

COLLEGE STUDENTS AND MENTAL HEALTH

WHITE PAPER

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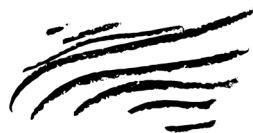
WHAT WE KNOW

Mental Health in College Students

- The prevalence of mental health issues in college students is rising. In 2020-2021, more than 60% of college students met criteria for at least one mental health problem.
- Students of color have the lowest rates of help-seeking and mental health treatment utilization.
- Adults ages 18-25 have the highest prevalence of any mental illness (30.6%).
- Perceived public stigma, the belief that others hold mental health stigma, is high.

Critical Role of Faculty and Academic Staff

- Due to frequent interactions in class, faculty and academic staff are uniquely positioned to identify students struggling with mental health concerns and refer them to the available resources.
- Faculty play a critical role in encouraging help-seeking and reducing the stigma around mental health by openly talking about the resources that students have available to them



WARNING SIGNS

Safety Risks

- Verbal, written, or implied references to suicide, homicide, assault, or self-harm behaviors
- Unprovoked anger or hostility/physical violence (e.g., shoving, grabbing, assaulting, use of weapon)
- Stalking or harassing
- Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)
- Communicating threats/disturbing comments via email, correspondence, texting, or phone call

Academic

- Sudden decline in academic performance characterized by
 - Frequently missed classes or assignments
 - Frequent requests for extensions
- Focus on personal problems to the exclusion of academic ones when meeting with faculty
- Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, helplessness, isolation, rage, despair, violence, self-injury
- “Acting up” in class
- Avoiding contact with faculty when prompted through email or MyCourses

Psychological

- Self-disclosure of personal distress (e.g., family problems, financial difficulties, assault, discrimination, legal difficulties)
- Unusual/disproportionate emotional response to events
- Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions
- Expressions of concern about the student by peers
- Unusual or erratic behavior (e.g., talking to people who are not present)

Physical

- Disheveled appearance
- Sudden weight gain or weight loss

Substance Use

- Presenting as intoxicated or smelling heavily of alcohol or other drugs

YOUR RESPONSE

Be mindful of mental health stigma

- Stigma or bias surrounding mental health can involve negatively labeling, stereotyping, or discriminating against a person with a mental health condition.
- Experiencing stigma may deter students from help seeking.
- Mental health stigma may include:
 - making assumptions about a student's ability to succeed academically because of their mental health
 - using judgmental language to describe a student's behavior (e.g., "dramatic" or "exaggerating")
 - ignoring a student's accommodations related to their mental health condition
- Monitor your own internalized mental health stigma through education and consultation
- Seek to de-stigmatize mental health by speaking openly about mental health and making resources available
- Include supportive statements of mental health and mental health resources in your syllabus

Openly check in about warning signs that a student may be struggling

- Check in with students privately about what you've observed
- Don't make any promises of confidentiality, as you may be required to report students who are at risk of harm to self or others
- Ask open-ended questions when you notice behaviors deviating from how a student usually present
 - "I've noticed that you've asked for several extensions this semester and have missed class a few times, I am wondering how you are doing with the class but also in general."

Have empathy in interactions with students

- Struggling with mental health concerns can be vulnerable and isolating. Responding with empathy is important to make students feel heard and seen.
- Seek to understand students' experiences, express care and concern for them, and act in ways that communicate understanding and care
 - "I can see that this has been a very difficult experience for you. How are you feeling about it? What can I do to support you?"
 - Offer concrete ways to support students if they do not ask for what they need. Students will not know all of the options and resources available to them.

Share and connect students with resources

- It is a normal response to feel uncertain or hesitant to check in with a student, remember that faculty are not responsible for treating students' mental health concerns but they may be responsible for referring them to resources
 - "Thank you so much for sharing this with me. You should not have to face this alone. Can I help connect you to CAPS or other resources on campus?"
- Identifying students with mental health needs, extending empathy, and connecting them to appropriate resources has been shown to lessen students' distress
- Students want universities to increase awareness of mental health and promote mental health resources

ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

- Individual, group, and same day mental health-related services to support SIU students enrolled in on-campus courses. Counseling and Same Day support is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 9:00 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 12:30 to 9:00 p.m. in various locations on campus. Call 618-453-5371 to schedule an appointment and identify a location.

[Clinical Center](#)

- Assessment, counseling, and speech and language treatment is provided to children, adolescents, and adults in the community on a fee scale. Call 618-453-2361 to make an appointment.

[Confidential Advising Services](#)

- Survivor-centered assistance provided to SIU students that have experienced sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking. Non-judgmental emotional support, reporting assistance, and accommodation management are provided in a safe environment. Call 618-536-4441.

[Saluki Cares](#)

- Care and support are provided to SIU students in distress by working closely with faculty, staff, students, and their families. Referrals can be submitted by faculty, staff, family members, peers, or the student him/herself. Submit a referral at: salukicare.siu.edu.

[HEROES- Higher Education Resources and Opportunities for Salukis in Need](#)

- Resources and assistance is provided to SIU students who are experiencing housing, food, and financial insecurities and to SIU students who were at any point under the care and legal custody of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Submit a referral at: salukicare.siu.edu.

[Department of Public Safety](#)

- Provides public safety, community policing, and problem solving to prevent crime, protect assets, and prevent disruption for the SIU campus and local community. For emergencies, dial 911. For non-emergencies, call 618-453-3771.

[Student Health Services Medical Clinic](#)

- Quality medical care, including preventative medicine, diagnostic services, treatment, and follow-up care, is provided to all SIU students enrolled in on-campus courses, regardless of insurance. The clinic includes a psychiatrist, dietitian, and pharmacy. Call 618-453-3311 to make an appointment. In the case of an emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

[Disability Support Services](#)

- Support services are coordinated and provided to SIU students with disabilities to ensure equal access to all campus programs, resources, and services. Call 618-453-5738 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

LOCAL RESOURCES

[SIH Memorial Hospital of Carbondale](#)

- Provides health care, urgent care, emergency treatment, and specialized services in multiple locations in the community. Call 618-549-0721.

[Centerstone](#)

- Provides mental health and substance use disorder services for children and adults, including counseling, psychiatric care, and vocational support. Call 877-467-3123.

[Shawnee Health](#)

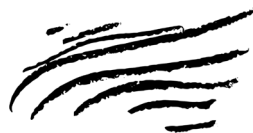
- Provides counseling, addiction and family medicine, care coordination, and nutrition services. Call 618-519-9200.

[Gateway](#)

- Offers multiple levels of personalized addiction treatment services tailed to recovery needs, mental health conditions, and support networks. Call 888-606-1682.

[Survivor Empowerment Center](#)

- Provides free and inclusive survivor support, emergency shelter, victim advocacy, and sexual assault prevention education. Call 1-800-334-2094.



NATIONAL RESOURCES

[Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)

- Provides free and confidential support for people in distress and prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones. Call 988.

[The Trevor Project](#)

- Provides confidential suicide prevention assistance for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth. Call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678-678.

[National Sexual Assault Hotline](#)

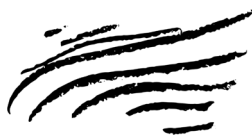
- Provides confidential crisis support for survivors of sexual assault. Call 1-800-656-4673

Domestic Violence

- [Domestic Violence Hotline](#) provides confidential support for those experiencing dating and domestic violence. Information and resources are available to identify abuse, seek help, and plan for safety. Call 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788.
- [Love is Respect](#) visit their website for more information at loveisrespect.org chat online at loveisrespect.org or call 866-331-9474

National Hopeline

- Helps students and young adults in crisis by offering sound advice and a safe place to connect. Call 1-800-784-2433 or [chat online](#)



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CARBONDALE **STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES**