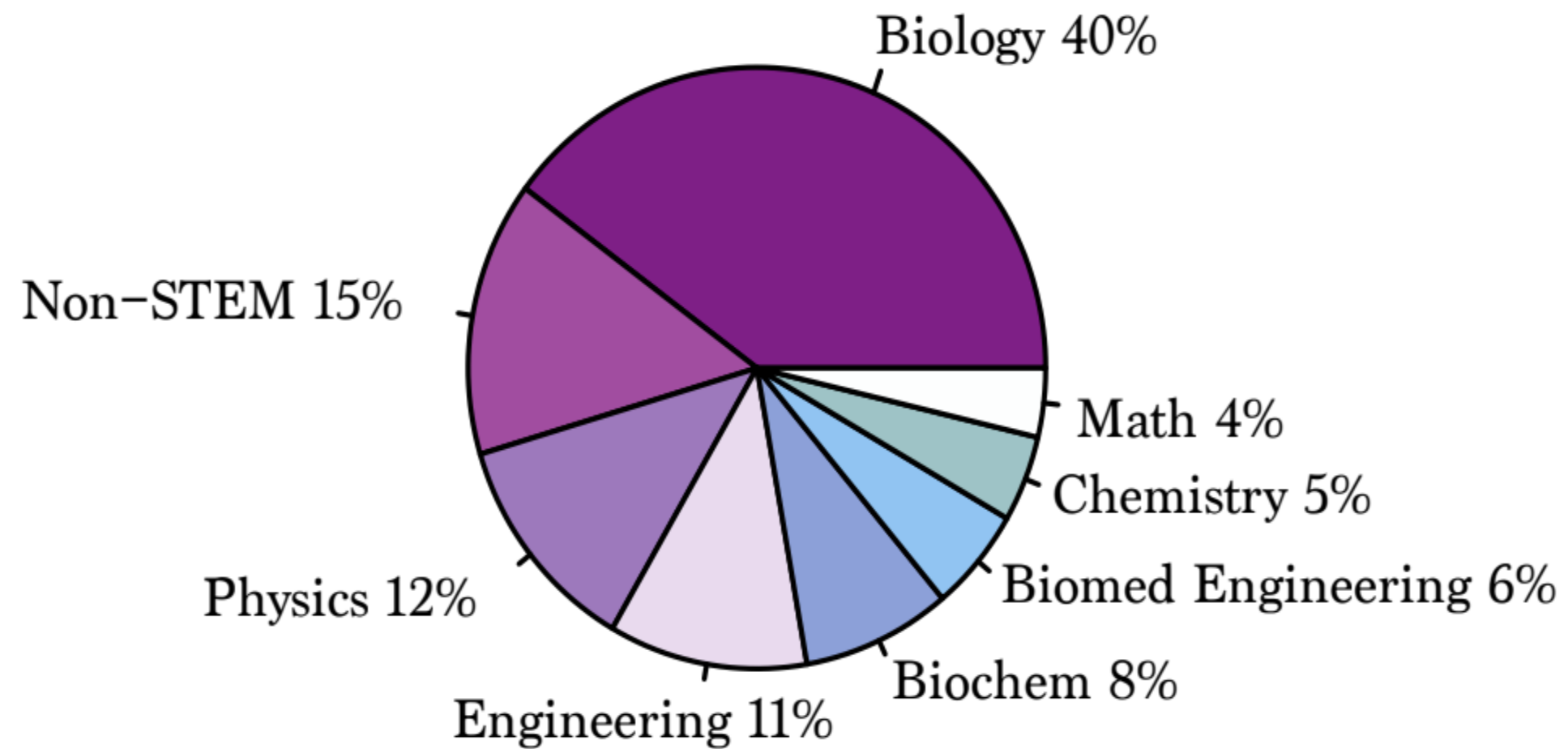
- Pizza!
- Lots of student engagement
- Students felt supported by their peers
- Data collection via survey

What was lacking:

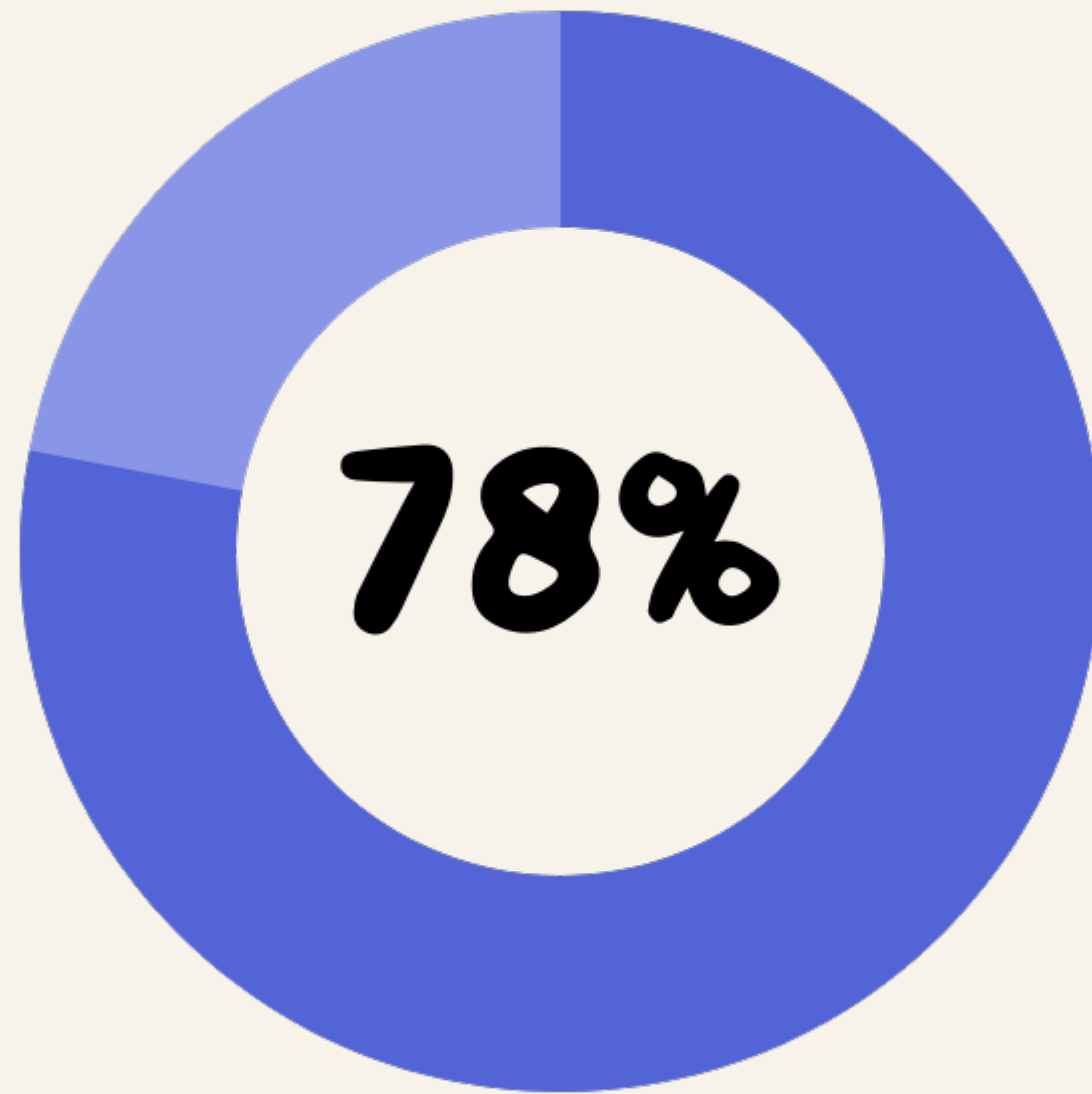
- Engagement/support from experts
- Hesitancy for students to engage in discussion

Survey Results

103 total respondents
Responses by Major

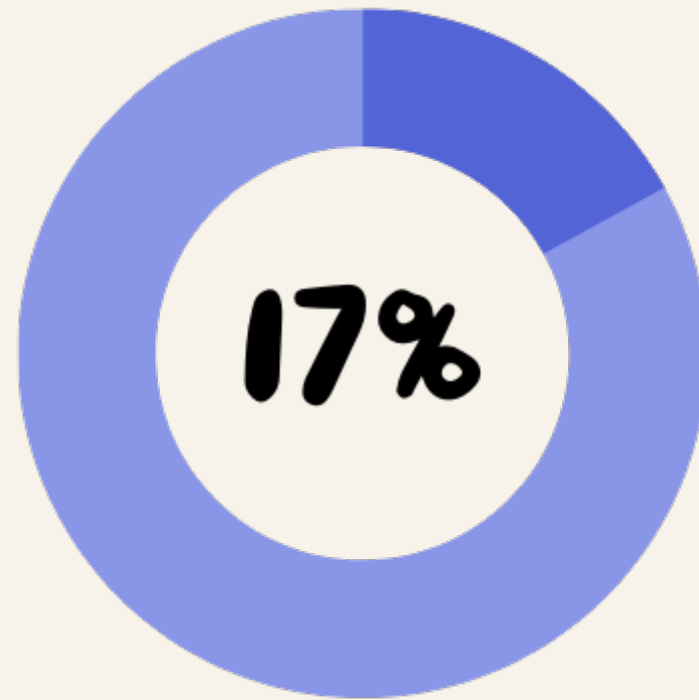


The Mental Health Climate at the U



78% of survey respondents
reported being at least
somewhat concerned about
their mental health during the
2023-24 academic year.

Where are people seeking support?

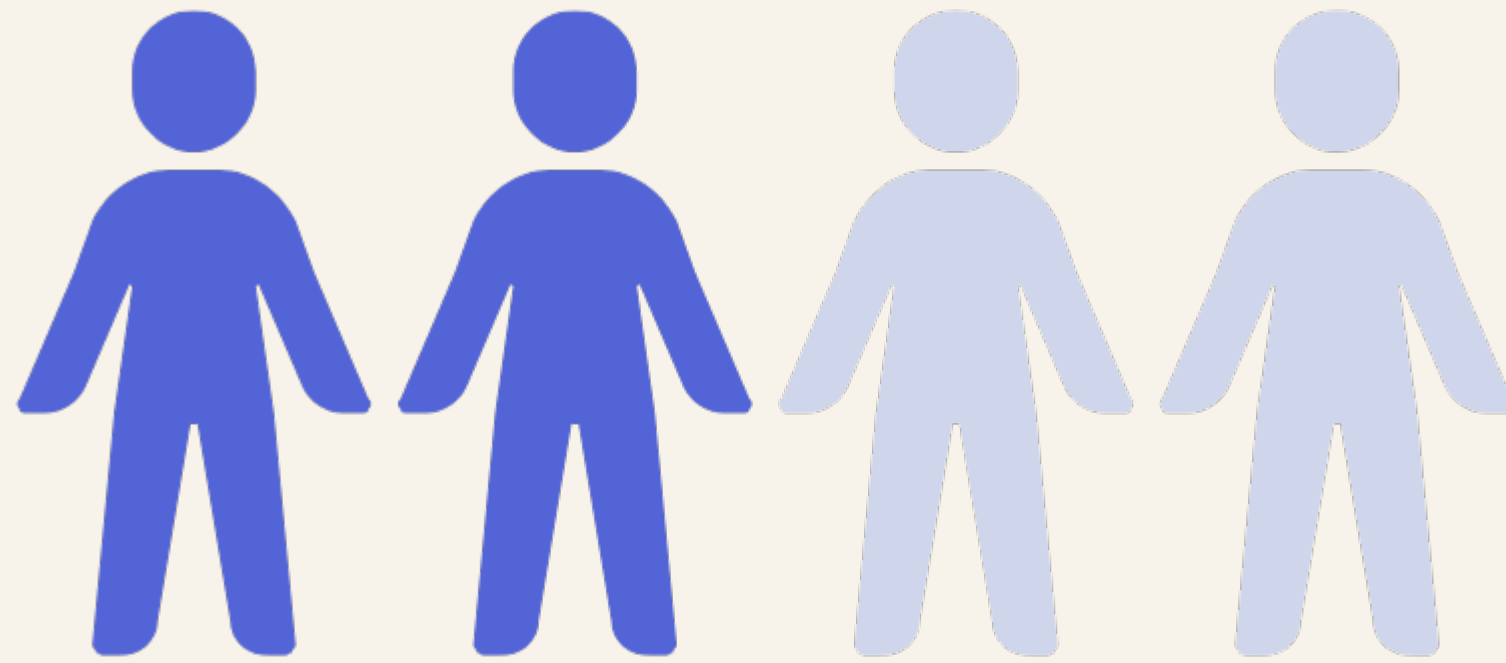


17% of survey respondents reported seeking resources on campus.

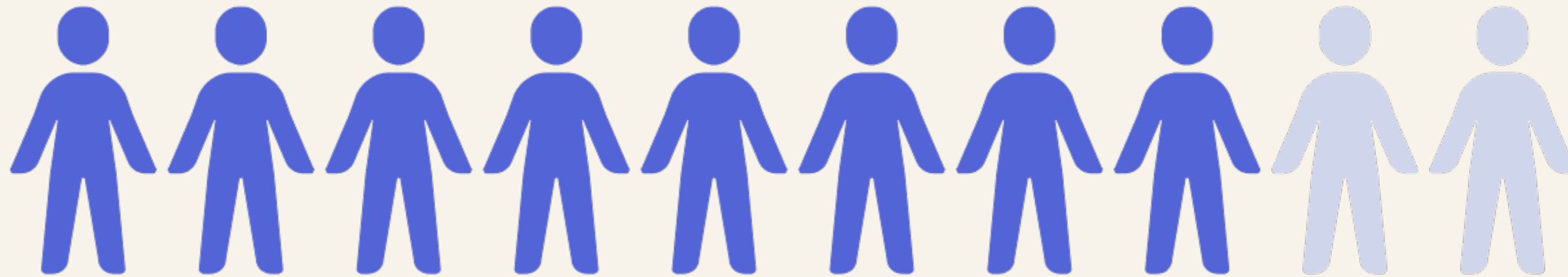
Most commonly utilized:

- Counseling Center (UCC)
- MH1 (Mental Health First Responders)
- Women's Resource Center (WRC)
- Center for Disability & Access (CDA)
- Student Success Coaches

Peer-to-Peer Dialogue



Half of survey respondents reported not always feeling comfortable discussing mental health with their peers



8/10 respondents reported that there should be more opportunities for peer-to-peer dialogue about mental health

Future Directions

- Decompression Spaces
- Integrating mental health education/awareness into course content
- More mental health focused events
- Reducing steps to get access to resources

Conclusions

- Our project shows that students in STEM struggle to talk about their mental health
- Our campus would greatly benefit from a culture shift that promotes dialogue surrounding mental health



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**We're all human.
We all struggle.
Let's talk about it!**

References:

