

Mental Health

Introduction

Mental health is defined by the American Heritage Medical Dictionary as a state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society, and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life. When implemented, **Mental Wellness** on campuses raises awareness and directs students to resources that can help them when issues arise.

Mental Health Awareness



- Encourages healthy habits
- Removes the stigma surrounding mental health issues by facilitating serious discussions of mental health

Mental Wellness Centers



- Can offer students information on how to:
- Recognize symptoms
 - Utilize resources
 - Seek help

Implementation

The Jed Foundation Campus¹ program offers a unique implementation plan regarding improving mental health promotion on campus. Some essential factors mentioned as part of their project include:

- Policy, Systems and Strategic Planning
- Developing Life Skills
- Connectedness
- Identifying Students at Risk
- Increase Help-Seeking Behavior
- Means Restriction and Environmental Safety
- Academic Performance

Addressing mental health on campus and combating the stigma that too often accompanies it can go a long way toward changing the mindset of the campus population to be more accepting of psychological services in general.

“When emotions are expressed...all systems are united and made whole. When emotions are repressed, denied, not allowed to be whatever they may be, our network pathways get blocked, stopping the flow of the vital feel-good, unifying chemicals that run both our biology and our behavior.”²

Best Practices

- Project Lighthouse operates an anonymous peer support chat line and referrals are given for resources on and off campus.
- NAMI on Campus Clubs are student-led and raise mental health awareness with fairs, walks, candlelight vigils, etc.
- Educate the campus with presentations, guest speakers and student panels.

Resources

- How to help a friend
- Empower students to change the perception about mental health on college campuses.
- UCLA Healthy Campus Initiative (Live Well) Counseling and Psychological Services

¹Jed Foundation: <http://www.thecampusprogram.org/framework-for-success>

²Candace B. Pert, Molecules of Emotion: The Science behind Mind-Body