



September 2018

# Prevalence and Correlates of Mental Health Literacy in Tennessee

Angela Bowman MA

*Middle Tennessee State University*, [asb5c@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:asb5c@mtmail.mtsu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ejournal.tnmed.org/home>

### Recommended Citation

Bowman, Angela MA (2018) "Prevalence and Correlates of Mental Health Literacy in Tennessee," *Tennessee Medicine E-Journal*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 3 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://ejournal.tnmed.org/home/vol3/iss3/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Tennessee Medicine e-Journal. It has been accepted for inclusion in Tennessee Medicine E-Journal by an authorized editor of Tennessee Medicine e-Journal.

## *Prevalence and Correlates of Mental Health Literacy in Tennessee*

**Background:** Mental health literacy (MHL) includes attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs about mental illness and can impact prevention, recognition, or management of a disease (Jorm, Korten et al. 1997). MHL plays a critical role in supporting mental health, as well as reducing stigma through increased knowledge. Mental illness recognition has increased, while other components of MHL such as defining, awareness of symptoms, and seeking treatment remain low (Kim, Saw, & Zane, 2015). This study examines the prevalence and correlates of MHL among college aged individuals.

**Objectives:** This study examines the prevalence and correlates of MHL among college aged individuals.

**Methods:** Data were collected from students (N = 200; Age = 18–24) at a southeastern university in Tennessee using the Mental Health Literacy Scale (MHLS) (O'Connor & Casey, 2015), demographics, and experience with mental health issues.

**Results:** When controlling for gender and major, those who had (or knew a close loved one who had) prior experience with mental health issues had higher mental health literacy (M = 118.33, SD = 3.29) than those who had no prior experience (M = 113.03, SD = 3.56); ANOVA results as follows: [MHLS  $F(4, 196) = 4.91, p = .002, \eta^2 = .30$ ].

**Conclusion:** Individuals 18–24 had lower MHL scores than the general population. Those with prior experience with mental health issues had increased MHL including stigma related literacy. Mental health education may be key to reducing stigma toward mental illness, but further study is needed to evaluate the relationship between literacy and stigma.