



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**HEALING THE WOUNDED STUDENT: UNIVERSITY SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGIES FROM A HUMANISED CARE PERSPECTIVE****SANAR AL ESTUDIANTE HERIDO: ESTRATEGIAS DE PREVENCIÓN DEL SUICIDIO EN LA UNIVERSIDAD DESDE LA PERSPECTIVA DEL CUIDADO HUMANIZADO****CURANDO O ALUNO FERIDO: ESTRATÉGIAS DE PREVENÇÃO DE SUICÍDIO NA UNIVERSIDADE A PARTIR DE UMA PERSPECTIVA DE ATENDIMENTO HUMANIZADO****Claudio Aranguiz Bravo**<sup>1a</sup> <sup>1</sup>Universidad de las Américas, Santiago, Chile.<sup>a</sup>**Corresponding author:** caranguiz@udla.cl **Cite as:** Aranguiz C. Healing the Wounded Student: University Suicide Prevention Strategies from a Humanised Care Perspective. Rev. chil. enferm. 2023;5(1):7-9. <https://doi.org/10.5354/2452-5839.2023.70428>

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Dear Editor:

More than 700,000 people die due to suicide every year, this being the fourth main cause of death among young people aged between 15 and 29 years. A history of previous suicide attempts is the most significant risk factor in the general population. At a global level, 77% of suicides occur in low- and mid-income countries, affecting people of all ages and from all regions.<sup>1</sup>

A study recently published in Chile analyzed the responses of 5,037 undergraduate students from Santiago, evaluating aspects such as mental health symptoms, family history, and substance use, among others. The researchers found a high prevalence of mental health problems, for example, stress, anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, and suicide risk, where higher levels were observed than those reported by the international literature. Suicide risk (20.4%) was examined considering four degrees, from hopelessness to suicide attempt. The results revealed that the main difficulties are faced during the second year of university and among newly admitted students, which poses the need to implement support strategies and assess their effectiveness.<sup>2</sup>

In the context of health and social care careers, we must recognize that numerous students choose this field based on their own experiences of suffering, which moves them to assist others going through similar situations. Therefore, it is essential to address this aspect during their academic training and encourage an approach that values and responds to the subjectivities of emotionally wounded students.<sup>3-5</sup>

Dear editor, what would be the solution to this issue, then? Would it be to apply filters to admission that exclude “wounded” students? This approach is not recommended.

These individuals, according to the archetype of the wounded healer proposed by Carl Jung, are able to develop outstanding abilities to care for and heal others if they are provided with adequate support. This is because, when tackling and overcoming their own experiences of suffering, they achieve deep understanding and empathy for other people’s pain.<sup>6-7</sup> Additionally, it is necessary to consider the emotional exhaustion (burnout) that may be experienced throughout university life and its relationship with suicidal ideation.<sup>8</sup>

Educational institutions and academic disciplines have the opportunity to promote their students’ mental health starting from their instruction.<sup>9</sup> Based on Jung’s Wounded Healer theory and Watson’s theories of Human Care and Transpersonal Caring, we propose certain strategies to be implemented in the university population, with evidence of their impact, in order to prevent suicide in university students.<sup>6,10,11</sup>

- To create protocols and training programs on psychological first aid, aimed at teachers and students, that allow them to respond efficiently and appropriately to situations of emotional crisis.<sup>12,13</sup>
- To create safe and supportive spaces within the university, where students can express their emotions, receive help, and heal.<sup>14,15</sup>
- To develop workshops and extracurricular activities, as well as incorporate contents in the syllabi that are centered around self-care, resilience, spirituality, and teach to identify symptoms of emotional disturbances.<sup>16,17</sup>

The aforementioned actions will make it possible for the students to strengthen their coping and stress management skills, and their connection to personal values and beliefs, while promoting shared awareness and responsibility regarding mental health care in the university community.

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