

Background

- Mental health issues among teens and young adults are increasing (1).
- Young adults may be experiencing increased levels of social isolation (2).
- Intergenerational programs can increase knowledge about aging, reduce physical and mental stress, and increase overall wellbeing for participating students (3).
- Intergenerational programs that facilitate interactions between aging adults and young adults are a promising strategy to improve mental health of college students (3,4).

Purpose

Determine how participation in the Cyber Seniors (CS) program impacts the mental health and social connection of young adults.

Program Description

- A mixed methods evaluation of a community engaged research program called Cyber Seniors (CS).
- College students participated in an 8-week reverse mentoring program as part of class service learning.
- Young & older adults engaged in activities related to wellness and technology once a week for 8 weeks.

Methods

- Pre and post surveys were administered to the young adults and results were analyzed using SPSS software.
- Surveys evaluated social connection and utilized the 36-item measure- the Perceived Wellness Scale, to evaluate the overall wellness and the 6 subscales of wellness.
 - The 6 areas of wellness include: Psychological, Social, Physical, Spiritual, Intellectual and emotional
- Qualitative data included a focus group with students that participated in CS.
- Data was triangulated to explain any differences or similarities.



"I think the program helped me become more involved and want to be a part of something a little more than I was after moving off of campus."

-Quotes from focus group participants

"I remember being in the room and the room was never quiet. We were always laughing or talking. It was the type of laughter that makes your stomach hurt."



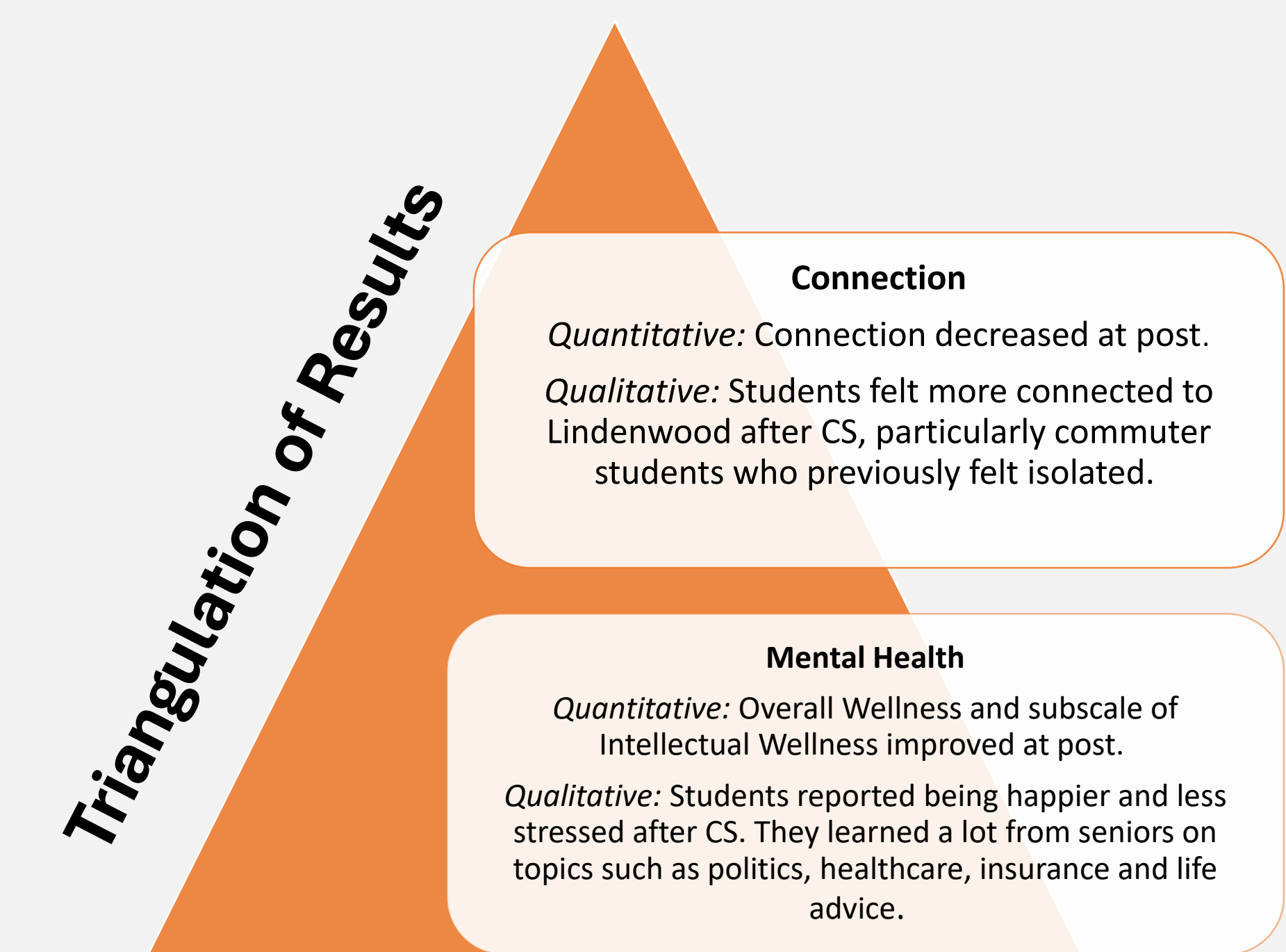
Quantitative Results

- N=19 participants at pre-survey and N=15 participants at post-survey

Well-Being type	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Psychological Pretest-Posttest	-2.26667	-1.609	14	0.130
Social Pretest-posttest	-0.6000	-0.592	14	0.563
Physical Pretest-posttest	-0.46667	-0.270	14	0.791
Spiritual Pretest-posttest	1.13333	1.753	14	0.101
Intellectual Pretest-posttest	2.50000	2.179	13	0.048
Emotional Pretest-posttest	-1.21429	-1.057	13	0.310
Overall Wellness Pretest-posttest	-2.17201	-2.931	12	0.013

Qualitative Results

- Focus group data shows:
 - increased feelings of social connectedness among students, particularly among commuter students.
 - decreased fear related to aging.
 - increased intellectual wellness.



Conclusion

- CS is a promising strategy to engage students and improve connection to the University, particularly commuter students.
- Intergenerational programming is a promising strategy to improve the mental health of college students.