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In-depth Interview: Heels and Hearts

The interview took place in the Carolina Union on a Tuesday afternoon. The interviewee, Anna Elsasser, was a sophomore. She was a female, media and journalism major with a concentration in advertising and public relations from Charlotte, North Carolina. Elsasser had connections to the topic of diabetes via her mother. Elsasser explained that her mother has type-2 diabetes and she has learned to help her mother deal with the disease. Her connection to diabetes made her a great potential resource for information about the marketing of the club due to the potential for Heels and Hearts outreach to those who do not have the disease themselves but are effected directly via family or friends.

As a full-time college student, Elsasser explained she spends her time doing school work, hanging out with her friends, and watching Netflix. She is involved in Alpha Delta Pi sorority, PRSSA, and a religious society.

Prior to this interview, Elsasser had no idea what Heels and Hearts was. However, after a brief explanation, she had a general idea of the supportive nature of the group. This revealed that those with tight connections to the disease do not know of the presence of the club on campus. This is despite Elsasser's expressed interest in getting involved with an awareness club in support of her mother. Those who have a close connection to the disease appear to have interest in getting closer to those who experience the struggles day-to-day. Her involvement with the disease came from her growing up in household surrounded by this issue. She believed that those who are effected just as much as she is would also be interested in getting involved with the issue as well as those interested in the health field. A major insight expressed from the interview with Elsasser was the necessity for the club to reach out to college students due to the issue of alcohol consumption. Experiencing it first-hand with a friend, she expressed that it is necessary for those close to diabetics to know how to help in a situation of dire need when a diabetic cannot administer their own needs. This group is seen as a way to create awareness events, support, and a community with health resources. Elsasser also suggested guides for dieting. The interview also revealed that even those who are close to a diabetic may not have all of the knowledge they desire about the disease. This club could give her insight into the details of the disease. She explained that she is very close to her mother's struggles and has to be there for her when health-care troubles arise or technology is not properly available to her. The regulation of the disease is a family wide experience despite Elsasser herself not having the disease. It is also the impending and potential inheritance of the disease Elsasser has to face herself as well. As a club expected to garner attention, she wanted to see them potentially host awareness events or provide food in the pit to raise funds for the cause. She revealed that she most often paid attention to flyers on the back of bathroom stalls and Facebook invites for events on campus. She believed the info needs to be spread more around campus due to the size of the club and her personal lack of knowledge about its presence on campus. For college students especially, it is important for diabetics to feel as though there is a community when they have to focus on so many other responsibilities in day-to-day life. She summed up

potential future awareness by explaining that the club must form an environment focused on comfort and awareness.

The results of the interview coincided with a large amount of the ethnography results. From the market research, it was fairly easy to understand that the club did not have a very large presence on campus. The members did not have a very loud voice when it came to social media or general awareness. Elsasser, a person with very personal connections to diabetes, did not know of Heels and Hearts in the slightest. The members of the group throughout the ethnographic study appeared to be hesitant to reach out to others on campus and were relying heavily on the idea that they were at a stopping point when it came to growth of outreach. They did not create much noise surrounding the upcoming events for the club, noticeable by Elsasser.

The interview was limited due to Elsasser's general lack of knowledge surrounding the club. Unlike many other businesses or organizations, Heels and Hearts' small presence on campus creates a difficult environment to be researched in. Although Elsasser has close ties to the disease, she had no idea as to what the club even entailed until informed half-way through the interview. This caused a lot of the questions about the club to be explained or posed in a hypothetical manner. An interviewee who was removed from the club while still knowing general structures of the group would be beneficial, however there were not many students or people in the community who fit this mold. This proved the insight that not many people know anything remotely about the group. Another limitation was the inability to access people who were closer to the club. An email was sent out to an advisor in the club about a potential interview about set-backs and potential growth strategies, however the advisor never replied to the initial inquiry. This shifted the angle of the interview to the stance of Elsasser, who was removed from the club but still had a family connection to the disease.

Some new research questions about the club stem from the lack of awareness that even someone with close ties to the issue has. How would the club create outreach to those who are not specifically connected to diabetes by having the disease? How can they shift their environment and atmosphere to include those who are interested in getting involved with the club in order to promote awareness for those who they care about? Would a bigger presence on campus diminish the general bond the current club members have or would it promote a strong connection between the people who are eager to devote themselves to the cause?

Challenges for potential club members in relation to current members is the inability to know when and where the meetings are held. The general awareness of when the club meeting is held seems fleeting and unreliable. There also appears to be disconnect throughout social media between the current members and those who potentially want to join. The members expressed how the Facebook page is not used and there is no other form of social media. The website is not being updated as well, creating confusion about the relevance of the club today.

Overall, Elsasser's interview gave much needed information about someone who could potentially join the club in order to support the cause. Heels and Hearts has a lot more work to do in order to arouse more interest from those not currently in the club. From this, it is obvious that there is a need for specific quantitative research about how many people on campus actually know about the club, despite their background in the disease.

Interview Questions and Raw Answers

- **What is your name, year, and major?**
 - Anna Elsasser, Sophomore, Ad and Pr
- **Where are you from?**
 - Charlotte NC
- **How do you like to spend your free time?**
 - I do my school work, I spend time with my friends, I like to watch Netflix and movies and read books.
- **Favorite past time?**
 - I like to eat out.
- **What clubs/ things are you involved in?**
 - I am in a sorority: Alpha Delta Pi. I am also a member of the PRSSA group club. I am hoping to be a part of heelprint communications and get a job at the Carolina Union. I sometimes go to religious events.
- **How important is diabetes to you?**
 - Pretty important, because my mom has had it for almost all her life, and she struggles a lot with it, she has it in correlation with her weight, big struggle regulating weight and managing diabetes and making sure she's healthy. She's always had to wrangle the medical system with it, hard with money and get technology that isn't a pain in the butt to use. She's had to switch pumps and distributors to give her stuff she needs with shipping etc. Really hard in day to day to manage, consumes a lot of her daily thoughts and think about that, very exhausting.
- **What do you know about diabetes from your personal experience?**
 - When your body isn't able to produce the proper amount of insulin to regulate sugar levels, manually give yourself insulin, not sure how you get it. Pancreas?
- **Do you know of a club named Heels and Hearts?**
 - No. What is that?
- **It is a club related to supporting diabetes. What do you think Heels and Hearts entails?**
 - Support group who have diabetes or are effected to meet and be together.
- **What other causes have you been involved with?**
 - Care about children's literacy, women's rights, sexual assault awareness and emotional abuse in relationships. Racial issues.
- **Who are you closest with?**
 - My family (mom dad brother's sister and law), friends who I live with a lot of.
- **How likely are you to donate your money to a cause looking to find a cure for diabetes?**
 - Pretty likely, very great for future generations, not something they had to worry about anymore, hereditary is likelihood, kids me etc. One of the only prominent diseases that can be triggered by lifestyle which makes it hard.
- **Does a club like Heels and Hearts interest you?**

- Yeah, I would because I care about the issue.
- **How does the issue have relevance to you?**
 - Because my mother had diabetes and has before I was born. And I see how difficult it is for her to deal with in her day to day.
- **Why do you think someone would join this club?**
 - Mainly if they are affected by it or personally effected by someone they care about, interest in health field.
- **What would a club of this sort offer to its members?**
 - Support, group events, being part of a community and health resources. Dieting guides, regulating alcohol consumption with diabetes, applicable to college students.
- **Do you know about specific brands related to diabetes?**
 - No, overlook it medical brand names. Brand makes purple pumps.
- **Have you ever gotten involved with at a diabetes awareness on campus?**
 - I have not.
- **How do you feel about type-2 diabetes and the way it is seen in society?**
 - I think people think you have diabetes if you're overweight. That's the stigma and people think it could have been prevented if you controlled how much you ate and had a healthier lifestyle. My mom got it regulating after her pregnancy and some people are just born with it. It's very diverse disease and I feel like people pigeon hole the disease. I also know very thin people who have it and its crazy how people stereotype because people would never say those people wouldn't get cancer.
- **What celebrities or notable people do you associate with diabetes?**
 - Nick Jonas, my god sister and I went to a Jonas brother concert and she loved him the best because he has diabetes and she has diabetes. And she got to meet them because of that connection.
- **How do you think the club should raise awareness?**
 - Awareness events, food in the pit etc to raise funds. I would attend those events.
- **Are you interested in Heels and Hearts?**
 - Yeah.
- **What is the most effective way to spread information about a club on campus in your mind?**
 - Look at people put on the back of bathroom stall doors, table in the pit, if they have a facebook event that they put in UNC class of 2021.
- **How effective do you think support groups are for those with diabetes?**
 - I think they are important, when you're a college student struggling you feel like you have to do all these extra things. And it can be hard with people with diabetes but it can also be hard on them when they have loved ones or friends. You have to be knowledgeable enough to step in and help them, it can be a worry for people not just people with diabetes.
- **How important is diabetes awareness on campus?**

- I'd say it's very important given that there are 11 people in this club, there are so many more people on campus who has it. It's definitely prevalent but it's not being addressed. It is definitely needed.
- **How can we make sure it is talked about?**
 - Awareness and creating an environment where people who do have the disease feel comfortable talking about it in different forms.