




EXPERIENCE REPORT


## Promoting the mental health of university students through educational video: experience report

Promoção da saúde mental de universitários por meio de vídeo educativo: relato de experiência  
Promoción de la salud mental de estudiantes universitarios por medio de video educativo: relato de experiencia


Gabriela Araújo Rocha<sup>1</sup>

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8489-8932>


Denival Nascimento Vieira Júnior<sup>2</sup>

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8813-0472>

Renata Kelly dos Santos e Silva<sup>1</sup>

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7509-1790>


Vicente Rubens Reges Brito<sup>1</sup>

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6231-4246>


Joyce Rayane Leite<sup>1</sup>

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1734-8567>

Emanuel Victor Cordeiro da Costa Silva<sup>1</sup>

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8088-3530>

Ana Larissa Gomes Machado<sup>1</sup>

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7937-6996>

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Federal do Piauí (UFPI). Piauí, Brasil. <sup>2</sup>Universidade de São Paulo. São Paulo, Brasil.

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** to report the experience of undergraduate students in Nursing and Medicine in the elaboration and dissemination of a motivational video as a strategy to promote the mental health of university students. **Methods:** this is an experience report about the construction and dissemination of a video produced by students of the Federal University of Piauí, in September 2019, that aimed at promoting the psychological and emotional well-being of the university target audience. The theme chosen encompassed the valorization of life, addressed in the campaign "Yellow September". The research was carried out in the scientific literature on the main psychological demands of university students, then six students with inspiring life stories were selected and followed by the stages of content creation, filming and dissemination of the audiovisual product. **Results:** the statements dealt with the experiences before entering the university, challenges in graduation, financial difficulties, achievements and overcoming. The experience in the construction of motivational video allowed us to contemplate how particular and diverse are the obstacles and overcoming for training in higher education. **Conclusion:** the preparation of the video by the university students proved to be a successful experience because it transmitted in the film examples of mutual support among students who share similar psychological demands, with reports of challenges and achievements in favor of university education.

**Descriptors:** Culturally Appropriate Technology. Audiovisual Aids. Students. Mental Health.

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** relatar a experiência de graduandos em Enfermagem e Medicina na elaboração e divulgação de um vídeo motivacional como estratégia de promoção da saúde mental de estudantes universitários. **Métodos:** relato de experiência acerca da construção e divulgação de um vídeo produzido por discentes da Universidade Federal do Piauí, em setembro de 2019, voltado à promoção do bem-estar psicológico e emocional do público-alvo universitário. A temática escolhida englobou a valorização da vida, abordada na campanha "Setembro Amarelo". Realizou-se uma pesquisa na literatura científica sobre as principais demandas psicológicas de universitários, em seguida, foram selecionados seis discentes com histórias de vida inspiradoras e seguiu-se para as etapas de criação do conteúdo, filmagens e divulgação do produto audiovisual. **Resultados:** os depoimentos trataram sobre as vivências pregressas à entrada na universidade, desafios na graduação, dificuldades financeiras, conquistas e superações. A experiência na construção do vídeo motivacional permitiu contemplar o quão particulares e diversos são os obstáculos e as superações para a formação no ensino superior. **Conclusão:** a elaboração do vídeo pelos universitários demonstrou-se uma experiência exitosa, pois transmitiu na película exemplos de apoio mútuo entre discentes que compartilham de demandas psicológicas semelhantes, com relatos de desafios e conquistas em prol da formação universitária.

**Descritores:** Tecnologias Leves. Recursos Audiovisuais. Estudantes. Saúde Mental.

### RESUMÉN

**Objetivo:** relatar la experiencia de graduados en Enfermería y Medicina en la elaboración y difusión de un video motivacional como estrategia de promoción a la salud mental de estudiantes universitarios. **Métodos:** relato de experiencia sobre la construcción y difusión de un video producido por estudiantes de la Universidade Federal do Piauí, en septiembre/2019, visando promover el bienestar psicológico y emocional del público objetivo. El tema elegido abarcó el aprecio por la vida, abordado en la campaña "Septiembre Amarillo". Se realizó una investigación en la literatura científica sobre las principales demandas psicológicas de universitarios, luego se seleccionaron seis estudiantes con historias de vida inspiradoras y se siguieron las etapas de creación de contenido, filmación y difusión del producto audiovisual. **Resultados:** los testimonios versaron sobre las experiencias previas al ingreso en la universidad, desafíos en la graduación, dificultades económicas, logros y superaciones. La experiencia en la construcción del video motivacional permitió contemplar cuán particulares y diversos son los obstáculos y la superación para la formación superior. **Conclusión:** la elaboración del video fue una experiencia exitosa, ya que transmitió ejemplos de apoyo mutuo entre estudiantes que comparten demandas psicológicas similares, con relatos de desafíos y logros a favor de la formación universitaria.

**Descritores:** Tecnología Culturalmente Apropriada. Recursos Audiovisuales. Estudiantes. Salud Mental.

## INTRODUCTION

Observe, listen, understand, humanize, with the maturing of these characteristics that the doctor Nise da Silveira is represented in the Brazilian feature film "Nise – The Heart of Madness", in which the inauguration of a new psychiatric care movement in Brazil, begun in the 1940s, is portrayed. The psychiatric care of the time was characterized by invasive interventions and that hurt the integrity of the subjects, on the other hand, Nise's actions refuted these cruel conceptions of treatment. Thus, occupational therapy was introduced, giving flow to the "in-body ingenuity", holistically treating the desires and needs of individuals.<sup>(1)</sup>

Nise da Silveira's tireless work served as a structural foundation for the inauguration of the Brazilian Psychiatric Reform and several policies derived from the anti-asylum fight, in which holistic care to an individual should be biopsychosocial, as the focus of a humanized professional action in the promotion of mental health.<sup>(1)</sup>

The process of consolidation of the Brazilian Psychiatric Reform has occurred in nonlinear movements, marked by advances and setbacks. The struggle is to make the voice of those who experience mental suffering audible and validated.<sup>(2)</sup> This care model expands the view of what health is, giving prominence to the subjectivity of the subject, removing the focus of the use of psychotropic drugs as the only therapeutic form and valuing the use of light technologies in mental health promotion practices.<sup>(3)</sup>

The theme of mental health care is comprehensive, being a dimension of human life present in all age groups, circumstances and environments. In this perspective, there are situations that require greater focus on measures to protect the psychological and emotional condition, such as those represented by adaptations. Thus, it is mentioned as an example the entry into higher education and its habituation to this new scenario, because at this moment the students' lives go through many changes previously not experienced, and may be influenced by anxiogenic factors, like anxiety, stress and depression.<sup>(4)</sup>

Admission to the university leads the student to go through three phases, being the first transition from high school to university; followed by contact with professional practice, and, finally, the completion of the course and insertion in the labor market. Each of these steps is marked by aspects, such as: adaptation to each new context, high level of demands in relation to the training process, excessive workload of studies, as well as increasing demands for time organization. These factors are considered as stressors for the emergence of fear, demotivation, anguish, sadness and emotional instability. In addition, they manifest themselves along with low academic performance, absenteeism and successive interruptions during the course, and definitive abandonment may occur.<sup>(5)</sup>

In this scenario of adaptations imposed by academic life, the financial burdens, disordered sleep schedules, new eating routines and constant concerns about the future stand out, becoming a

vulnerable period for the onset of self-medication. The use of these medications is harmful, since no substance is harmless, and the fact is aggravated by the alarming number of university students who use, for example, analgesics and anti-inflammatory drugs. These drugs are easily accessible, but they can cause dependence as a consequence.<sup>(6)</sup>

In a study conducted with university students in a higher education institution in the state of São Paulo, it was found that 39.9% of the students presented a score of classification for suspected cases of mood disorders, anxiety and somatization.<sup>(7)</sup> In view of the psychological and emotional demands presented by university students, assertive strategies of support, encouragement and motivation to this target audience should be planned and used. In this scenario, health technologies emerge as a possibility of recourse to be used, and the format of dissemination of videos is an example of light technology important in the promotion of mental health care, in view of its applicability and scope.<sup>(8)</sup>

Information and communication technologies in health have been widely used in this area, including audiovisual works. Thus, using the audiovisual language that has the ability to reach the viewer in a multisensory way, allowing interactivity and exploring different contexts and realities. The basis of mental health promotion requires that the strategies used are beyond structured technological knowledge or health equipment, and it is necessary to convey sensitive and welcoming messages that consider the uniqueness of individuals and their psychic suffering.<sup>(9)</sup>

In this sense, the use of videos aimed at promoting psychological well-being has been increasingly present in the various possibilities of health care, including the promotion of mental health. Notably, a sensitive scenario in which there is a need for actions that permeate biomedical techniques and prescription of psychotropic drugs. Therefore, contents should be elaborated that transmit to the spectator incentives to deal with their psychological demands within the context of realities close to they live, in a perspective of support, motivation and acceptance.<sup>(10)</sup>

In this context, using resources under video format stimulates interaction and technological appropriation, moreover to problematizes images and narratives, provoking the recognition of the user as the protagonist to assume other roles besides psychic suffering. It is necessary to build alternative spaces that promote conversation with art and the demonstration of other experiences that encourage individuals to have attitudes of resilience during the adversities of life.<sup>(11)</sup>

In view of the above, the development of this study is justified, considering the need to report successful experiences on strategies aimed at promoting the mental and emotional health of university students, evidenced by the indicators of development of anxiety disorders, depression and other anxiogenic factors associated with this public. In this perspective, using the audiovisual resource under the video format, given that this tool is able to capture attention and arouse curiosity, being suitable for the current society that is constantly stimulated

Promoting the mental health of university students through educational video.. to digital technologies. So, this study intended to report the experience of undergraduate nursing and medicine students in the preparation and dissemination of a motivational video as a strategy to promote the mental health of university students.

Thereby, the title of the video originated: "Study: Dream, Fight, Strength, Persistence, Overcoming, Live the Today!", which is available on the Youtube video sharing platform and lasts 9 minutes and 32 seconds.

## METHODS

This is a descriptive study, the type of experience report, about the construction and dissemination of a video aimed at promoting the psychological and emotional well-being of the university target audience. The video was produced by students of the Nursing and Medicine courses of the Federal University of Piauí (UFPI), campus of Picos, in September 2019. The theme chosen encompassed the valorization of life, also addressed in the campaign "Yellow September", adopted in 2015 in Brazil by the Center for The Valorization of Life (CVV), and which highlights actions aimed at suicide prevention.

Studies such as experience reports show importance, as they are instruments that stimulate reflection about practices that occurred in the academic and professional context, having relevance for the scientific community and dissemination of successful experiences, serving as a baseline and direction for the replication of similar experiences.<sup>(12)</sup>

Initially, the research was carried out in the scientific literature to deepen the theme on the main demands required by students during their experience in higher education, in which the prevalence of anxiety, depression and anxiogenic factors resulting from the demands of the undergraduate period was identified.

Sequentially, there was the stage of defining and selecting participants with statements that could impact other students by talking about the moments of obstacles and overcoming in academic life, sharing both their vulnerabilities and the development of resilience and strength. Their origins and trajectories were considered, from the choice of the course until the current semester, directing at the exposure of both the challenges faced and positions achieved during the journey, with the main focus of reporting their experiences and also on the achievements obtained during the confrontation of adversities.

Six students were selected, five from the nursing course and one from the medicine course of UFPI, from several states of the country: Bahia, Ceará, Pernambuco, Piauí and São Paulo, with very diverse life histories, from the family structure to the trajectory for the beginning of academic life, but with something in common: narratives that inspire to overcome challenges in the university environment.

From there, it was followed by the stages of content creation, filming and dissemination. All the steps occurred under the guidance of a professor of nursing course, who develops studies on innovation, development and use of technologies in health care. In addition to the orientation, the teacher also participated in the video and made speeches of encouragement to the students.

The members of the video elaborated a script in which to each participant selected a short expression that synthesized the content of their narrative.

The environment chosen for the filming was a laboratory located in the ambience of the university, looking at the positioning of the ornate scenery, lighting, framing and sound and visual quality. The members expressed their speeches, intonations and gestures spontaneously, in view of the uniqueness of each one, within their chosen narrative theme. This dynamism was important both so that the students could feel at ease in front of the camera and report fluidly, besides, to bring listeners closer to their realities and arouse attention, interest and curiosity.

The editing of the video was carried out by an information technology professional and audiovisual editor, who together with the members of the video, elaborated strategies for the positioning of speeches in the mixing, in order to optimize the purpose of the video, making it attractive and dynamic, with improvements in lighting, addition of the description of participants and subtitles.

Regarding the ethical and legal aspects, this study is a report of experience developed from the experiences of the authors themselves, without direct intervention or exposure that put at risk other individuals, the need for appreciation by the Research Ethics Committee is not necessary, according to Resolution No. 466/2012.<sup>(13)</sup>

## RESULTS

Initially, the video encourages students to have dreams, incited by the medical student who studied six years of pre-vestibular until the long-awaited approval in medicine in a public university, giving concrete to his dream that was born in the inside of the state of Pernambuco.

Then, even after approval, the dream of achieving higher education is confronted by the economic barriers imposed by the cost of living away from the family and city of origin, even as by the burden of maintaining housing, food and purchasing study materials. In particular, the health courses of public universities, which take place full-time, significantly hinder the exercise of paid activities, which causes a great change in the routine of the student who once contributed to expenses and becomes dependent on family income.

A reality reported by a student was about the lack of accreditation on the part of her family members in the search for professionalization in a higher education course. Nevertheless, she changed her job in the largest Brazilian metropolis for life in the interior of Piauí in search of better education, and after winning her place at the university she discovered herself pregnant with twins. Pregnancy has brought new challenges to be overcome to reconcile the roles of mother, housewife, home provider and university student, as she reports in the video, that her training takes place more lightly, respecting her own time and limits, noting that she has persisted and that the important thing is not to



give up her dream and, for this, it seeks ways to continue reconciling graduation with motherhood.

Other topics addressed were overcoming the fear of public speaking, anxiety and neglect of one's own health, making use of self-medication. The report of a student born in Bahia describes the first periods as the most difficult due to anxiety disorder, but who over time learned to live and reach prominent positions in the university through participation in research groups, presentation and publication of academic papers. Achievements, once, not considered by psychological adversities.

Using the theme "Overcoming" a nursing graduate shared other barriers besides financial ones, in which family issues that made it impossible for her to move to participate in scientific events seemed an impediment to her academic and professional growth. She reported that throughout the journey, she often neglected her health and used self-medication as a way to mitigate biological disorders caused by emotional overload, suffocated by excessive caffeine intake, common among university students to endure long periods without sleep. Still with so many mishaps, he managed to achieve academic success, overcoming the fear of public speaking and admits today that he recognizes that it takes time to take care of herself and her own physical and mental health.

In a singular way, the statements dealt with the experiences before entering the university, challenges during graduation, financial difficulties and obstacles faced when leaving their homeland and family members in favor of training in higher education.

The experience of the undergraduates in the construction of motivational video allowed us to contemplate how particular and diverse are the obstacles and overcoming for training in higher education. The feeling envisioned by the participants of the video is that, still through difficulties, one is not alone, and that each one has within himself a unique force, which can only be discovered in the face of a brave act of courage: do not give up!

During the speeches, the importance of requesting help and maintaining interaction with people as a tool for coping with adversities, fears, dream support and academic growth was reinforced. All the statements were intended to pass on to other students representative moments that marked the trajectory contained there, in order to provoke the feeling that it is possible to overcome the challenging moments of the academic cycle.

Regarding the dissemination of the video, we used the face-to-face and online media to disseminate the audiovisual product among students, professors and the entire academic community during the activities of allusion to the campaign of "Yellow September", which take place annually at the university, with the support of the Student Assistance Center (NAE). Thus, the auditorium was used for lectures of suicide prevention, valorization of life and motivational video was exhibited.

In addition, social media features were used, such as social networks and sharing in instant messaging groups, to more comprehensively reach the target population.

It is considered that the elaborated video was efficient in promoting the mental health of university students, since positive feedback emerged through sharing by other students and teachers. Emotional statements about the messages conveyed came against the actors in the video, so that they contributed so that freshmen and veterans could identify with the stories of life narrated and feel welcomed in the academy, generating a motivational environment, mutual support and emotional care.

## DISCUSSION

The production of educational videos directed to communities, aiming at health promotion, acts in the sensitization of social groups about some problems, thus marking to positively interfere in behaviors towards certain health conditions. Corroborating this, advances in mobile technologies and virtual communication allow audiovisual tools to contribute as facilitating agents in the dissemination of accessible health education.<sup>(14-15)</sup>

The advent of mobile technologies has exponentially revolutionized the ways of living, communicating, interacting and perceiving the world. In this, it can also be used as channels to demonstrate empathy, support and to reinforce that many difficulties can be better overcome when having people with similar stories.

During the reproduction of a video, it is essential that the discourses between the participants of the material be consistent with the interest and close to the reality of the subjects that will be achieved, making it at the same time an inclusive and dynamic technology, because there is care in the use of interactive images and sound, in order to arouse the interest of the target audience.<sup>(16)</sup>

In this sense, the actors in the video should use expressions of easy understanding and act spontaneously. The clarity and objectivity of the language avoid the tiredness and dispersion of the receiver when watching, making the display fluid and, by capturing attention, consequently culminates in a greater absorption of the content and brings reflection on the subject addressed. One should therefore prioritize an interactive language that provides a conversation environment between senders and receivers.<sup>(17)</sup>

Thus, during the construction of the students' reports, we tried to use the appropriate language, while the participants were free to express themselves spontaneously, in order to reach the understanding of the university students. This makes it easier for viewers to identify when watching the actual stories portrayed, consequently being an assertive requirement during the video construction experience.

It is noteworthy that the editing of the video was also an important step to ensure a quality product, given that it is necessary editions, with the combination of images, musical background, sounds and speeches that must be synchronized, in order to be able to express and awaken sensations, feelings and thoughts, favoring the construction of reasoning and dialogic between actors and spectators. So, it involved a preparation of the transmitted message to

reach the receivers through a communication technique, making the contents more attractive and simplified, contributing to the fixation of the displayed theme.<sup>(18)</sup>

In a study conducted in China with the application of 586 questionnaires, social media represented to be the preferred platform for the use of mental health services (64.9%), while among health professionals, most preferred applications for smartphones (75.1%), evidencing the potential that technological resources have in mental health care when they are the way of choosing professionals and users.<sup>(19)</sup>

When investigating the impact caused by the pandemic on the mental health of university students, Rodrigues and collaborators<sup>(20)</sup>, they identified that studies related to the mental health of university students mainly address students in the health area, and that the findings commonly deal with psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress.

A study that evaluated the prevalence of depression among Chinese university students found a percentage of 28.4%.<sup>(21)</sup> Another similar cross-sectional study conducted in Ethiopia found concordant results, in which 28.2% of the university students had depression and associated factors.<sup>(22)</sup>

Anxiety disorder is another common mental health problem in college students, triggered by excessive worries and stresses. This was corroborated by two studies, in which one was conducted at selected private and government universities throughout Malaysia, which recorded a prevalence of anxiety risk of 29%.<sup>(23)</sup> The other estimated the prevalence of anxiety in students in Afghanistan, finding a prevalence of 40%.<sup>(24)</sup>

In view of this global scientific evidence, all these studies highlight the current risk of prevalence of depression and anxiety in the university environment, suggesting the development of actions expected at promoting the mental health of students, considering the debilitating impact on their biopsychosocial, emotional and interpersonal well-being. In this sense, being able to recognize that other students face adversity in the same university context could arouse a sense of mutual support for sharing experiences, serving as a realistic incentive that it would be possible to find ways to improve academic performance, as occurred with the life stories narrated in the video and shared with the other students.

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The limitation is the absence of other studies with follow-up similar to that developed here, when reporting on the construction of a motivational video for the university public. This is because the construction of videos pointed at students are usually educational in nature and in order to promote didactic learning of a specific content of a particular curriculum. Thus, the present study contributes as a basic methodological line so that the use of light technologies, such as videos, is used as a new resource for the promotion of mental health among university students, contributing to reach students in situations of vulnerability and psychological suffering, acting as a source of emotional support from the sharing of similar life situations.

Accordingly, it is suggested that future development studies of interventions that motivate and support the mental and emotional well-being of students, serving as a foundation resource to adequately address and manage the problem.

## CONCLUSION

The elaboration of audiovisual material by university students proved to be a successful experience, as it transmits in the film examples of mutual support among students who share similar psychological demands, with reports of challenges and achievements in favor of training in higher education. Thus, evidencing the strength and power of dreams, private struggles, study, persistence, overcoming and, mainly, on the importance of not giving up and living today as supports for personal and professional fulfillment. Through the production, dissemination and analysis of the impact of this short film, the importance of approaches that see on the theme of mental health care is evidenced, that instill, encourage and support individuals in their entirety, giving vent to their longings and needs, in a holistic way.

It is considered that the use of audiovisual resources is relevant and effective in the promotion of mental health, when also used for this purpose. This is because it allows an ease of propagation and reach, when combined with an accessible language and appropriate editing, imbued with messages motivating the sharing of real-life stories, which contributed to the psychological strengthening of individuals who experience emotional effort.

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**Corresponding author:**

Gabriela Araújo Rocha

Email: [gabrielaaraujorocha@hotmail.com](mailto:gabrielaaraujorocha@hotmail.com)

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