The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The central area is white, providing a clean space for the text.

Barriers to Academic Advising

A Shameful Perception

Alix Westgard, MEd

Picture This...



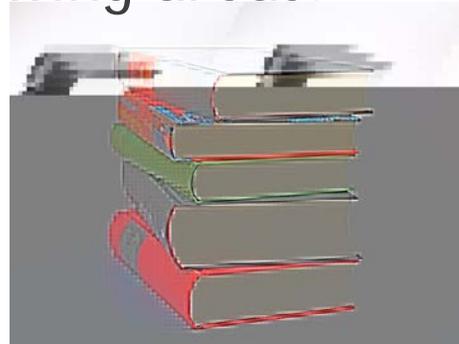
Why Examine Barriers?

- ▶ Most studies within advising look only at client populations
- ▶ This does nothing to show the barriers experienced by those not accessing advising services
- ▶ Without knowledge of these barriers we can't create effective interventions for the broader student body



The Literature

- ▶ I analysed literature in the following areas:
 - ▶ academic advising
 - ▶ academic help-seeking
 - ▶ career advising
- ▶ Most studies were from the academic help-seeking field
- ▶ There are five common factors impacting students' decisions to access academic advising services



Institutional Factors

- ▶ These components at learning institutions may affect help-seeking behaviour
 - ▶ Leadership
 - ▶ Policies
 - ▶ Attitudes



Institutional Factors



- ▶ Promotion of mastery over performance or competition promotes effective help-seeking
- ▶ Conversely, prioritizing competition causes an increase in help-seeking avoidance

Institutional Factors

- ▶ When both the institutional culture and standard teaching approach promote competition over mastery, help-seeking avoidance *will* increase.



Motivation Level and Types

Extrinsic Motivation ↔ Intrinsic Motivation

Low Motivation ↔ High Motivation

Motivation Level and Types

- ▶ Extrinsically motivated students find help-seeking threatening
- ▶ Extrinsically motivated students can view engaging with advising services as not worth the effort
- ▶ Existing extrinsic motivation (i.e. passing the course) is not enough to motivate these students to access advising



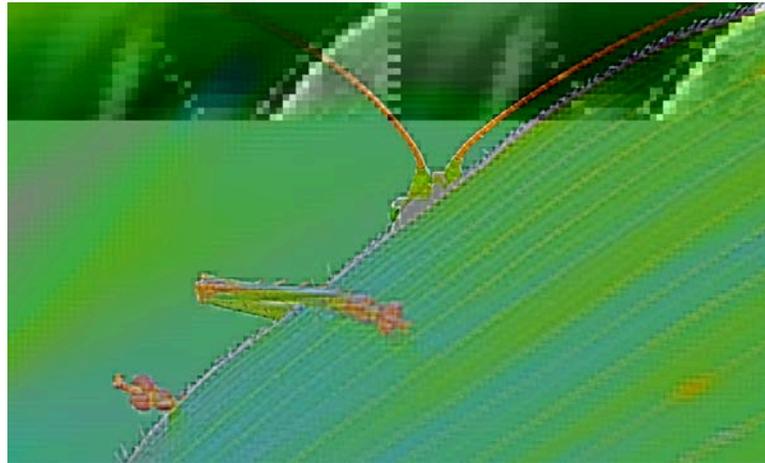
Motivation Level and Types

- ▶ Intrinsically motivated students are more likely to carry through on help-seeking intentions
- ▶ This means they both recognize their need for help and act on it



Motivation Level and Types

- ▶ Both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated students avoid help-seeking



It is evident that multiple factors are working together to prevent students from accessing help when needed

Self-Concealment and Avoidance



- ▶ Students who do not engage with academic advising may be:
 - ▶ avoiding help-seeking
 - ▶ concealing their need for assistance

Self-Concealment and Avoidance

- ▶ Students with reactive or avoidant coping styles are less likely to seek help from available services
- ▶ Reactive and avoidant coping styles appear to be linked to more frequent reports of psychological distress



Self-Concealment and Avoidance



- ▶ Some research has shown that individuals with higher self-concealment tendencies are more likely to seek help
- ▶ This is likely because these individuals experience more negative social events and higher levels of distress

Self-Concealment and Avoidance

- ▶ What about students who aren't aware they need help?
 - ▶ Reflective - self-awareness of own deficiencies
 - ▶ Approach - engage with experts to identify deficiencies
 - ▶ Thus, these students are most likely engaging in avoidant problem solving strategies



Fixed Mindset

We are born with a certain ability level and that is all we can achieve

Growth Mindset

A belief that intelligence is malleable and can be developed



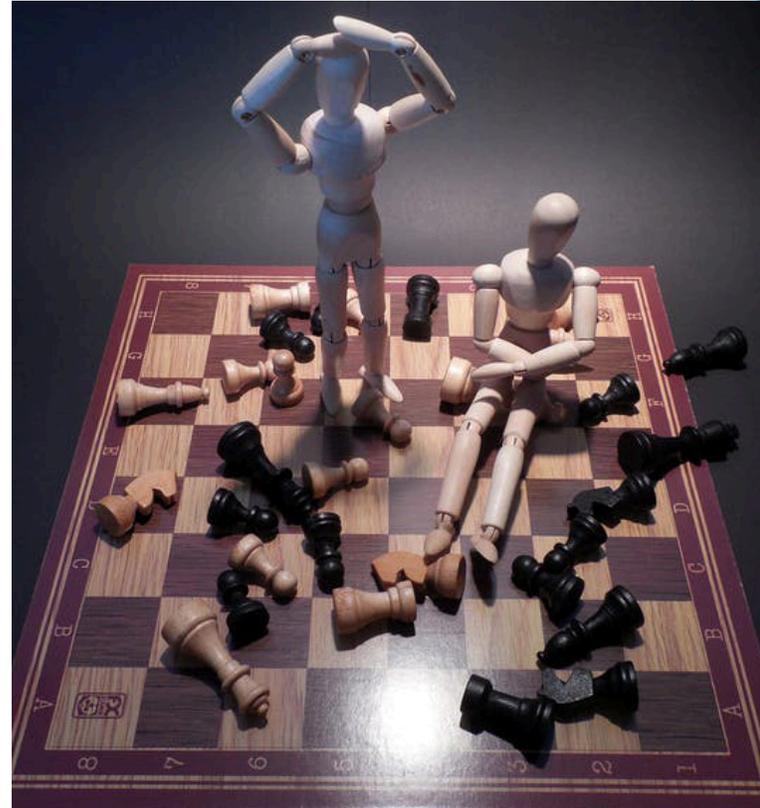
Success or Failure Attributed to Ability

- ▶ Students who repeatedly fail at tasks can develop a fixed mindset
- ▶ When these students are exposed to performance focused classrooms they are less likely to use help focusing on understanding



Success or Failure Attributed to Ability

- ▶ Students with a fixed mindset view help-seeking as threatening
- ▶ Continued failure after receiving help is an example of their low ability
- ▶ Students protect their self-worth by avoiding certain types of help-seeking



Stigma and Shame

Stigma	Shame
Attribute or behaviour stereotyped as negative Society discriminates against this behaviour	Individual's feelings of humiliation in reaction to perceived stigma

Stigma and shame are strongly connected: both play a role in the decision to seek help

Stigma and Shame

- ▶ Most students who identify stigma as an access barrier do so without evidence of anyone being stigmatised
- ▶ Students devalue services as they internalise stigmatised beliefs about them



Stigma and Shame

- ▶ Individuals who are highly prone to shame are more likely to blame failure on low ability

'Shame has been suggested to lie at the core of students' fear of failure and to be associated with what have been called performance-avoidance achievement goals'

Johnson, 2012



Stigma and Shame

Students who choose to engage despite these feelings ultimately find the advantages of receiving help outweigh any fears



How does this all connect?

Stigma and shame represent the overarching barrier facing students deciding to access advising

- ▶ Students are making the decision to avoid advising to protect their status
- ▶ This self-preservation results in the other behaviours and barriers



How does this all connect?

Institutional Factors

Institutional factors represent practices increasing or decreasing stigma within an institution



How does this all connect?

Motivation

Extrinsically motivated students stigmatise help-seeking as evidence of unworthiness for the reward of their education



How does this all connect?

Self-Concealment and Avoidance

Self-concealment is keeping something perceived as negative away from others in order to protect one's ego



How does this all connect?

Belief in Low Ability



For students with a fixed mindset, help-seeking represents evidence of inability visible to faculty, staff, and peers

Breakout Groups

- ▶ Brainstorm solutions to the identified barriers
 - ▶ Example: More presence at orientation, drop in on first year classes, approach advising with more sympathy
- ▶ Some things to consider:
 - ▶ Who is it a solution for?
 - ▶ Think micro, not macro
 - ▶ What can YOU do?
- ▶ Groups will present their top solutions

Failure = Low Ability

Motivation

Institutional

Stigma/Shame

Concealment/Avoidance

Suggested Interventions and Future Research

- ▶ Outreach initiatives
 - ▶ Education programs, advertising campaigns, orientation programs
- ▶ Faculty and staff training
- ▶ Problem solving skills training
- ▶ Intrusive/Proactive advising

Importance of Action

- ▶ This is your chance to reflect and apply these solutions to your own practice
 - ▶ What might you try considering what you've learned

What will you do?

Final Thoughts Questions



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