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Key Factors in Promoting Success in Students with Mental Health Disorders

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OBJECTIVES

- Review the prevalence of mental health disorders among university students & impact on academic performance
- Describe risk factors inherent in college life for mental health destabilization
- Identify key roles of academic advisors in promoting success
- Discuss resources available to students to promote success

Prevalence of Mental Health Disorders

- ~1 in every 4-5 youth meets criteria for SMI by 18 years of age
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth & young adults 15-34 years of age
- 40% of youth with a mental health disorder met criteria for > one disorder
- 50% of all mental health disorders begin by age 14 and 75% occur by age 24. Therefore university students may have their first mental health crisis while enrolled.

(CDC, 2018)

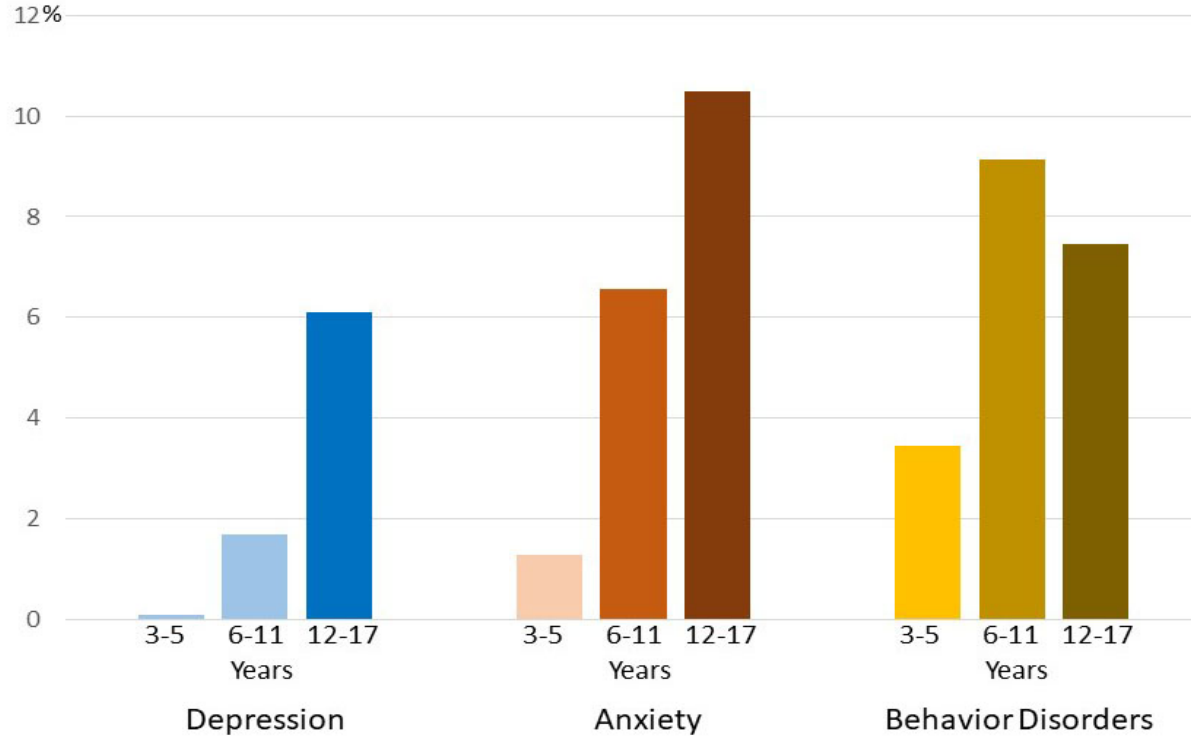
Common Disorders in Adolescence

- Anxiety Disorders ~ 32% of 13-18 year-olds
- Depression: ~13% of 12-17 year-olds
- ADHD: ~ 9 percent of 13- 18 year-olds
- Eating disorders: ~ 3% of 13- 18-year-olds
- Substance abuse: Youth who have experienced a major depressive episode are twice as likely to start using alcohol or an illicit drug.

HHS.gov Office of Adolescent Health

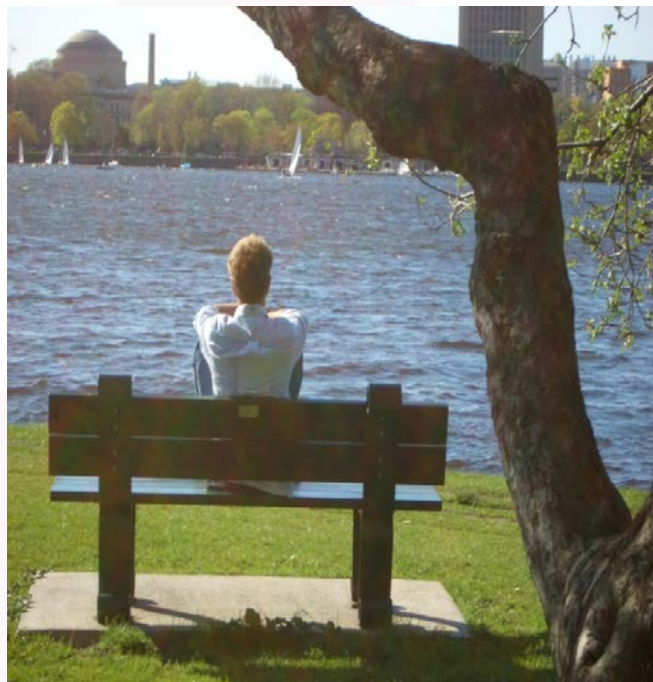


Depression, Anxiety, Behavior Disorders, by Age



National College Health Survey 2017

- Reported that in the past 12 months:
 - 50.9% felt hopeless
 - 86% felt overwhelmed
 - 82.6% felt emotionally exhausted
 - 66 % felt very sad
 - 60.8% felt overwhelming anxiety
 - 10.4% seriously considered suicide



(ACHA NCHA II, Exec. Summary, Fall 2017)

Reported Psychological Distress

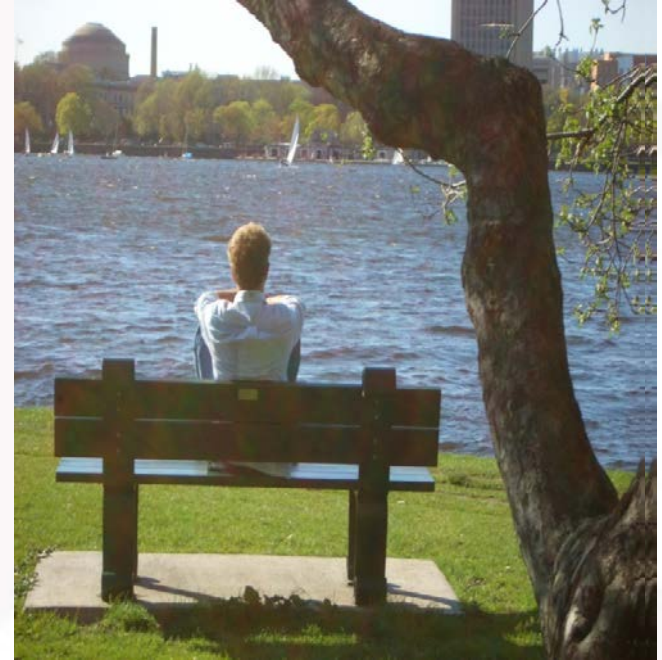
- 29.6% of college students reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to function
- 45.9% felt hopeless
- 84.6% felt overwhelmed
- 6.1% seriously considered suicide
(ACHA-NCHA II, Exec. Summary, Fall 2017)



Most Traumatic or Too Difficult To Handle

- Academics: 46.8%
- Finances: 33.5%
- Sleep difficulties 30.7%
- Intimate relationships 30.5%
- Family problems 28.8%
- Personal appearance 28.3%

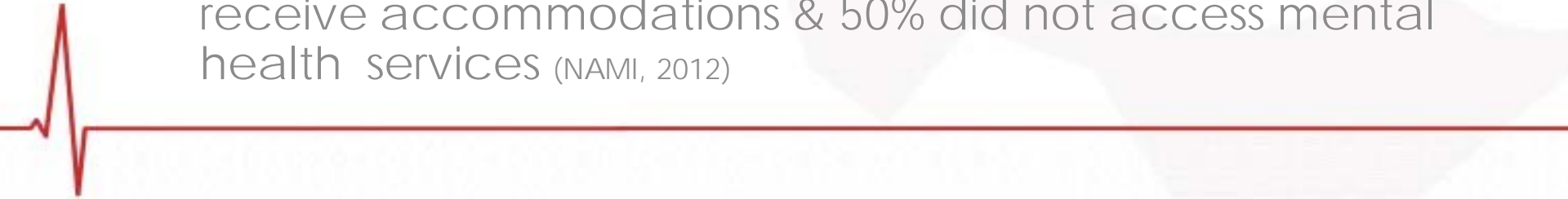
(ACHA-NCHA II, Exec. Summary, Fall 2017)



NAMI Survey of College Students



- 73% of students with a mental health condition experienced a crisis on campus
- 65.8% stated the college was unaware of this crisis
- 64% of students who stopped attending college did so due to their mental health condition
- Of those that stopped attending college >45% did not receive accommodations & 50% did not access mental health services (NAMI, 2012)



What Might Have Helped You Stay in School?

- Accommodations such as tutoring, books on tape, reduce hours per semester, help with communicating needs to professors
- Accessing mental health services
- Having peer run support groups available
- Getting assistance with medical bills & transportation
- Managing side effects of medications
- Support from family and friends



University Services & Supports Critical to Success

1. Walk-in health center
2. Individual counseling
3. Crisis services
4. 24-hour hotline
5. Screening and evaluation
6. Off-campus referrals
7. Medications
8. Peer support
9. Pharmacy
10. Group counseling

Gruttadara & Crudo, 2012)



Problems Experienced by Students with Mental Health Issues

- Medication side effects
- Screening out environmental stimuli
- Sustaining concentration
- Maintaining stamina
- Handling time pressures & multiple tasks

(NAMI, 2012)



Disclosure of Need for Accommodations

Reasons for Disclosure

- To receive accommodations
- Receive clinical services & support
- Be a role model & reduce stigma
- Educate students, staff & faculty about mental health
- Avoid disciplinary action by school & avoid losing financial aid

Reasons for Nondisclosure

- Fear for impact of disclosure
- No opportunity to disclose
- Did not feel that diagnosis would impact academic performance
- Did not know about accommodations
- Confidentiality concerns

Student Case #1

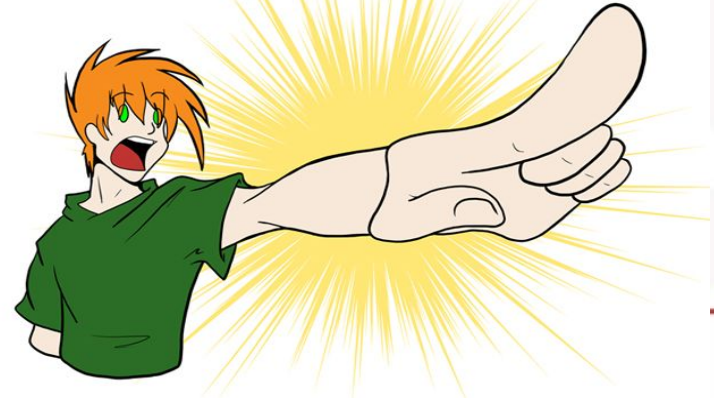


Discloses that she deals with anxiety and tries to handle it herself. When referred to counseling she states she does not want to be diagnosed because she wants to be commissioned. Student states she is stubborn and wants to handle it herself.

Student Case #2

- Has paperwork for documented disability (ADHD)
- Concerned that Disability Office will force him to use all accommodations listed by his health care provider.

LOOK!
A Distraction!



Student #3



- Student indicates Stress/Anxiety on SP contract
- Mother and father are divorced living in Mexico
- Mother is depressed; brother is living with father and was out of contact for several weeks.
- Not connected to anyone on campus

Scholastic Probation Contracts

How Did I Get Here?

Check all that you think may be hindering your academic progress:

☐ Not really liking school ☐ Lack of self-discipline ☐ Difficult courses ☐ Family obligations

☐ Not motivated ☐ Poor study skills ☐ Stress/anxiety ☐ Financial issues

☐ Documented disability ☐ Unclear sense of purpose/direction ☐ Not feeling connected to anyone/lonely ☐ Other

Fall 2016- 55.5% of SP students indicated stress/anxiety

Fall 2017 - 70% of SP students indicated stress/anxiety

Key Areas to Explore

- A. Previous diagnosis of a mental health disorder? If so, age of diagnosis, any past or current successful treatment
- B. Awareness of filing for 504 accommodations?
- C. Does student have accommodations on file?
- D. If not, what are barriers to filing for accommodations?



Providing Reassurance

- Faculty member receives only the accommodation(s) requested – not the diagnosis
- Faculty receive letters of accommodation from students frequently
- The filing of accommodations does not impact scholarships or recommendations for graduate school

Obtain Documentation for 504 Accommodations

- ADA 1990, amended in 2009 requires schools & institutions of higher learning to make reasonable accommodations for the student's disabilities
- Postsecondary institutions; as long as it does not cause a significant change in requirements for POS or cause undue burden for the university

(U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights, 2013).



Examples of Accommodations

Diagnosis	Accommodations
Generalized anxiety disorder	Quiet room for testing, private room for testing, additional testing time
Attention Deficit Disorder	Additional testing time, private room for testing, quiet room for testing, late submission of assignments without penalty
Depression or other mood disorders	Additional time for completion of assignments, late submissions accepted.

Required Documentation

- Qualified professional with a specialty in the specific disability
- Diagnostic statement along with diagnostic methodology
- Functional limitations
- Severity or Expected Progression
- Medications & related side effects
- Current and/or past accommodations



What Factors in College Life Lead to a Crisis?

John Doe



1. Diagnosed w/ bipolar disorder at age 16. Stable with meds & psychotherapy.
2. Starting his 4th week as a college freshman develops roommate issues.
3. Missed chemistry test.
4. Failed in class pop quiz due to missing reading assignment.

John Doe



- At home would meet up with friends to play basketball so heads to gym to shoot hoops.
- Sees other groups of students having fun & feels lonely.
- Walking to the cafeteria, runs into guys from the dorm who invite him to bar.
- They just happen to have a fake ID for to use...

John Doe



- Has forgotten to take his medication for three days
- Has only had 4 hours of sleep a night over the past several days
- Calls the counseling center -there is a 3 week wait for an appointment
- Failed to file for accommodations when enrolling

Factors Impacting Mental Health



College Life: Factors Impacting Mental Health

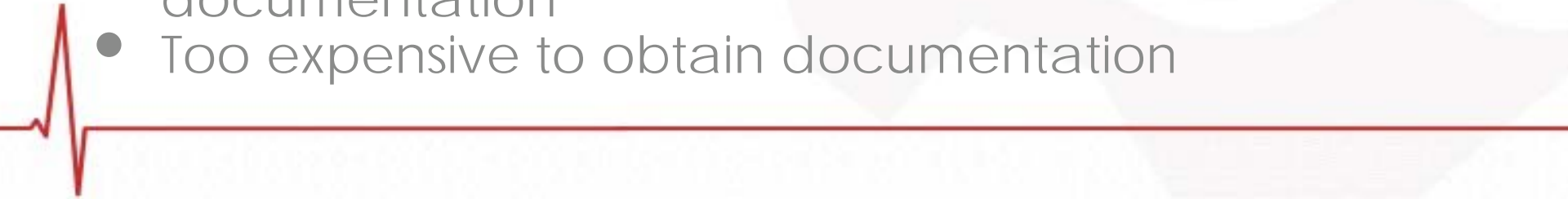
- Sleep deprivation
- Inadequate Nutrition & Lack of Exercise
- Alcohol, Tobacco & other Drug Use
- Loss of Social Support & Coping Mechanisms
- Poor Self-management of Health Care

Celebrities with Mental Health Disorders



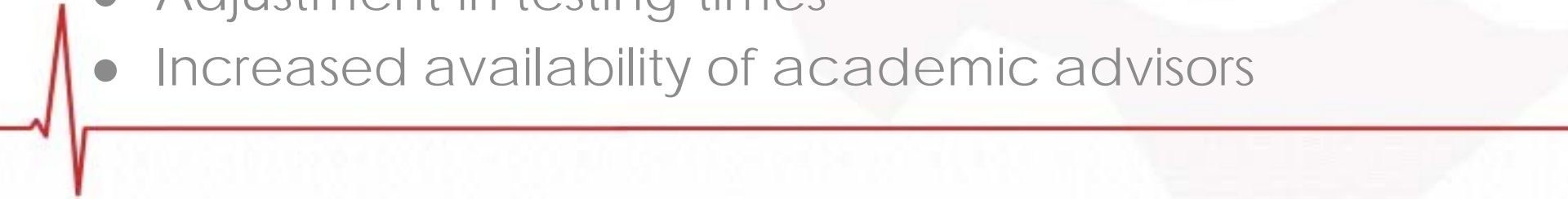
Reasons for Not Accessing Accommodations

- Unaware that they qualified for a right to receive accommodations
- Did not know that the office of student disabilities was for students with mental health disorders
- Fear of stigma
- Too burdensome & requires too much documentation
- Too expensive to obtain documentation



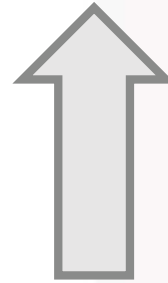
Accommodations Most Critical to Success

- Excused absences for treatment
- Medical LOA
- Course withdrawals without penalty
- Adjustments in test setting
- Homework deadline extensions
- Adjustment in testing times
- Increased availability of academic advisors



Sleep

Inadequate sleep leads
to ...



Negative mood

Likelihood of stimulant
use

Likelihood of alcohol
use



Productivity

Academic
performance



Sleep

- Consistent sleep schedule is key
- Strategies for optimizing sleep
 - Sound machine
 - Black out curtains
 - Sleep mask
- Elevated risk for those with bipolar disorder



Nutrition & Exercise

- Review of nutrition basics
 - [choosemyplate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov)
 - Serving sizes
 - “Empty” calories
 - Snacking
- Review of physical activity recommendations
- Identify plans for ensuring healthy nutrition and exercise habits
- Elevated risk for all mental health disorders



Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drugs

- Private discussion regarding plans to consume or avoid alcohol/drugs
- Review recommendations regarding 'safe' alcohol use
- Alternative activities
- Elevated risk for those on antidepressants and anxiolytics



Social Support & Coping Mechanisms

- Quality vs. Quantity
- Review plans for social interactions
- Planned contact with family and friends
- Review preferred coping mechanisms and discuss strategies for consistent use during college



Anticipatory Guidance



After Acceptance to University

- Make appts to meet with a member of counseling staff
- Meet with academic advisor to develop POS that will reduce stress
- Meet with director of Office of Student Disabilities and submit required documentation



After Acceptance to University

Develop health care summary: demographic data, allergies, diagnoses, current meds & meds that have been unsuccessful & store in mobile device*
Store photos of health insurance & prescription drug benefits cards in mobile device



*78% of adolescents and emerging adults carry a mobile device (Madden, et al, 2013).

Take Home Points

- College-bound adolescents with mental health disorders need anticipatory guidance for a successful transition
- The Advisor is in a key position to facilitate a successful transition
- College students who meet criteria for a mental health disorder should be encouraged to file for accommodations



References

- American College Health Association (2017). *American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment II: Reference Group Executive Summary Fall 2017*. Hanover, MD: American College Health Association; 2018. https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/NCHA-II_FALL_2017_REFERENCE_GROUP_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.pdf
- Data and Statistics on Children's Mental Health (2018) , Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>
- Gruttadaro & Crudo (2012). College students speak. *National Alliance on Mental Illness*, www.nami.org/namioncampus.



Questions?





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