The Role of Mental Health in Student Success

While college is exciting, there are adjustments to be made in the first year that can be stressful. Being in a new environment may intensify an already challenging period of life.

You can help us to help them.
Understanding the Continuum of Health & Wellness

Health

Physical Health  Sprain/Cold  Major Illness

Mental Health

Mental Health  Stress  Mental Illness
What is influencing student stress?

- Academic changes
- New levels of responsibility
- Over-stimulating and competitive world
- Social adjustment
Coping with the stress

- Remind your student …
  - That stress is normal
  - To engage in prevention strategies
  - Learn stress reduction techniques to use once it hits
  - To acknowledge when they need help
  - To know where to seek help

*It’s okay to ask for help!*
The Best Tools are Prevention Tools

- Practice basic self-care
  - Sleep, nutrition, exercise and safety

- Utilize time management and study skills

- Balance academic, social, and work demands

- Be careful to avoid taking on too many demands at once

- Stay on prescribed psychiatric medication, if applicable
If left *unchecked* stress can affect performance & well-being. This can *sometimes* trigger an onset of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, eating disorders, or other mental illness concerns.
But it may not be stress...

- There are sometimes biological or genetic factors

- Onset of Mental Illness
  - Traditional college age, 18-24, is a common period for the onset of mental disorders in the general population
  - 27% of 18-24 year olds have a diagnosable mental illness (NAMI)
  - 14% of college students have been treated for depression before entering college

- Early recognition and treatment can make an important difference

- If left untreated, symptoms can become more frequent and severe thus affecting
  - Academic performance
  - Interpersonal relationships
  - Job stability
  - Overall functioning

National Institute of Mental Health, 2012
Signs and Symptoms of Concern

- Exaggerated emotional responses
- Radical change in behavior
- Loss of interest in activities
- **Communications about hopelessness, depression, or suicide**
- Excessive worry
- Poor concentration/memory
- Frequent crying
- Sleep disturbance
- Major change in appetite
- Social withdrawal
- Missing classes
- Significant change in personal hygiene or dress
- Detection of alcohol and/or other drug abuse
What’s a Family to Do?

- Listen
- Ask
- Share
- Encourage
- Act
- Consult
- Follow-Up
- Maintain Health coverage
## Counseling Center Services

### What We Do

- **Individual counseling**
  - Short term
  - About every two weeks
- **Group counseling**
- **Crisis Response**
- **Consultation & Referral Services**
- **Psychiatric service referrals**

### What We Don’t Do

- **Long term therapy**
- **Treatment of severe mental illness**
- **Academic advising**

*Services provided by qualified professionals*
Counseling Center Resources

- Developing Effective Approaches for Life (DEAL)
- Biofeedback training
- Online & self-help resources
  - [www.counseling.txstate.edu](http://www.counseling.txstate.edu)
  - Family Page (also in Spanish)
  - Online screening for students
  - Self-Help, Stress Management, Suicide Prevention and more

Social Media
- Like our page
- Follow our account
- Favorite our Tweets
- Subscribe to our channel
- Check out our pins
If your student is already receiving psychological services...

- Consult with current providers.
- Consider maintaining current psychiatric services for availability and continuity.
- Consult with Counseling Center Referral Specialist to locate community provider for individual counseling.
- Visit the Counseling Center website for group offerings and workshops appropriate for your student.
Accessing our services

- Students begin by calling for an Initial Consultation to determine appropriate care.
- There are no charges for counseling services.
- All services are confidential as mandated by law and professional ethical standards.

The Counseling Center website has detailed information on accessing services and much more.

www.counseling.txstate.edu
Families Can Help

- Stay in touch with your student
- Be observant & respond to distress
- Balance their need to make decisions for themselves with their need for your input

- Look for opportunities to understand their college experience
  - Attend activities like Family Weekend & athletic events
  - Join the Family Association
  - Visit campus
Wellness for a Lifetime

College, like life, is full of joys, disappointments, challenges, successes and many transitions. Establishing skills for wellness now will serve your student for a lifetime.