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Tami B. Radohl, PhD
Fort Hays State University

Jordan O. Shockley, MSW

Kathryn L. Brown, MSW

Vanessa E. Groves, MSW

Regina Montoya, MSW

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Tami B. Radohl, PhD
Associate Professor of Social Work
Fort Hays State University

Jordan O. Shockley, MSW

Kathryn L. Brown, MSW

Vanessa E. Groves, MSW

Regina Montoya, MSW

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Abstract. Homelessness among at-risk transitional age youth is an increasingly growing crisis impacting college-aged students across the United States. Thankfully, along with interest in their local community's success, universities have the necessary resources that may offer a unique solution to this crisis. This study describes the pilot of a collaborative effort among a local youth shelter, mental health center, and a private university that provides housing and a college education simultaneously for college students experiencing homelessness and evaluates whether students who participate in such programs experience and maintain increases in life satisfaction, wellbeing, and resilience. Data were collected from a total of seven college students over a period of four years for this longitudinal study, yielding limited but encouraging results about the pilot process and the potential for an expansion of the project. Students were asked to complete surveys that assessed resilience and life satisfaction using the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (2003) and the Satisfaction with Life scale (International Wellbeing Group, 2013). Results showed students in the program presented similar scores as the general population (Zimmermann et al., 2020). Scores of well-being and resilience fluctuated; however, over time student wellbeing and resilience increased overall. Students participating in this comprehensive program achieved stability, safety, an increased standard of living, and connection. Results suggest that universities have the resources and networks to provide wrap-around services to students facing homelessness, increasing overall life satisfaction and resilience, and improving the likelihood of graduation.

A university degree has long been touted as the prerequisite for social and economic mobility in the United States. Adults with at least a bachelor's degree earn more income throughout their lives, have stronger protections against unemployment risk, are less likely to experience poverty, and are more likely to have health insurance (US Census, 2019; Vasquez, 2020). However, while attaining a degree, students continue to face challenges that demand resilience and support. Basic needs insecurity among college students has become increasingly prevalent in recent years, as has greater public awareness of the problem. Financial insecurity, or insufficient monetary resources for basic needs, further contributes to food and housing insecurities among college students. Housing insecurity, fluctuating from challenges in paying rent to homelessness, affects one-third of students trying to earn a 4-year degree (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019). A Wisconsin HOPE Lab nationwide survey with over 43,000 respondents found that 36% of university students across 20 states who attended either community college or a traditional four-year university were food and housing insecure, and 9% of these respondents identified as homeless (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019).

Basic needs insecurities are associated with poor academic outcomes, as research shows students who experience food insecurity or homelessness more often report grades of C or below (The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, 2021). When students struggle to have their basic needs met, their ability to focus on their schoolwork may suffer. For example, severely food insecure students were more likely to report adverse academic experiences, with 73% reporting difficulty concentrating in class or during an exam (Farahbakhsh et al., 2017). Furthermore, students experiencing basic needs insecurity associated lacking adequate resources with adverse physical and mental symptoms, poor academic performance, and hesitation to access services due to the colloquial normalization college students' financial struggles (Crutchfield et al., 2020). Other challenges that students have

connected to this issue include barriers with transportation to needed resources, uncertainty in navigating financial aid resources, and having to decide whether to allocate money toward housing or food (Martinez et al., 2011).

Homelessness is defined as the condition in which there is a lack of housing; often individuals or families reside in transitional or emergency shelters, automobiles, or abandoned buildings or outside. The term *housing insecurity* involves a broader set of challenges, such as the inability to pay rent or utilities or the need to move frequently (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019; Havlik et al., 2018). Through the Point-in-Time count in 2022, more than 30,000 people under the age of 25 experienced homelessness as "unaccompanied youth," and most (91%) were between the ages of 18 and 24 (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2022). Transition-age youth, defined as individuals between the ages of 16 and 25, who are at-risk of homelessness can be one of the most challenging groups to assist. This population faces a variety of complex challenges associated with homelessness, including food insecurity, unreliable transportation, the inability to receive public assistance without a mailing address, and safety concerns. While many youths without housing do not attend college, those who do enroll are less likely to complete their degree and face more challenges compared to their peers (Huang et al., 2018).

Students experiencing homelessness find themselves juggling the daily challenges of meeting their own basic needs while trying to be academically successful. Students with housing insecurity also move more frequently, putting them at an academic disadvantage and reducing opportunities for positive relationships to form with instructors, faculty, and peers, which increases feelings of loneliness (Field, 2015). Many of these students are used to living in small spaces with family members or in shelters. Students may be afraid to live in big dormitories (Field, 2015), contributing to feelings of isolation and longing for positive relationships, feelings of connection, and social interaction. On the other hand, Huang et al. (2018) suggests that feeling connected and having a network of supports can promote resilience and success in students. On-campus housing can have a positive influence on student persistence and completion of their college education and is associated with additional support resources such as social integration, more time to study, increased knowledge, and access to academic-support services (Turk & González Canché, 2019).

University Programs

Most universities incorporate a meal plan into their on-campus housing agreement and offer mental and physical health services to their students, thus providing for the most pressing needs of students experiencing basic needs insecurities and stressful life events, like broken engagements, separation, personal severe illness or injury, layoff and firing, major financial problems, housing problems, the death of a close loved one, or parental illness or injury (Bourdon et al., 2020). Housing, food, and mental and physical health services may be important to retention and support for students with these challenges. In a 2016 survey of the utilization of on-campus services, students who experienced SLES were more likely to use university counseling services, university health services, and the wellness resource center (Bourdon et al., 2020). Unfortunately, with the complexity of needs with overlapping mental health concerns, students may not seek help where their concerns would be best addressed (Bourdon et al., 2020). For example, Gupton (2017) noted that homeless students are often unfamiliar with or mistrusting of on-campus support structures, and typical campus services do not always best address the needs of students living in shelters or off-campus transitional living programs.

Students facing housing insecurity are more likely to have underlying challenges that can influence their wellbeing and academic experience (Reppond, 2019). For instance, Leung et al. (2020) examined the cumulative burden of multiple insecurities on health and academic performance and discovered that students experiencing food insecurity, financial insecurity, or housing insecurity were all more likely to have anxiety and/or depression, fair/poor health, and lower mean GPA than their secure counterparts. To address basic needs insecurities not covered by traditional methods and thus improve students' wellbeing and academic performance, universities are now adopting new resources and services to improve the lives of their students. Across the nation, universities have established food pantries, implemented case management, created temporary work opportunities, expanded scholarships, utilized campus apartments, and distributed personal care items. For instance, Kennesaw State University offers support for students who have experienced homelessness, food insecurity, and the foster care system by providing a food pantry, on-campus microwaves, case management, temporary work, scholarships, campus apartments, personal care items, and clothing swaps (Kennesaw State University, 2020). The Promise Program at West Chester University provides unaccompanied homeless and foster youth with access to year-round housing, food and supplies, employment opportunities, access to scholarship funds, and monthly mentorship dinners (West Chester University, 2020). With

their Massachusetts Student Housing Security Pilot, Framingham State University houses homeless students and provides students with support, meals, and social services (Framingham State University, n.d.).

Universities are also collaborating with outside agencies to provide comprehensive and holistic services to address multiple issues that a student might be facing. Often called *wrap-around services*, the goal of this partnership is to increase access to stable housing, which has been shown to improve student academic performance, future security, and student wellbeing (Crutchfield, 2018). By eliminating or preventing basic needs insecurities and providing wrap-around services, communities and universities are attempting to lessen the negative effects of homelessness, thus strengthening student wellbeing and empowering youth to be successful. Stressful life events are inevitable for those experiencing poverty or basic needs insecurities, and the key to having a resilient campus community is preparedness and support. Pilot programs, such as the one studied here, give campuses and their partners the opportunity to evaluate and revise wraparound services' policies and procedures and determine if the program they have designed has the potential to improve student outcomes. This manuscript describes the process one university used to create a wraparound program and assess participants' life satisfaction, wellbeing, and resilience.

Team TLP Program

Universities are forming relationships with community partners to expand access to social services for students experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness. Among those interdisciplinary connections, a small private university in the Midwest partnered with a local youth transitional living program (TLP) shelter and other leaders in community mental health to address college-aged youth experiencing homelessness. Frustrated by the lack of housing for transition-aged youth experiencing homelessness (one of the toughest age groups to find assistance for under state/federal guidelines), professionals in community mental health and higher education started impromptu discussions about how agencies could partner better to address these gaps. Preliminary work began by identifying who had the knowledge and access to pre-existing, reoccurring resources to house homeless young adults. It was then suggested that universities, which have housed young adults for centuries, are equipped with internal and external resources to successfully accomplish this goal. For instance, universities' internal resources include dormitories, counseling services, and work study programs. Additionally, university social work and other human service programs can provide supplemental support to college students experiencing homelessness while offering real world experiences to social work students. External resources may be offered by local community organizations that have developed relationships with the university.

After several collaborative meetings, a pilot project was constructed in Fall of 2016 to create an education-focused residential program that integrated four transitional-age youth experiencing homelessness into a four-year private traditional university setting. Through this partnership, youth were provided on-campus housing, case management services, community referrals, financial assistance, and access to mental health services each academic year. A project team ("Team TLP") was created with a researcher (faculty at the university), university administrator, and representatives from the participating agencies and/or funders. The project was limited to between four and six transition age youth at a time due to a multitude of factors, including availability of student housing, funding to cover tuition, and capacity of service providers to add additional youth to their caseloads. The overarching purpose and goals of Team TLP were five-fold: 1) find creative solutions to house youth and transition youth out of shelters; 2) engage interested youth in secondary education; 3) create new social support networks for youth outside of the agency setting; 4) create a model that other communities could replicate for similar housing concerns; and 5) combine resources for funding and other endeavors.

In the initial year of this five-year pilot, researchers collected data that assisted in developing, testing, and revising the policies and procedures that would guide wraparound services for the remaining years of the pilot.

Table 1

Cohort Tracking

Year	Cohort Name
2016-2017	Pilot
2017-2018	Y1
2018-2019	Y2
2019-2020	Y3
2020-2021	Y4

Research Methods

A study of this pilot program sought to document the process of creating the wraparound program and answer the following question: *How, if at all, did individual students' scores of wellbeing change over the duration of their participation in wraparound services?* Based on the available literature, the researchers anticipated that individual student scores would increase over the course of individuals' participation in the program.

Participants

Participating students were referred by the Transitional Living Program (TLP) shelter, met eligibility requirements for the university, completed intake assessments with the community mental health agency, and met criteria for being at-risk for homelessness. The university required students to live in on-campus student housing and enroll in classes part-time or full-time, and the TLP shelter required students to secure and maintain a minimum of part-time employment (no minimum hours required). Due to arrangements with the university, students were permitted to stay in their dormitories year-round, including campus closures for holidays, breaks, and the summer semester (even if they were not enrolled during the summer term). Mental health clinicians from a local mental health center were available to students as needed or determined by the initial assessment. All students met criteria for mental health treatment; however, it was agreed that they would receive support regardless of diagnosis if they wanted or needed mental health support. Participating students were integrated into campus life and had access to natural social connections in a non-stigmatizing setting.

Researchers collected academic data (e.g., grades, attendance), housing data (e.g., number of days housed), and employment status about students. Whereas Team TLP used academic data to monitor program eligibility and continued enrollment, this data is not shared in this report as it involves FERPA-protected not addressed in the initial IRB application.

Case managers from area agencies regularly met with students on campus to support and review students' educational, career, and financial needs. During academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, student interns working on their Master's degree in social work (MSW) also provided case management services and helped the authors with data collection to study outcomes. TLP staff focused on helping students navigate academics, identify campus resources, locate transportation, work with employers if needed, and find food when the university cafeteria was closed. Finally, the university collected and analyzed program data, administered surveys, prepared summaries, and reported to funders and partners about the program's status.

A total of seven students were recruited in four years of the program through purposive sampling though the agency's TLP. Students transferred in a range of 0 to 23 credits from previous college efforts. Participants were encouraged to have employment via work-study on or off-campus and apply for financial aid to meet work-study and other campus requirements. Unfortunately, researchers did not collect information about student loan debt, so this factor is unknown. This program also offered various scholarships to offset tuition expenses for current students when they started the program, and due to current socioeconomic status, students qualified for Pell grants or other need-based scholarships as well. Feedback from qualitative measures and initial complaints to TLP staff during the initial stages of the program suggested that students had concerns balancing work, school, and personal time. To address students' responses, a state agency and contributing partner with Team TLP (affiliated with mental health) began offering TLP students a monthly stipend to help offset the number of hours students needed to work beginning in Fall 2017. Students' on-campus housing experiences varied; some lived in a single room, most had roommates, and one student lived in family-housing because they had a small child. Tables 2 and 3 provide descriptive data for participants in the TLP project.

Table 2

Participant Demographics (Pseudonyms Withheld for Confidentiality; No Order)

Race/Ethnicity	Gender	College Experience
African	Female	1 year
White	Male	Unknown
African American	Female	None
Asian American	Male	1 year
African American	Female	None
White	Female	None
White	Female	1 year

Table 3

Participation Demographics by Cohort

Name	# of Semesters of Participation	Year/Cohort Name
Kionna	10	Pilot through Y4
Trey	3	Pilot through Y1 (dropped 2nd semester)
Amy	8	Y1 through Y4
Jessie	7	Y1 through Y2
Lynn	3	Y1
Rivka	8	Entered in 2nd semester of Y1
Kim	4	Y3

Note. Pseudonyms were used to maintain students' confidentiality

Through systematic inquiry into college students who have experienced homelessness, Skobba et al. (2022) conveyed the importance of using longitudinal research to better understand the variance of experiences over time and intervene more effectively. Agreeing with Skobba et al.'s (2022) methodology, researchers for this project also utilized a longitudinal, quantitative approach employing descriptive statistics to explore how life satisfaction and resilience were perceived by participants after receiving stable housing and assistance with basic life insecurities. For tracking purposes, please see Table 1 regarding cohort titles and years.

Initially, researchers wanted to follow the same four students across their college experience until graduation. However, Team TLP quickly realized attrition may occur due to the types of SLEs that participants were experiencing. Not wanting funding or opportunities to go unused, Team TLP agreed that new students would be added to fill "slots" if attrition occurred, and, if funding was available, they could add a fifth and sixth student to the group. Moreover, Team TLP realized that following the information gained in the initial year across the next year of the project would be challenging due to participant turnover. All in all, four students participated during Academic year 2016-2017, but only two students were retained for the following year. Given this, although helpful in understanding the scope and aim of the project and student needs, data from academic year 2016-2017 was only used for Team TLP to learn, overcome challenges, and make necessary improvements for the start of Fall 2017 (Y1) and the duration of the program.

Of the four original student participants, two remained for the program's entirety, and one student successfully graduated at the end of the program's fourth year. One student entered the study's third year, and another student entered Y4 to fill a departure vacancy. Though seven students participated in the TLP program at different points of their academic careers, and funding was available for up to six students at a time, due to attrition, there was only one semester where six students were served at one time. In the spring of Y4, a student who began in Y1 moved out of the dorms and ceased participation in the TLP project; however, they continued receiving services from community partners and attended class at the university for an additional year. Their data was collected for one more year and was labeled as "after care" to monitor their transition and path toward graduation. Thus, this student's average reported scores are no longer included in the data after Spring 2020.

For quantitative longitudinal data, researchers reinitiated data collection with new and current participants and collected quantitative data for the next four years, at the start and end of each Fall and Spring semester between 2017 and 2021 (F17 1, F17 2, F18 1, F18 2, etc.). Furthermore, data was collected one more time from remaining youth in Fall of 2021 and is noted in this paper as "exit survey" results as community partners, who continued to provide services after students ended their participation in the program, wanted to know whether gains were being sustained. After data collection for the TLP study was complete in Spring of 2021, assessment data on life satisfaction and resilience were no longer gathered due to staff schedules and funding issues due to COVID. However, students were surveyed one more time in Fall 2021 to gather exit data. Their transitions and successes were very important to Team TLP—graduation is the ultimate outcome for the whole program. Shown in Figures 1- 3, most students stayed engaged with the program two years or longer. Kionna remained in the program during the entire study. At the conclusion of the study, a total of three students were on track to graduate with an undergraduate degree. Table 4 describes students participating by data collection point.

Approval for research with student participants was obtained annually from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the participating university for each academic year. Approval was also extended by the IRB to Fall of 2021 to collect exit data.

Table 4

Students Participating by Data Collection Point

Tool	F17 1	F17 2	S18 1	S18 2	F18 1	F18 2	S19 1	S19 2	F19 1	F19 2	S20 1	S20 2	F20 1	F20 2	S21 1	S21 2
SLW and PWI-A	Kionna Trey Amy Lynn Jessie	Kionna Trey Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Rivka Kim
CD-RISC	Kionna Trey Amy Lynn Jessie	Kionna Trey Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Lynn Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Jessie Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Rivka Kim	Kionna Amy Rivka Kim

Tools

This study asked if youth experiencing housing insecurity would experience positive outcomes during their participation in wraparound services. Given the small sample size and the complexity of both stressful life events and the array of services provided, the research goal was not to use traditional statistical analysis to confirm that improvement in student outcomes could be credited to wraparound services but instead to identify whether most students saw increases in scores over time as an indicator of the potential usefulness of such services should the university choose to continue or expand them. Researchers deployed several validated tools to measure student wellbeing, academic success, and resilience.

Quantitative data sources included the Personal Wellbeing Index-Adult (PWI-A) and Satisfaction with Life as a Whole Scale (SLWS) (International Wellbeing Group, 2013), and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC 10) (Campbell-Sills et al., 2009; Connor & Davidson, 2003). Assessment data were collected by case managers from the youth TLP a total of 17 times. All students were asked to complete self-reported satisfaction with life and perceptions of resilience using the SLWS, the PWI-A, and the CD-RISC 10 every 90 days. In the data presented in this paper, it is shown as Fall 1, Fall 2, Spring 1, and Spring 2 respectively; summer data was not collected. TLP case managers shared completed scales with the treatment team and utilized initials to protect student confidentiality given FERPA, HIPPA, and other university dynamics.

The Personal Wellbeing Index-Adult (PWI-A) Scale aims to explore subjective wellbeing and how people experience their lives. This scale contains 7 items of satisfaction corresponding to a quality-of-life domain: standard of living, health, achieving in life, relationships, safety, community connectedness, and future security (International Wellbeing Group, 2013). Data collected from this scale may be used either at the level of individual domains or scores may be aggregated and averaged to create the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI). For the purpose of this study, both individual and aggregate scores were measured. The scale asked questions such as "How satisfied are you with your standard of living?" and "How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?" and an optional question, "How satisfied are you with your spirituality or religion?" This version of the PWI-A scale has been adapted and validated with adults aged 18 years or higher. Normative data suggests that a typical, average mean for the PWI-A is 75.25 (International Wellbeing Group, 2013).

The Satisfaction with Life as a Whole Scale (SLWS) is one separate question on the PWI-A scale that tests the construct validity of the PWI-A using multiple regression (International Wellbeing Group, 2013). It is one separate variable that researchers can use to compare scores with the broader PWI-A scale. For this study, this question was included and scored separately as instructed by the tool. Normative data for this portion of the tool has been measured as a mean of 77.66 (International Wellbeing Group, 2013).

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10) is a 10-item self-administered questionnaire designed as a Likert-type scale. Originally part of a 25-item scale that was validated and used to measure resilience with individuals diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Connor & Davidson, 2003), the 10-item version was developed by Campbell-Sills et al., at the University of California, San Diego, on the basis of factor analysis. Team TLP, recognizing the role of trauma and resilience in homeless youth, believed that this type of tool would capture resilience among the participants and provide additional information regarding both their baseline resilience data and their data as they moved through their classes and the program itself. The tool has five response options (0=never; 4=almost

always) where the final score on the questionnaire is the sum of the responses obtained on each item ranging from 0-40, with the highest scores representing the highest level of resilience (Martinez et al., 2011). A perfect score is 40, and the highest-quality normative data comes from a study conducted by the authors where a community survey with 764 US adults demonstrated a mean score of 31.8 (SD = 5.4 for the CD-RISC 10) (Campbell-Sills et al., 2009). These numbers were consistent with the lengthier 25-item original scale created by Connor and Davidson (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Whereas this tool has been validated with the US general population in the initial study, since that time, it has been used specifically with primary care patients, psychiatric patients, individuals with PTSD, and patients with anxiety disorders by tool developers. Unfortunately, there is no specific information regarding means with transition-age adults or those experiencing homelessness; therefore, study participants were compared with 31.8 for the general population as determined by Cambell-Sills, Forde, and Stein in 2009. Researchers in this study received written consent from the tool's developers to use the CD-RISC 10 and to publish its results.

Following the administration and distribution of the completed scales to the treatment team, the researchers input the data into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed the responses. Individual and group scoring calculations and median results were computed and analyzed across semesters to evaluate trends of satisfaction of life, personal wellbeing, and resilience across time. Together, data from these tools was used to answer the questions: Did TLP student scores on the SLWS, PWI-A, and CS-RISC 10 increase, decrease, or remain stable during their participation in the program, both between consecutive data collection points—indicating change from the start to the end of semesters as well as between semesters—and from the start to the end of their participation? While the small sample does not permit generalization to a larger population, identifying the direction of trends in students' experiences potentially helps those who support students at-risk of homelessness to select interventions that are more likely to be effective and helped Team TLP determine student perception of services.

Results

Though the sample size was small, as with many longitudinal or pilot studies, results demonstrate that stakeholders can build wraparound programs for students at risk of homelessness and that students who engage in such programs can achieve and maintain increases in life satisfaction, personal wellbeing, and resilience. In terms of the success of the program in delivering housing and basic needs security for students, participants in the TLP project obtained safe housing and food security ranging from 672 days to approximately 1,825 days.

Overall, students demonstrated sustainment in satisfaction with life and resilience throughout academic years. Across specific life domains, student scores demonstrated an increase in the standard of living and sense of safety. Furthermore, students sustained or increased scores in satisfaction with life as a whole, feelings of achievement in life, personal relationships, future security, and spirituality. Students demonstrated overall sustainment in resilience scores, although only one area (use of humor when faced with problems) showed any notable increase over time. Students also reported an increase in the use of coping capacities in response to stress, demonstrating an increase in resilience.

Figure 1

Students' SLWS Mean and Median Scores by Semester of Program

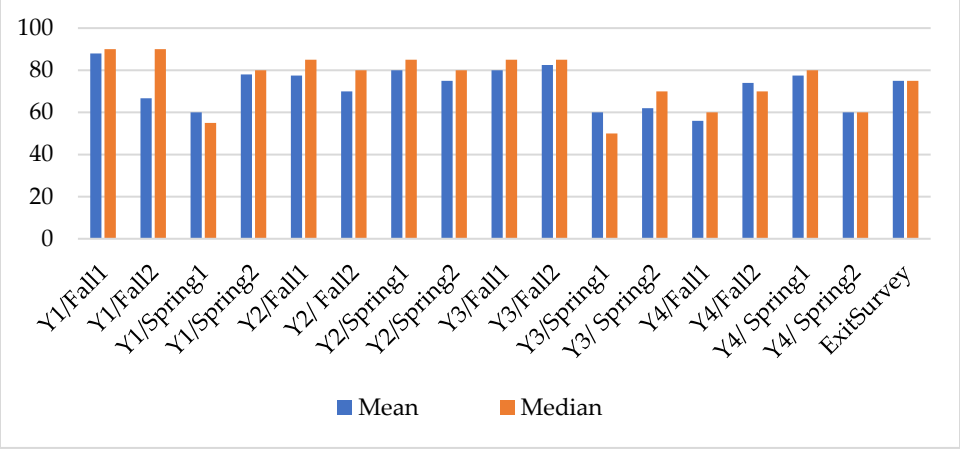


Figure 2

Students' PWI-A Mean and Median Scores by Semester of Program

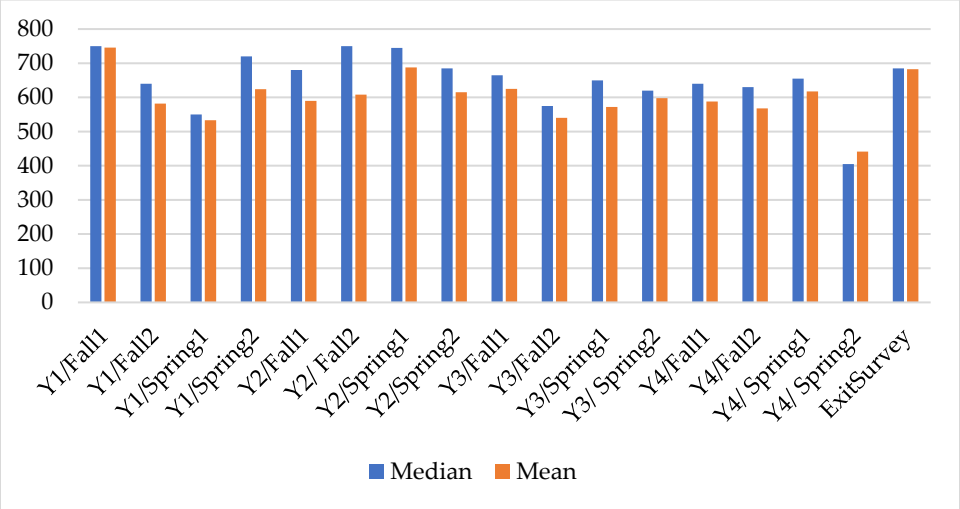
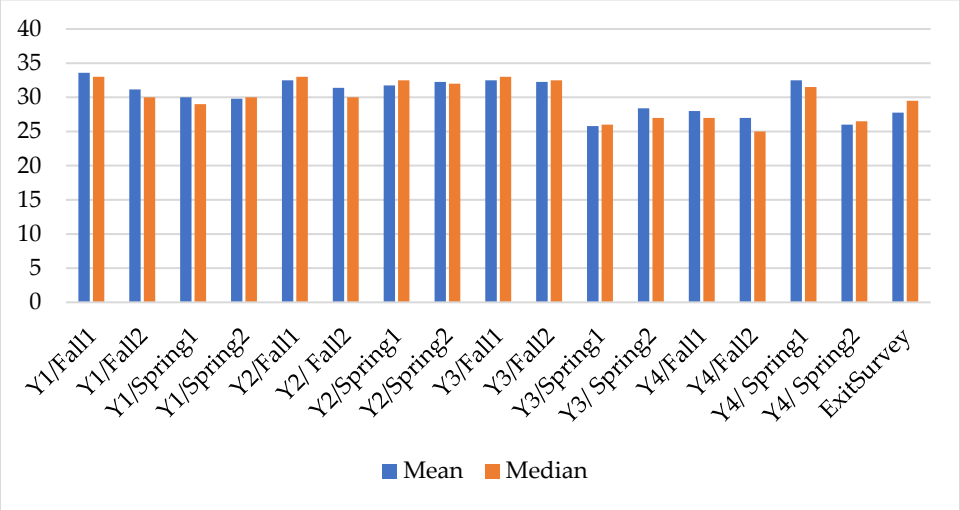


Figure 3

Students' CD-RISC 10 Mean and Median Scores by Semester of Program



Scores are presented in Figures 4-6 using both mean and median scores to return the central tendency for skewed number distributions, a choice made to account for the dramatically lower scores of Rivka, as compared to her peers, during her first semesters. Though her initial scores were quite low, her individual trajectory shows improvement by 250 points on the SLWS and the PWI-A and 3 points on the CD-RISC-10, indicating an increase in life satisfaction and resilience. Indeed, her change in scores was dramatic, suggesting that rapid improvement in student wellbeing and satisfaction is possible.

Mean scores for both Satisfaction of Life (SWLS) and resilience (CD-RISC 10) in students in the TLP program were consistently at or above normative data, other than a dip during Spring of 2020 when social distancing was put into place and students faced new challenges with school, health, and relationships due to the COVID pandemic. Mean scores for the PWI-A fell below the normative data with the tool, heavily influenced by Rivka's scores. Individual student scores on the PWI-A suggest that many of the students were approaching or above normative scores depending on the semester and various life events (e.g., crisis or health issues).

Figure 4

Individual Student SLWS Scores Over Time

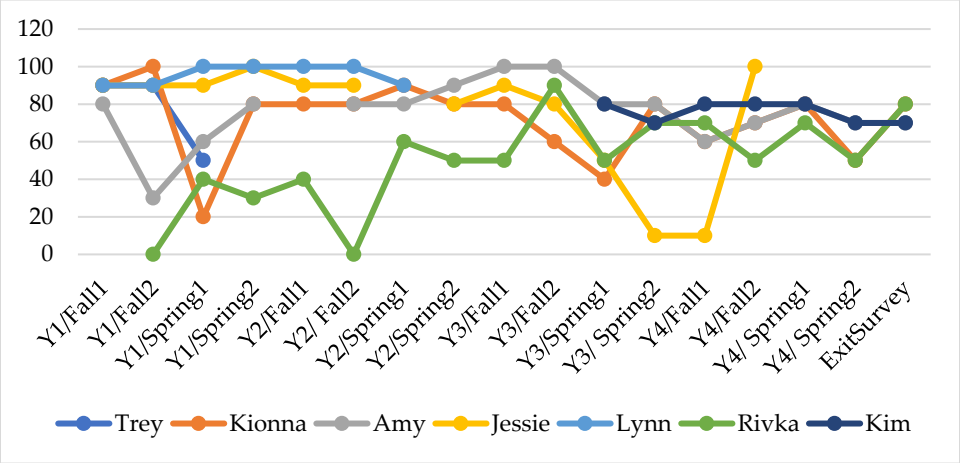


Figure 5

Individual Student PWI-A Summative Scores Over Time

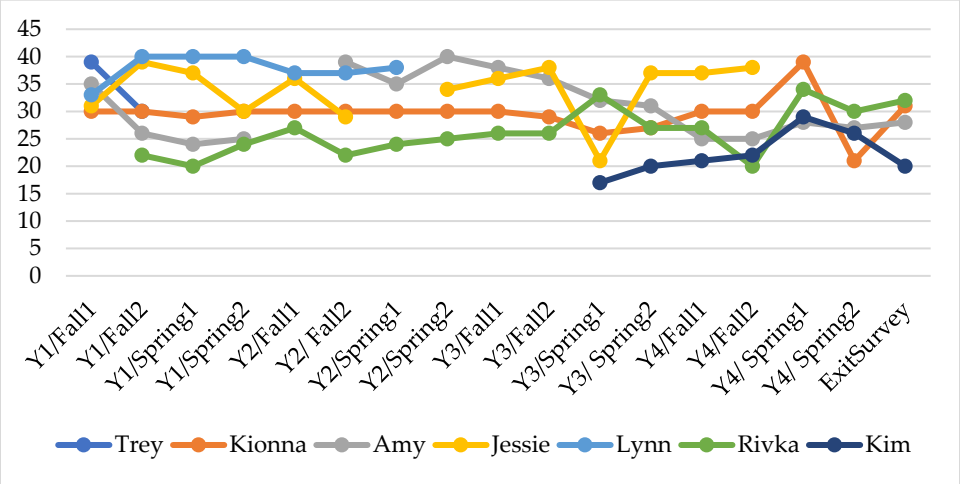
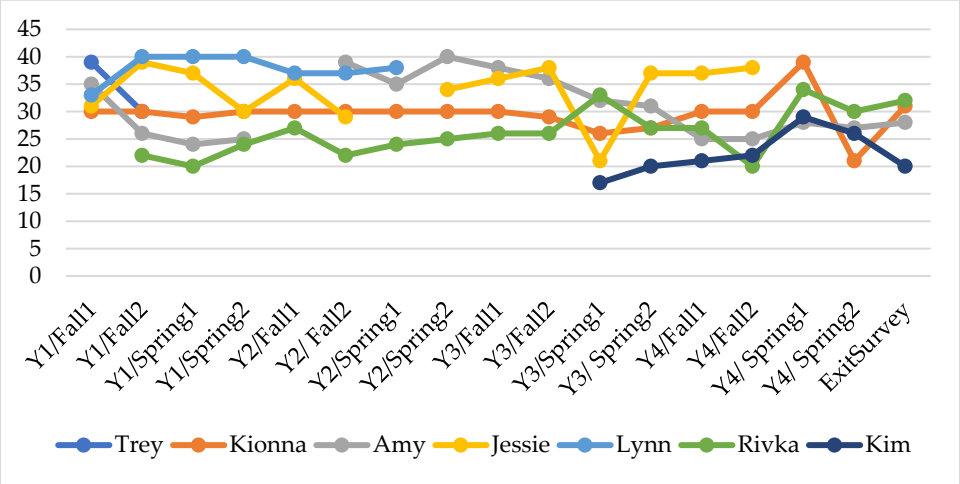


Figure 6

Individual Student CD-RISC 10 Scores Over Time



To assess whether long-term engagement in the program correlated with a rise in scores over time, changes in students' mean scores from each data collection point were compared (see Table 5). A negative number indicates a median decline in scores, while a positive number indicates an increase in scores. For example, midway through the third data collection period of Y1, the mean score for students decreased on all instruments but then rebounded by the end of the second semester. The general trend suggests variability across time; students experience SLEs or other issues that impact resilience, satisfaction with life, and personal wellbeing, but student scores rebound as students continue to move through each semester. Comparing changes in mean scores and individual scores across time, data suggests that student scores fluctuate; however, at the conclusion of the study, any declining scores recovered back to near or above initial baseline scores when they entered the study. Rivka, who had consistently lower scores than her peers, showed growth over time with the SLWS and PWI-A, and at the exit survey, reported scores comparable to her peers at baseline and exit. All in all, students were able to maintain or stay near baseline scores with the SLWS, even as coursework became more challenging through semester advancement, but had a slight decline in median scores with the personal wellbeing index and the CD-RISC10.

Table 5

Mean Change in Student Scores between Data Collection Periods

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11*	12*	13	14	15	16	ES
SLWS	90	-21.3	-6.7	+18	-.5	-7.5	+10	-5	+5	+2.5	-22.5	+2	-6	+18	+3.5	-17.5	+15
PWI-A		-163.3	-48.3	+90.7	-34	+18	+79.5	-72.5	+10	-85	+32	+26	-10	-20	+49.5	-176.3	+241.3
CD-RISC		-2.4	-1.2	-.2	+2.7	-1.1	-.35	+.5	+.25	-.25	-6.45	+2.6	-.4	-1	+5.5	-6.5	+1.75

*indicates campus social distancing guidelines and remote learning due to COVID.

Discussion

Homeless students face more challenges and barriers than the general population (Roth & Bongoy, 2020), but assistance can increase wellbeing and resilience (Dworsky, 2010; Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017). These findings, identified in the literature and affirmed in interviews with students, were influential in the development of this program, and the successful development, testing, revision, and implementation of policies and procedures to support student success speaks to the efforts of all parties involved. Program success can be measured both in terms of basic needs met and student scores on tools used to measure life satisfaction, personal wellbeing, and resilience.

Basic Needs Met

Students identified financial stability, housing, positive mental health, and education as high priorities, and they achieved each during their participation in this program. Over the course of their participation, students experienced an increased standard of living, which includes the degree of income and material comfort and feelings of safety, thus meeting the participants' highest priorities of concern. Case management and mental health services offered through this program addressed mental health challenges by providing opportunities for integration into the community, relationships, feelings of connection, and increased social interaction. The regular health services that were part of this program supported emotional wellbeing and provided youth with opportunities to grow the independence needed to obtain social, economic, and emotional skills needed in adulthood. In turn, students had the support needed to cope with or mediate SLEs, thereby remaining engaged and enrolled in university courses, thus meeting or moving toward their educational goals.

As both scholarly literature and interviews with TLP students indicate, finances raise a particular challenge for students, and student debt is both a barrier in college and a barrier to economic success upon graduation for the general population—problems worse for those experiencing housing insecurity. With financial strain, students feel the need to work during school, which can negatively impact academic performance (Skobba et al., 2022). Moreover, this pressure to work may be exacerbated by TLP or similar programs that encourage or request that young adults work to achieve financial stability, feedback gathered during academic year 2016-2017. This program provided free housing, food service, and, in response to data collected from students, a monthly stipend, which afforded students opportunities to work and save while in school, reducing or eliminating student debt, depending on their Pell and other grant eligibility. Challenges affording basic necessities were reduced through program support.

Connectivity is also an important factor in building resilience. On-campus college resources make services easily available at the location of the students. Often these services are provided by the university and thus terminated once the student graduates. This unique program brought services onto campus, effectively serving students at their location while connecting them to lifelong service providers in the community, establishing relationships that can support students even after college ends.

Combining and collaborating with multiple programs puts layers of protective factors in place. Mental health literature suggests that social support positively influences both mental health and adjustment (Cao, 2021; Shorey & Lakey, 2011). From these findings, the authors suggest that program services may prepare youth facing homelessness for economic success and emotional health and may help retain students through challenging academic coursework, adjustments to campus life, and SLEs. Recognizing the role of SLEs in disrupting college life (Cao, 2021), the authors posit that SLEs influenced variability in scores; however, program support may have mediated the relationship between SLEs and adjustment, thereby assisting the university with student retention.

Satisfaction with Life, Personal Wellbeing, and Resilience

Program goals extended beyond meeting needs for housing, food, education, and mental and physical healthcare to include students' perceived satisfaction with life, wellbeing, and resilience. Results indicate that, during their participation in the program, students' perceptions of standard of living, safety, and capacity for healthy coping skills increased. Even Rivka, who scored the lowest on all tools at initial data collection, showed significant increases over time, eventually reporting scores above normative data. The researchers considered both the change in student scores over the length of their participation and changes in scores between the start and end of semesters. While long-term growth in life satisfaction, wellbeing, and resilience is the goal, students experience college semester-by-semester, and the stress they face, especially academic stress, can change each semester. Understanding changes between end-of- and beginning-of-semester data collection points can assist stakeholders in identifying points in the semester when students may be experiencing additional stress, possibly due to transitions related to progress toward degree, anxiety about beginning new classes, worry about final exams, or other causes linked to the academic calendar. Additionally, because students at-risk of homelessness are also at-risk of dropping out of college and thus attrition from the intervention and research, the researchers chose to collect and examine beginning-of-semester and end-of-semester data to ensure a robust data set for analysis. Simply measuring start-of-program and end-of-programming results would have yielded too little data for analysis and would have easily hidden the ups-and-downs of the academic year and the introduction of SLEs that may be especially threatening to the success of vulnerable students.

Change in Scores is Immediate. Though scores increased, the change in scores was not a direct upward path, even from the start of a student's participation. Between the first data collection point, at the start of their first semester in the program, to the second, at the end of that same semester, three students saw no change in their SWLS scores while two students saw an improvement and two saw a decline. The pattern was similar with PWI-A scores, with two students reporting no change in scores, two reporting an increase, and three reporting a decline in the first semester of participation. CD-RISC 10 scores were also volatile, with one student reporting no change, three reporting positive change, and three reporting a decline in score in the first semester. Immediate differences in the trajectory of scores suggests that, even with the same supports in place, students' different SLEs and different responses to those SLEs may shape their life satisfaction, wellbeing, and resilience.

Change is Common across Consecutive Data Collection Points. As mentioned previously, SWLS scores were collected for 7 students a total of 79 times across this multi-year study. In turn, this yielded 72 opportunities for change in consecutive scores (see Figure 4). The pattern of variation in scores continued throughout students' participation. Of the 72 intervals between consecutive SWLS scores, scores remained unchanged 22 times (30.6%), increased 25 times (34.7%), and decreased 25 times (34.7%). Of the 71 intervals between consecutive PWI-A scores, scores remained unchanged 8 times (11.3%), increased 31 times (43.7%), and decreased 32 times (45.1%). Of the 71 intervals between consecutive CD-RISC scores, scores remained unchanged 14 times (19.7%), increased 30 times (43.7%), and decreased 26 times (36.6%). Across all students, scores on all tools did not change between consecutive data collection points about 20% of the time, increased about 41% of the time, and decreased about 39% of the time. In other words, from the start to the end of a semester to the start of the next semester, positive change was about as frequent as negative change in scores. Changes in scores from the beginning to the end of a semester or academic calendar may reflect the rhythm of academic work, as classes typically increase in difficulty as the semester progresses, even as students are farther from the rejuvenation of the recent break or the promise of the next one, but further research

on patterns in fluctuation may assist researchers in identifying cyclic causes of stress for students and guide them to intervene during moments of the academic year when students are likely to experience lower levels of life satisfaction, wellbeing, and resilience.

Increases in Scores are More Frequent than Decreases, but Radical Change is Rare. While change between data collection points was the norm, most students experienced increases in scores more often than decreases. Only one student experienced more decreases than increases in her SWLS score, two experienced more decreases than increases in their PWI-A scores, and only one experienced more decreases than increases of her CD RISC score. In half of these cases where decreases in scores between data collection points were more common than increases, students still experienced more points gained than lost over the course of their participation and ended the program with higher scores than they had at the start of their participation Whereas the majority of students experienced more semesters of growth in scores than decline in scores, half of those who did not still experienced greater increases in scores than declines in scores, and even those who experienced more times of decline than increases ended with higher scores than they started which indicates that, even though change in a positive direction is uneven, it is occurring.

Dramatic swings with both increases and drops in scores between data collection points were rare. The mean decrease in SWLS scores between data collection points was 24.6 points, and 31% of declining scores were above the mean. The mean increase in scores between data collection points was nearly 24 points on the SWLS, and 69% of increases in score were above the mean, a consequence of Rivka's dramatic changes in score. Here, the mode may actually be more indicative of student experiences: an increase of only ten points between data collection was most common for both declining and increasing scores.

On the PWI-A, when scores changed between data collection points, increases and decreases in scores were equally likely, but the mean decline was 110 points while the mean increase was 118 points. Approximately 41% of declining scores were above the mean, but nearly 39% of the scores that were above the mean were from a single student, Rivka. Likewise, 31% of increases in scores were above the mean increase on the PWI-A, and Rivka's scores accounted for approximately 56% of these higher-than-average scores. On the CD-RISC 10, the average decrease in scores between data collection was 5.6 points, and 33.3% of increases in scores were higher than this average. The average increase between data collection was 3.7 points, and 48% of increases in scores were above the mean.

Over the course of their participation in the program, some students experienced significant changes in scores: a drop in the SWSL of 80 points for Kionna and 50 points for Amy and an increase of 60 points for Rivka; on the PWI-A, a drop of 270 points for Trey, who completed the PWI-A only three times; a drop of 110 points for Amy; and an increase of 590 points for Rivka, whose initial score was quite low. Notes recorded by Team TLP during monthly check-in meetings suggest that these swings in scores may have been influenced by various SLEs among participants including but not limited to peer or significant other conflict, familial conflict, mental health issues, and economic concerns (e.g., Kionna damaged her car). However, with each situation, support personnel affiliated with Team TLP (e.g., case managers or therapists for wraparound care) were on hand to assist participants as needed. On the CD-RISC 10, there was a drop of 18 points for Kionna, a drop of 17 for Jessie but also an increase of 16 for her, and an increase of 14 for Rivka. Trey's decrease in score may be reflective of the stressors that caused him to end his participation in the program and thus should be interpreted with caution as, had he continued, his scores might have increased, as Rivka's did. While Amy's PWI-A scores fell from the start of her participation until the end, her final score of 640 points was similar to the mean of the scores from the second half of her participation which were much less volatile than her first half (when the mean change in her score between data collection points was 33 points higher than later in the semester). On the SWLS, there was inconsistency across students; some had increased scores over the course of their participation, whereas others experienced decreases or were variable across time. Trey, who participated in data collection for a semester and a half, saw a decline in scores of 40 points, which was the mean among all students who saw a decline between the first and third data collection point, his final data collection point. Among students who saw a decline similar to Trey's but who continued to submit data, SWLS final scores were comparable to their peers, suggesting that, had Trey continued to report SWLS scores, they might have improved. Because Rivka's initial SWLS score was 0, it could not have declined from the beginning of her participation until the end. Her final score of 80 was above the mean SWLS score for all students, which was 78.6, showing dramatic improvement. Overall, when outlying scores are accounted for, consecutive scores showed frequent but not radical change.

Notably, at half of the data collection points, most students' scores increased or decreased on all three measures simultaneously, indicating that satisfaction with life, personal wellbeing, and resilience often rose and fell together, opening the question of whether improving student satisfaction with life, wellbeing, or resilience can improve outcomes in the other areas.

Overall, the picture is one of two steps forward and one step back: upward but uneven improvement in scores. Small changes added up, however, and over their participation in the program, students gained a mean of 4.3 points on the SWLS, 37 points on the PWI-A, and 2.7 points on the CD-RISC 10 from their first to final data collection point. On the question of whether student reports of life satisfaction, wellbeing, and resilience can increase over the long-term, even when they face stressors along the way, the answer is *yes.*

Limitations and Future Implications

This research included a small sample size at a small-town college, and results may not generalize to other populations. It is important to note other universities will have other services and community agencies that differ from those offered at this location. This population was self-selecting; these students were involved in a voluntary program and could choose to participate through their agency, and students who choose to participate in similar efforts at other universities may bring with them different strengths and difficulties. There were challenges in coordinating multiple agencies, their competing funding agendas, and specific agency goals for the project. For instance, the university valued grades, whereas case managers valued housing, and mental health agencies valued positive changes in daily life skills or employment. Each system (i.e., mental health agency, homeless shelter/transitional living program, and university) had policies and procedures that impacted programming from time to time. Even with extra incentives including stipends, data collection could be challenging at times depending on student availability and commitment to paperwork completion. Communities interested in designing and implementing a similar program should engage in broad-level discussions early in the planning phase. Key stakeholders from this project agree that when starting an initiative like this, a high level of coordination, collaboration, and maintenance is needed to be successful in replication.

Moreover, students had high scores in some areas (well above normative data) at the first data collection point at the beginning of the semester, and scores lowered and then leveled off the following semesters. Without in-depth information such as specific records of SLEs or challenging course work, it is hard to substantiate what led to this decline. The authors hypothesize that high initial scores followed by a decline could be due to response bias (Bradburn et al., 1978) at the beginning of the project, where students showed higher scores to 'please' their service providers. Students were able to move from shelter environments to more ‘normal’ environments with peers, thereby quickly enhancing their living environment and access to resources overnight. It is possible that compared to prior environments, the newly remodeled on-campus living accommodations influenced perceptions of SLWS scores, but then these perceptions changed or leveled off once the ‘newness’ began to fade. Unfortunately, in research, it is very common for response bias to occur when obtaining services and benefits in conjunction with research efforts (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007).

External factors and personal experiences were likely to have contributed to the fluctuation in student scores and trends throughout the program. As mentioned earlier, although they remained on campus in residential housing, students switched from in-person classes to required distance learning in response to the pandemic. Social distancing restrictions, changes in how the agencies involved provided support to participants, and campus class cancellations during Spring 2020 may have directly affected the students’ survey scores as this may have affected their feelings of social support and connectedness. In fact, recent studies have found that increased psychological distress occurred from February to April of 2020 (Zimmermann et al., 2020), which aligns with decreased student scores in this study. Satisfaction with life and resilience scores decreased at multiple data points after the onset of the pandemic. College students already face increased pressures, challenges, and stress with intimate relationships, financial difficulties, and fulfilling responsibilities, and these difficulties may have been exacerbated even further due to the COVID pandemic and the shift to a virtual learning environment. For many students, the transition to online learning was difficult and took a toll on their social interaction, causing them to lose their motivation to learn (Davis et al., 2022). One lesson learned is that universities and/or team members might really emphasize connectedness and focus on ways in future semesters to further engage students on campus with peers, university staff/faculty, and others campus activities.

In addition to the complications of the COVID pandemic, this comprehensive effort to bring wraparound services to students at risk of homelessness faced challenges as a pilot project. Creating a new program will always come with barriers. Longitudinal studies such as this produce rich data by following individuals over time and tracking changes; however, these researchers also experienced some of the disadvantages of longitudinal research, such as inconsistent data collection due to participant attrition and life transitions (Hill et al., 2015). This was a necessary risk in seeking to learn and intervene more effectively with this population. Further research is needed to continue informing practices with those experiencing housing insecurity in higher education.

Conclusion

Social networks are vital to resilience and need to be embedded in the development and implementation of any future initiatives that will address homelessness in higher education. High-quality positive social support is associated with resilience to stress and positive physical and mental health (Southwick & Charney, 2012). Narratives collected from students suggested colleges develop systems for identifying and supporting homeless students. Campuses should create tangible and accessible support services for homeless and housing-vulnerable students (Gupton, 2017). Homeless students would benefit from having support on both sides to help them transition to college, and qualitative data suggest that having specific points of contact at each university would ease the communication among advocates (e.g., McKinney-Vento liaisons in secondary K-12 education) as they help students prepare for higher education (Terrile, 2022). Future research and practice initiatives are needed to implement more direct, streamlined resources for students experiencing housing insecurity and replicate findings to determine what continued collaboration between higher education institutions and community organizations can do for students in need.

Community-based services on college campuses augment on-campus services and help connect students to a lifetime of resources. To best address the lack of resources associated with homelessness, the authors advocate for coordinating multiple agencies. Partnering agencies can address policies that limit educational opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness by advocating and developing policies that embrace both housing and education. This will increase student feelings of connectivity while also increasing student satisfaction with life and resilience (Roming & Howard, 2019; Zhang et al., 2014).

The local service agencies partnering for this program each threaded their resources to form one powerful cord, so their overlapping services offered students additional protective layers than could be provided when agencies do not coordinate. Community collaboration provided options and a backup plan. If one resource staff was not available due to training or illness, other resources were still available. Each program contributed its unique resources, staff, and solutions. Students in this program demonstrated elevated needs, and involving more than one agency provided multiple resources, solutions, and opportunities for them to connect. Consequently, stable housing offered by this project provided students with a safe, social, predictable, and supportive environment while they focused on academics and future goals.

Understanding the intersection of education, basic needs security, housing, and quality of life for transition-aged adults are paramount to improved teaching and learning. With higher education's increasing emphasis on retention, meeting the needs of students at risk of homelessness is a growing area of interest for faculty, researchers, and administrators alike. The results of this study demonstrate that students at risk of homelessness who participate in university-led, collaborative wraparound services supporting stable housing, mental health support, and basic needs security can demonstrate increases in satisfaction of life, resilience, and safety over time, even if individuals' progress is not always straightforward. The researchers' goal is that the conclusions drawn from this small study may spark ideas to improve student learning with this population. Given the breadth of those who benefit from better outcomes for students at risk of homelessness, many stakeholders have motivation to collaborate.

Understanding the intersection of education, basic needs security, housing, and quality of life for transition-aged adults are paramount to improved teaching and learning.

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Dr. Tami Radohl is currently an Associate Professor at Fort Hays State University. She specializes in behavioral health, assessment, and working with children and families. She received her BSW from the University of Kansas, her MSW from Washburn University, and her PhD from the University of Kansas. Dissertation research focused on adult mental health recovery, Shared Decision Making, and Personal Medicine. Current research focuses on field education, social work pedagogy, homeless youth, and social work advocacy. Outside of employment, she is continually active in the community, focusing on the assistance of non-profits, food and housing accessibility, and leadership training.

Jordan Shockley is not currently in the social work field, but working as a contract specialist for the U.S. Army. She received her undergraduate degree at Fort Hays State University (Hays, KS) and her MSW from Park University (Parkville, MO). Ms. Shockley volunteers her time by assisting local non-profits file their state incorporation paperwork and help them obtain their 501(c)3 status. She has served as a board member for a non-profit youth sports organization.

Kathryn Brown is a licensed master social worker in Missouri. During her career, she has specialized in working with international students and immigrants. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology/Intercultural Studies at John Brown University and her MSW from Park University. During graduate school, Mrs. Brown served as a graduate assistant for the International Education office and Department of Social Work. Mrs. Brown is currently under clinical supervision while providing therapy services to refugees and immigrants in Kansas City, MO. She has also completed internships focused on case management, counseling and outreach services for human trafficking survivors.

Vanessa Groves is a licensed master social worker in the state of Missouri. Her area of practice is Couples and Relationship Therapy and works as a Family Systems Therapist counseling families, adults, and adolescents. She received her undergraduate degree in Human Services from Northwest Missouri State University (Maryville, Mo) and her Master's in Social Work from Park University (Parkville, Mo). She is certified in Adult Mental Health First Aid and a member of the National Association of Social Workers.

Regina Montoya first began her career through volunteering and subsequently working for a homeless teen shelter. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology in 2001 from Park University (Parkville, MO). She has worked for government and non-profit agencies serving children and families involved with the State of Missouri foster care system for over 18 years. She recently earned her MSW from Park University in 2022.