It Takes a Village: Your Role in Promoting Mental Health

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Today’s Program

• Brief overview of SCS trends
• Factors that contribute to positive and negative mental health for students
• Model of broad shared responsibility for promoting mental health
• Opportunity to begin to assess your role as an individual and as a department
Our Clients

- Top 3 presenting concerns are anxiety, depression and relationship concerns
- We currently serve roughly 8% of the campus population in any given year
- We responded to 507 daytime emergency or walk in situations this year, and 157 after hours or weekend emergencies
- In addition to individual therapy, we run 10-15 general groups and 7-12 topic oriented or structured groups per year
Trends in Student Counseling Services

![Graph showing trends in student counseling sessions and enrollment per 100 students from FY88 to FY14. The graph indicates a steady increase in counseling sessions over the years, while enrollment per 100 students remains relatively constant.]
What Contributes to Poor Mental Health?

- Academic failure
- Emotional immaturity
- Excessive substance use
- Loneliness
- Family conflict
- Personal loss
- Poor work skills and habits
- Social incompetence
- Stressful life events

- Social and Environmental Factors
- Access to drugs and alcohol
- Isolation and alienation
- Peer rejection
- Work stress
What Contributes to Positive Mental Health?

- Ability to cope with stress
- Adaptability
- Autonomy
- Exercise
- Feelings of mastery and control
- Problem-solving skills
- Self-esteem
- Social conflict management skills
- Stress management
- Social support of family and friends
- Positive interpersonal interactions
- Social participation
- Social support and community networks

The Campus Program Framework

- Policy, Systems & Strategic Planning
- Develop Life Skills
- Connectedness
- Academic Performance
- Student Wellness
- Identify Students at Risk
- Increase Help-Seeking Behavior
- Provide Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services
- Means Restriction & Environmental Safety
Identify Students at Risk

- Gather information about mental health history on medical history forms.
- Protocols to connect students with histories to services.
- Availability of “screening days”
- Health service clinicians should routinely screen
- Gatekeeper program to train faculty and staff to identify and refer
- Online resources
- Training of student leaders
- Training for general students
- Information for parents/families
- Behavioral intervention team in place
- System in place to have advisors meet with students who are struggling academically to explore for possible emotional issues
Means Restriction and Environmental Safety

- Environmental scan for access to lethal means
- Restricted access to rooftops, windows, balconies, bridges, medications, etc.
- Break-away closet rods in residence halls
- Policy limiting or containing firearms on campus
- Tracking of toxic substances in labs
- Prescription drug collection/return
- Late night transport and/or escort system
Policy, Systems and Strategic Planning

- Emotional health as a campus-wide issue
- Interdisciplinary task force or committee
- Strategic planning to identify national and campus-specific trends, and use of campus data to inform planning and programming
- System to assess budgetary needs for programs and plans
Policy

- Health insurance for all students
- Medical leave of absence policies
- Protocols for mandatory leaves
- Emergency/disaster plans
- Postvention plans
- Alcohol and substance abuse policies
- Connection with local communities re: substance abuse prevention
- Protocols for transport of intoxicated or overdosed/distressed students
- Follow-up with students who have overdosed
Connectedness

- Careful and consistent oversight of fraternities and sororities
- Peer mentoring programs or programs to connect students to small peer groups
- Programs/activities that promote continuing communication between students and their families and connections to community based cultural, religious or national groups
- Group building programs in residence halls
- Systems to identify and support disconnected or isolated students
- Programs to support connectedness among high(er) risk student groups
Examples of Critical Life Skills

- Interpersonal communication/human relations
- Establishing relationships
- Physical fitness/health maintenance
- Problem-solving/decision-making
- Assessing and analyzing information
- Identifying and solving problems
- Setting goals
- Managing time
- Resolving conflicts
- Identity development/ purpose in life
- Developing awareness of personal and emotional identity
- Maintaining one's self esteem
- Clarifying values
- Developing meaning of life
- Managing finances

Academic Performance

- Programs/groups to address study skills and test anxiety
- Access to academic support services, including free or inexpensive tutoring
- Opportunities for students to evaluate course workload and course stress level
- Programs and campaigns to educate students about links between good physical and emotional health and academic success
Student Wellness

- Programs that address stress and time management
- Information about physical health and wellness, sleep, nutrition and exercise
- Student-run campaigns to educate peers about mental health, substance abuse, general health and relationship health and safety
- Collegiate recovery community or substance-free housing
- Free access to a gym
- Orientation includes information about school policies related to substance abuse
- Campaigns about opiate misuse
- Metrics collected on the reach of messaging campaigns
- Defined spaces for student groups to meet
- Regular alcohol-free events and activities, including late night
- Active club and intramural program
- Education about links between substance use, poor academic performance, accidents and relationship violence
Increase Help-Seeking Behavior

- Counseling center and health education websites readily accessible from university homepage
- Well publicized/easily accessed screening tools for depression, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders
- Online information about substance misuse and mental health that is cross referenced
- Peer mental health education or peer counseling
- Anti-stigma campaigns
- Campaigns to inform students about campus resources