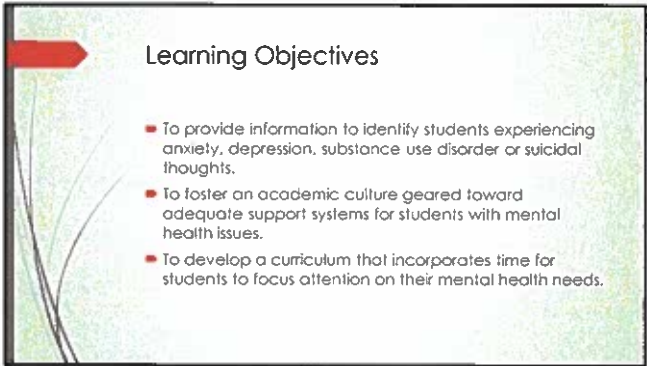


Addressing Mental Health Issues on College Campuses

Ellen Condon, RN, BSN, MSH, APRN, BC
Associate Professor
Fairleigh State University



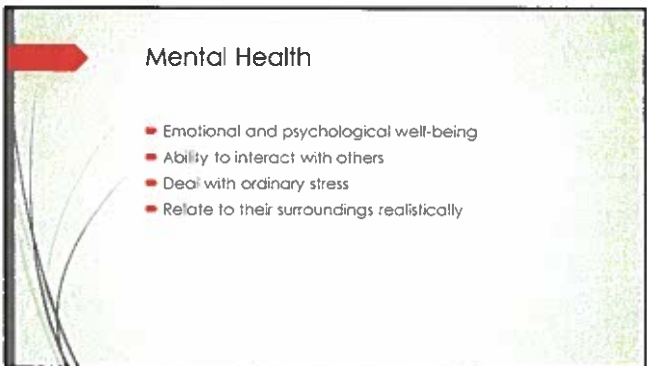
Learning Objectives

- To provide information to identify students experiencing anxiety, depression, substance use disorder or suicidal thoughts.
- To foster an academic culture geared toward adequate support systems for students with mental health issues.
- To develop a curriculum that incorporates time for students to focus attention on their mental health needs.



Mental Health

- A state of well-being where a person realizes his or her own abilities
- A person can cope with life's normal stresses
- A person can work productively
- A person can make contributions to society
- Essential to personal well-being, interpersonal relationships and contributing to the community



Mental Health

- Emotional and psychological well-being
- Ability to interact with others
- Deal with ordinary stress
- Relate to their surroundings realistically

Mental Health Disorders

- Disturbances in thinking, regulating emotions, and behaviors
- A set of symptoms that may have many causes
- Defined by clusters of behaviors, thoughts, and feelings
- DSM-5

Mental Health Problems: College Students

- Challenging time for traditional students
 - Younger
 - Need parents for financial support
 - May work parttime
 - Stress of academic load
 - Housemates
 - Relationship issues
 - Support systems
 - Digital world
 - Increased feelings of loneliness

Mental Health Problems: College Students

- Non-traditional students
 - Older
 - Working fulltime or parttime
 - Family responsibilities
 - Support systems
 - Finding the time to study

Mental Health Problems : College Students

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts
- Substance Use Disorder

Anxiety: Perceptual Fields

- Mild: perceptual field widens
- Moderate: perceptual field narrows slightly
- Severe: Perceptual field greatly reduced
- Panic: Perceptual field reduced to a detail;

Anxiety Disorders

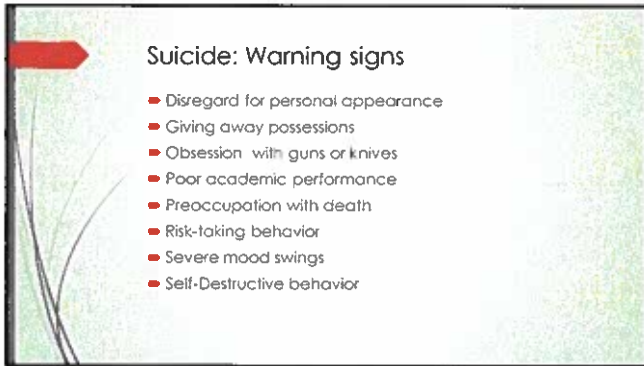
- Most prevalent among college students - 11.9%
- Obsessive compulsive disorder - 19 yr.
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder - 20 yr.
- PTSD
- Panic Disorder

Depression

- 7 - 9% of college students
- 50% had first onset childhood, adolescence, or early adulthood

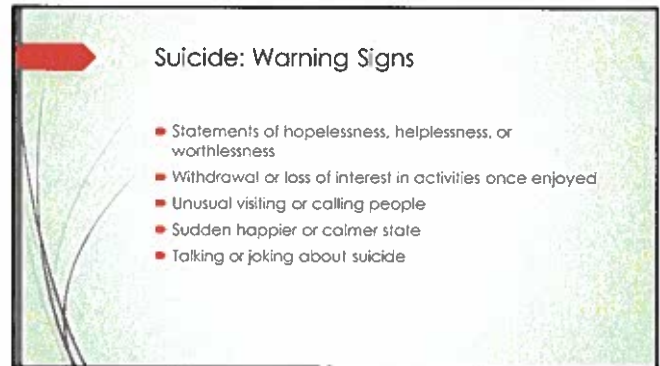
Suicide: A Leading Cause of Death in US National Health Crisis

- Tenth leading cause of death overall in US
- Second leading cause of death ages 35-44
- Among adults across all age groups.
 - Prevalence of suicide attempts in 2019, 18-25 year old
- Second leading cause of death on college campuses



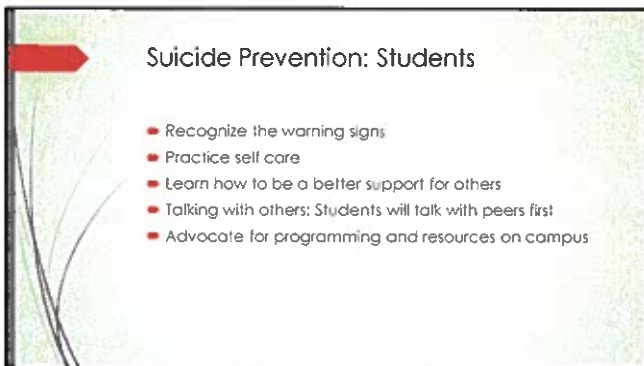
Suicide: Warning signs

- Disregard for personal appearance
- Giving away possessions
- Obsession with guns or knives
- Poor academic performance
- Preoccupation with death
- Risk-taking behavior
- Severe mood swings
- Self-Destructive behavior



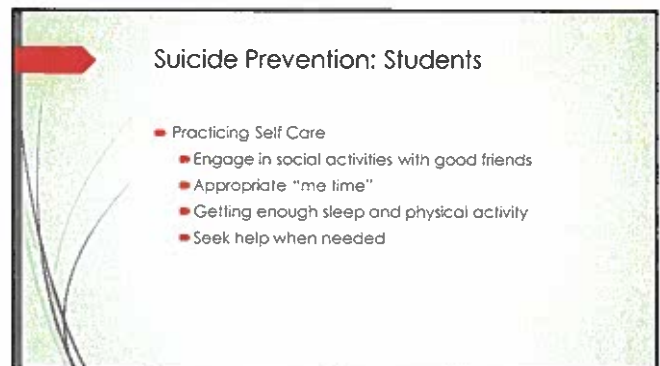
Suicide: Warning Signs

- Statements of hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness
- Withdrawal or loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Unusual visiting or calling people
- Sudden happier or calmer state
- Talking or joking about suicide



Suicide Prevention: Students

- Recognize the warning signs
- Practice self care
- Learn how to be a better support for others
- Talking with others: Students will talk with peers first
- Advocate for programming and resources on campus



Suicide Prevention: Students

- Practicing Self Care
 - Engage in social activities with good friends
 - Appropriate "me time"
 - Getting enough sleep and physical activity
 - Seek help when needed

Suicide Prevention: Colleges

- Identify students at risk
- Promote social connectedness to campus, family and friends
- Increase help seeking behavior
 - Increase access to mental health and crisis support
 - Reduce the burden of stigma
- Provide mental health and substance abuse services

Suicide Prevention: Colleges

- Develop life skills education
 - Cope with life's stressors
 - Make wise lifestyle choices
 - Foster resilience
 - Achieve academic success

Substance Use Disorder

- Most prevalent problem among college students
- 1 in 5 college students meet the criteria for AUD
- Binge Drinking
 - #1 public health hazard
 - Primary cause for morbidity and mortality
- MVA (death), accidental injuries
- Poor classroom performance
- Impairment in prefrontal cortex functions


Substance Use Disorder

- Marijuana Use: 23.5% males and 16.1% females
 - Cognitive performance
 - Memory
 - Achievement motivation: higher drop out risk
 - Binge drinkers
- Prescription medications
 - Opioids
 - Benzodiazepines,
 - Amphetamines: highest use throughout four years of college




Why Are College Students More Vulnerable?

- Biological factors
 - Brain development: prefrontal cortex
 - Rational thinking
 - Ability to regulate emotions and impulses




Why Are College Students More Vulnerable?

- Environment
 - First time living independently
 - Away from family and supports systems
 - Experience anxiety and mental health issues regardless of health history
- Lifestyle choices
 - Experiment with substances
 - Poor nutrition
 - Poor sleep habits



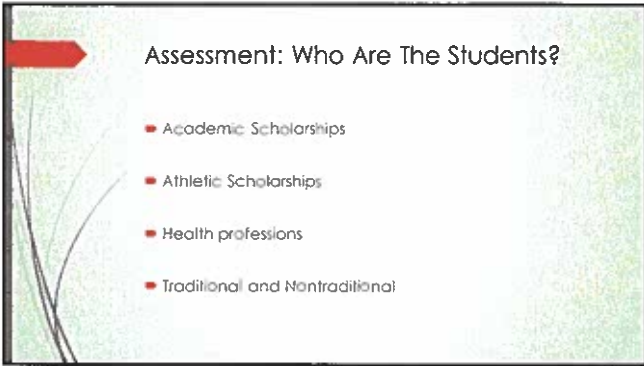
Assessment of College Students for Mental Health Issues

- Age of onset of current problem
 - The earlier the age of onset, the poorer the outcome
- Early identification of college students with mental health problems and thorough assessment are critical in order to provide adequate services and to ensure better outcomes: Graduation!



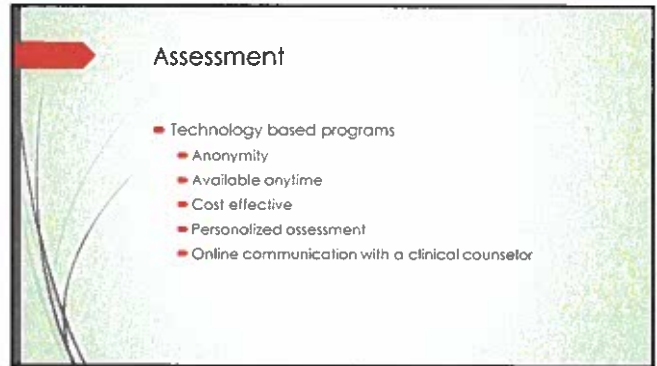
Persistence of mental health problems

- Depression: 27% 2 years later
- Self injury behavior: 40%
- Suicidal thoughts: 35%
- Less than 50% received treatment within a 2 year period



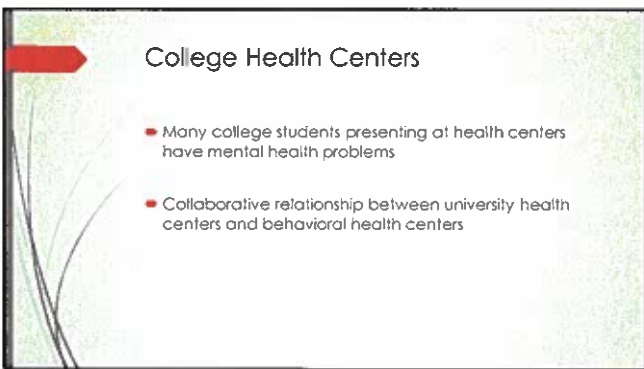
Assessment: Who Are The Students?

- Academic Scholarships
- Athletic Scholarships
- Health professions
- Traditional and Nontraditional



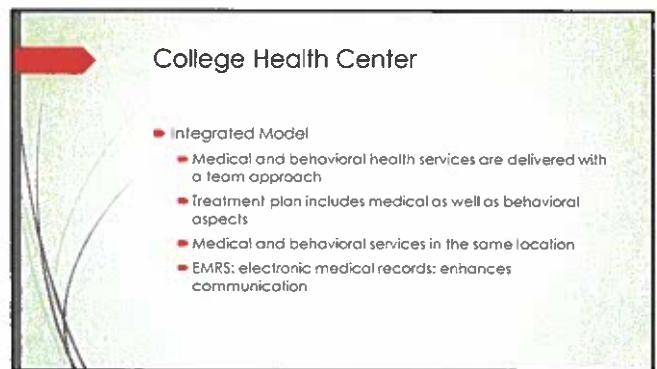
Assessment

- Technology based programs
 - Anonymity
 - Available anytime
 - Cost effective
 - Personalized assessment
 - Online communication with a clinical counselor



College Health Centers

- Many college students presenting at health centers have mental health problems
- Collaborative relationship between university health centers and behavioral health centers



College Health Center

- Integrated Model
 - Medical and behavioral health services are delivered with a team approach
 - Treatment plan includes medical as well as behavioral aspects
 - Medical and behavioral services in the same location
 - EMRS: electronic medical records: enhances communication

What Some Universities Are Doing?

- UCLA : offers incoming freshmen free online screening for depression
- Ohio State added a dozen additional mental health specialists ...not enough
- Ohio State launched a counseling mobile app
 - Schedule appointments
 - Access breathing exercises
 - Listen to relaxing music
 - Contact the clinic on case of an emergency

Universities (cont.)

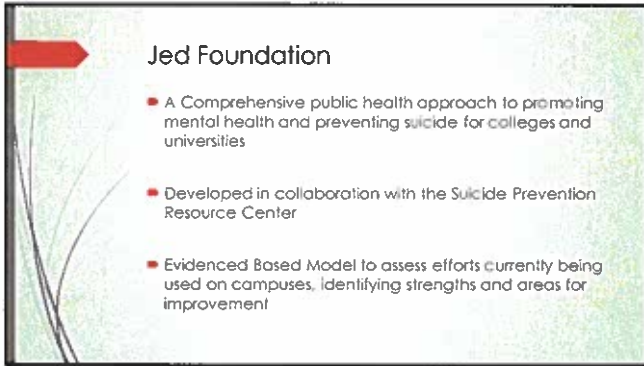
- University of Iowa
 - Increases counseling staff, are considering adding more
 - Embedded counselors in dorms
 - Added questions about mental health to a freshman survey and follow up with students who might need help

Mindfulness Meditation: Emory University

- Promotes health and well being
- More compassionate, clear minded and present
- How we respond to others
- Simply pausing, deep breathing before addressing the next student or situation

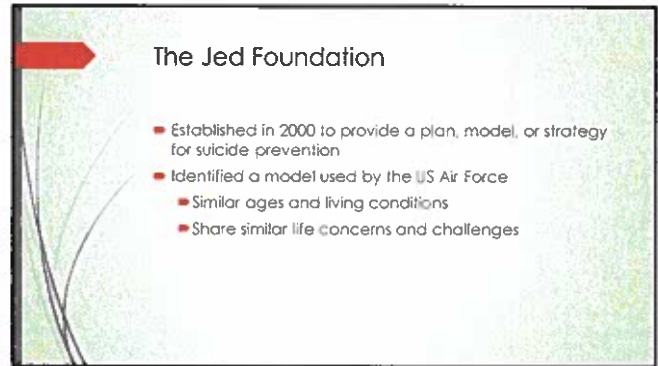
Mindfulness Meditation: CBCT: Cognitive Based Compassionate Training

- A series of lectures and practices that aim to develop a sense of closeness and connectedness to others
- Increases compassionate care
- Decreases empathetic fatigue
- Requires a quiet place for meditation and reflection



Jed Foundation

- A Comprehensive public health approach to promoting mental health and preventing suicide for colleges and universities
- Developed in collaboration with the Suicide Prevention Resource Center
- Evidenced Based Model to assess efforts currently being used on campuses, identifying strengths and areas for improvement



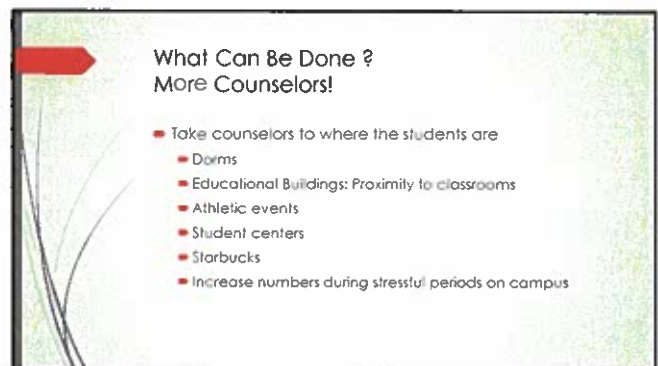
The Jed Foundation

- Established in 2000 to provide a plan, model, or strategy for suicide prevention
- Identified a model used by the US Air Force
 - Similar ages and living conditions
 - Share similar life concerns and challenges



The Jed Foundation

- Enhancing protective and preventative factors and resilience : life skills and connectedness
- Early intervention:
 - Identifying those at risk
 - Increase help seeking
- Availability and access to clinical services
- Environmental safety and means restriction



What Can Be Done ? More Counselors!

- Take counselors to where the students are
 - Dorms
 - Educational Buildings: Proximity to classrooms
 - Athletic events
 - Student centers
 - Starbucks
 - Increase numbers during stressful periods on campus

More Counselors

- Assign each at risk freshman and other student to a counselor
- Assign each incoming freshman to a group that meets regularly with a counselor
 - These focus groups remain together during the entire college experience

What Can We Do As Faculty?

- Examine our curriculum
 - Class schedules
 - Length of classes
 - Adequate break times during the day
 - Breaks during the semester

Solutions: With Faculty Approval

- Academic courses
 - Let students decide how they will attend class
 - Person to person
 - Virtually
 - On their own time
 - Let students decide when to take exams
 - Set their own schedule for submitting assignments

Campus Environment

- Open access to counselors
- Areas for relaxation and socialization with others
- Transcendental Meditation Programs
- Jed Foundation
- Marshall University: Collegiate Recovery Community
- WVCRN: West Virginia Collegiate Recovery Network

References

- Boyd. (2018). Psychiatric Nursing Contemporary Practice.
- CCMH. (n.d.). 2020 Annual Report. Retrieved from https://ccmh.psu.edu/index.php?option=com_dailyplanetblog&view=entry&category=new-findings&id=8:2020-annual-report
- Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion Based Ethics: Emory University: Atlanta GA. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://compassion.emory.edu/>
- Our Approach. (2021, October 20). Retrieved from <https://jedfoundation.org/our-approach/>

References

- Pedrelli. (2015). College Students: Mental Health Problems and Treatment ... Retrieved October, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264989871_College_Students_Mental_Health_Problems_and_Treatment_Considerations
- Ramón-Albués, E., Geo-Caballero, V., Granada López, J. M., Juárez-Velo, R., Pellicer-García, B., & Antón-Solanas, I. (2020, September 24). The Prevalence of Depression, Anxiety and Stress and Their Associated Factors in College Students. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7579351/>
- WV Collegiate Recovery Conference. (2021, September 09). Retrieved from <https://www.marshall.edu/cin/southern-west-virginia-collegiate-recovery-network/wv-collegiate-recovery-conference/>