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**Help-seeking behaviors and mental well-being of first year undergraduate university students**

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**Abstract**

University students demonstrate poor help-seeking behaviors for their mental health, despite often reporting low levels of mental well-being. The aims of this study were to examine the help-seeking intentions and experiences of first year university students in terms of their mental well-being, and to explore these students' views on formal (e.g. psychiatrists) and informal (e.g. friends) help-seeking. Students from a university in the Republic of Ireland (n=220) completed an online questionnaire which focused on mental well-being and help-seeking behaviors. Almost a third of students had sought help from a mental health professional. Very few students reported availing of university/online supports. Informal sources of help were more popular than formal sources, and those who would avail and had availed of informal sources demonstrated higher well-being scores. Counselors were the source of professional help most widely used. General practitioners, chaplains, social workers, and family therapists were rated the most helpful. Those with low/average well-being scores were less likely to seek help than those with higher scores. Findings indicate the importance of enhancing public knowledge of mental health issues, and for further examination of students' knowledge of help-seeking resources in order to improve the help-seeking behaviors and mental well-being of this population group.

**Keywords:**

Mental Health  
Students  
Well-being

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