

# Improving Counseling Outcomes for Diabetics by Understanding the Impact of Diabetic Shame and Distress

Sponsor:



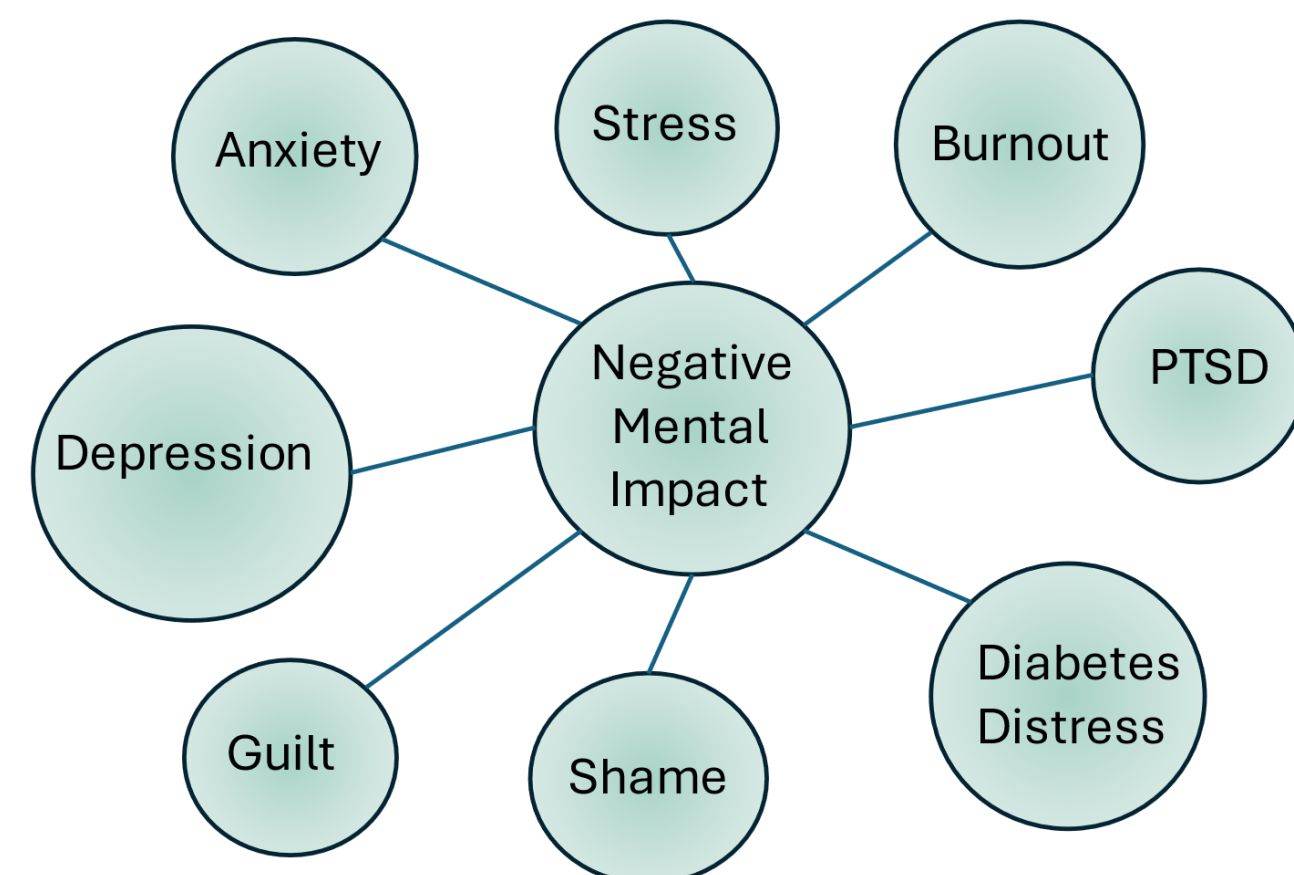
OFFICE OF  
**STUDENT RESEARCH**  
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## Introduction

- **34.2 million Americans have diabetes** (CDC 2020)
  - 90-95% Type 2 (T2D)
  - 5% Type 1 (T1D)
- **Stressors of newly diagnosed:**
  - Adopt healthy diet
  - Learn new monitoring equipment
  - Learn how to dose medication
  - Strict daily monitoring
  - Chronic disease with no cure
- **Current standard of care after diagnosis:**
  - Single session
  - Crash course in disease management, disease monitoring equipment, medication, lifestyle changes
  - LITTLE TO NO PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT
- **Long-Reaching Mental Health concerns related to Diabetes:**

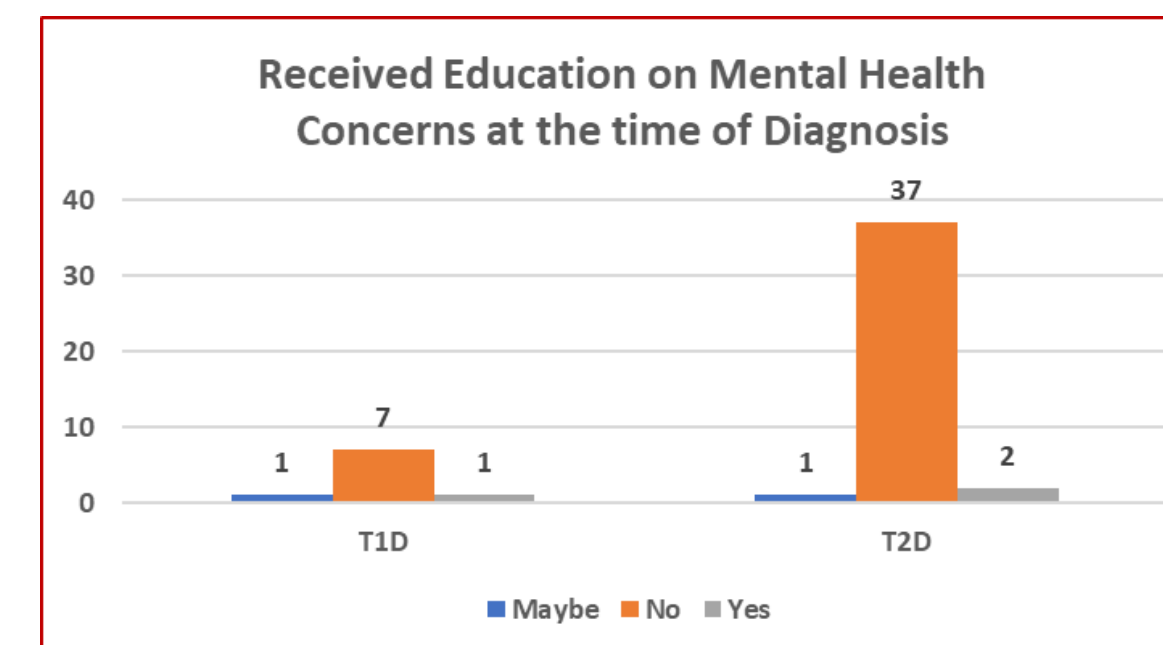


- **Improved provider education leads to improved patient:**
  - Self-advocacy
  - Diabetic management
  - Quality of life

## Methodology

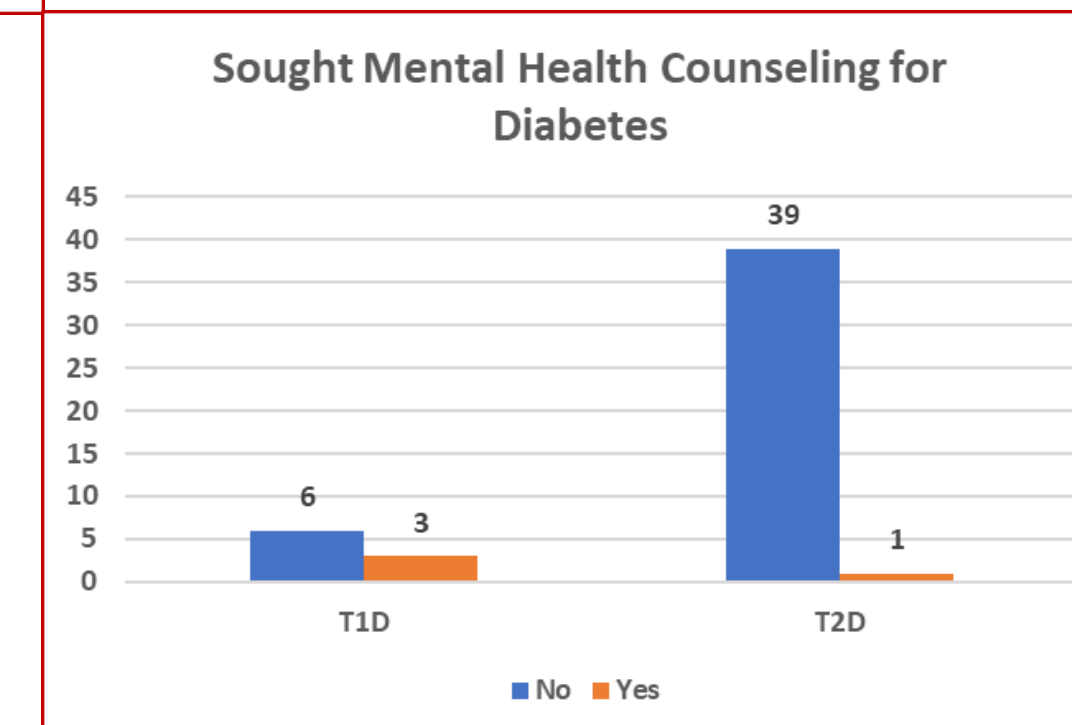
- **07/2024 - Literature review 40+ articles**
- **03/2025 - Quantitative Assessment of Current Care Protocol through surveying:**
  - Diabetics
  - Primary Care Physicians
  - Mental Health Therapists
- **05/2025 - Quantitative Analysis of Survey Data**
- **07/2025 - Presentation of research findings**

## Results



Of the diabetics surveyed, only 1 out of 9 (11%) type 1 and 2 out of 40 (5%) type 2 individuals had received psychoeducation on the potential mental health concerns of living with diabetes at the time of their diagnosis.

Of the diabetics surveyed, only 3 out of 9 (33%) type 1 diabetics and only 1 out of 40 (2.5%) type 2 diabetics sought counseling for diabetes related mental health concerns.



### •Key definitions:

- **Diabetes** is a chronic disease characterized by inadequate blood glucose control
- **Shame** is a painful self-conscious emotion that comes from believing we are flawed or have done something, failed to do something, or experienced something to make us feel unworthy of connection
- **Guilt** is feeling bad or worrying that you've caused harm or have made a mistake
- **Social stigma** is the public's negative reaction to a group based on stereotypes
- **Internalized stigma** is a negative attitude toward themselves due to their condition
- **Diabetic Distress** is the negative toll an individual experiences from living with and managing diabetes

- **45% of diabetics have diabetic distress (based on literature survey)**
- **Blaming and shaming - key components of diabetic distress**
- **Diabetics have a 24% increased chance of developing depression**
- **Suicidal ideation rate is 7x higher in diabetics** than general population
- **Gap in care** - current diabetes management guidelines are written from the medical model and do NOT include a psychological component
- **Providers need to assess and address diabetic distress, shame, and guilt**

## Significance of Project

- **Providers use proven, existing assessment tools to detect diabetic distress, shame, and guilt**
- **Addressing negative psychological impacts of diabetes** leads to improved disease management, physical health, mental health, and overall quality of life
- **Educate more mental health counselors** using psychoeducation on diabetes distress and effective treatments (programs/workshops are needed)
- **Diabetic distress trained therapists:** get listed in ADA directory for physicians to refer patients to
- **For non-trained therapists:** use ACT, CBT, CFT, and Motivational Interviewing directed to address diabetic distress
- **Suggested improvements to standard of care after diagnosis:**
  - Survival tips for first three weeks of diagnosis
  - Connect client with a therapist with knowledge of Diabetic Distress Management
  - Teach disease management in depth, one month after diagnosis
- **Treatment for Diabetic Distress:**
  - Physician directs client to a therapist who can treat Diabetic Distress
  - ADA Directory of Trained Therapists (limited list)
  - Non-Diabetic Trained Therapists can use: CBT, CFT, ACT, and Motivational Interviewing

## References

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