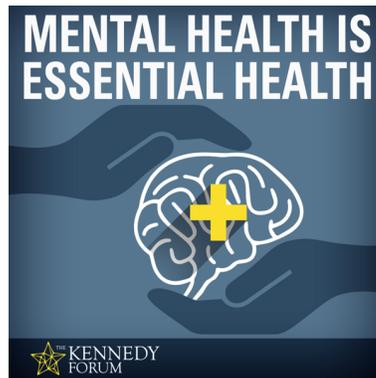


A Seat at The Table for Mental Health



Student Mental Health and Well-Being on Campus

Taking care of your mental health and well-being in college is important. College is an exciting time, filled with opportunities for growth, independence, and curiosity. However, college can also be a stressful time, with new academic challenges, social situations, and in some cases, the emergence of mental health or substance use disorders.

Key Facts

- Approximately one in five young adults experience a mental health condition, and 75% of all lifetime mental health conditions begin by age 24, with many conditions first emerging during the college years.ⁱ
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29 year olds globally.ⁱⁱ
- Mental health issues affect students and their ability to thrive. In the past year, over 80% of college students felt overwhelmed by their responsibilities at some point, and 45% felt that things were hopeless.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Over 45% of college students who stopped attending college because of a mental health condition did not receive accommodations; 50% of them did not access mental health services and supports.^{iv}
- 49% of full-time college students drink and/or abuse drugs. 25% of college students report experiencing a negative academic consequence as a result of alcohol.^v
-

Possible Questions for Discussion

- How do mental health challenges and addiction affect your school community?
- What are some challenges to maintaining mental well-being in college? Have you ever felt stressed or overwhelmed by your courses or other responsibilities?
- What barriers exist at your school to mental wellness and to receiving help?
- How do you practice self-care and promote mental well-being in your own life?
- If you had one message you could give to your community about mental health and well-being, what would it be?
- What factors might make a college student more prone to substance use or addiction?

What You Can Do to Promote Mental Health and Well-Being in Your School Community

Practice Self-Care to Manage Your Mental Health

- Know the facts about mental illness and ask for help when you need it.
- During stressful times, set aside time for exercise, spending time with loved ones, and other activities you enjoy; prioritize the basics of well-being.
- Limit or decrease any use of alcohol and other drugs that can negatively impact your mental and overall well-being.

Know Where You Can Find Help for You or Your Classmates

- Recognize the warning signs of a mental health and substance use disorders, including social withdrawal, decreased ability to function, difficulty concentrating, feelings of hopelessness, mood changes, etc.
- Be aware of your community's health and well-being resources (counseling center, health services, wellness center, Office of Student Affairs, disability services, etc.)
- If you are concerned about a friend or peer, show your support, listen, and ask how you can help; if you aren't sure what to do, consult a trusted professional.

Build a Culture of Well-Being

- Be an advocate; work with school administrators to improve well-being resources.
- Join a campus organization such as Active Minds or NAMI On Campus and help raise awareness of mental health issues.
- Work to increase social options for students that do not revolve around drinking.

About The Kennedy Forum

Just as President Kennedy rallied the nation to dream big and set audacious goals 50 years ago, The Kennedy Forum in Illinois is working toward lasting change in the way mental health and addictions are considered and treated. Our mission is to end stigma against mental health and substance use disorders in both attitudes and practice. We believe that strong, bold leadership, strategic collaboration with partners and concerted action, it is possible to build a future with a health system that fully recognizes that the brain is part of the body and all persons are treated with dignity. Join us at www.thekennedyforumillinois.org

RESOURCES

- Active Minds: <http://www.activeminds.org/>
- ULifeline: <http://ulifeline.org>
- American Foundation For Suicide Prevention, Bring Prevention to Your School: <https://afsp.org/bring-suicide-prevention-to-your-school>
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America, College Students: <https://adaa.org/node/5117>
- The Jed Foundation: <https://www.jedfoundation.org/>
- Mental Health America, Life on Campus: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/life-campus>
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> , 1-800-273-8255
- U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Discussion Guide: <https://www.samhsa.gov/community-conversations>

ⁱU. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Mental Health Myths and Facts, <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/myths-facts/>.

ⁱⁱ World Health Organization, Suicide data, http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/.

ⁱⁱⁱ American College Health Association, *American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment II: Reference Group Executive Summary*, Spring 2013, http://www.activeminds.org/storage/documents/TheIssue_FullCitations2.pdf.

^{iv} NAMI, *College Students Speak: A Survey Report on Mental Health*, https://www.nami.org/getattachment/About-NAMI/Publications-Reports/Survey-Reports/College-Students-Speak_A-Survey-Report-on-Mental-Health-NAMI-2012.pdf.

^v Learn Psychology, *Guidebook to Addiction on College Campuses*, <http://www.learnpsychology.org/college-campus-addiction-resources/>.