The Impact of Mental Health Issues on the Student Learning Experience

Mike Malmon-Berg, PhD
Clinical Psychologist
College of Wooster
Impediments to Academic Success

- Stress 31.6%
- Cold/Flu 26.5%
- Sleep Problems 24.8%
- Depression 15.3%
- Internet Use/ Games 14.2%
  (3-6% of students addicted to internet pornography; 20% are women)
Depression

Felt Hopeless
Last 12 Months

Felt So Depressed
Difficult to Function
Last 12 Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 times</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 8 times</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 or more times</td>
<td>10</td>
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Rise on college campuses

– Earlier identification and referral (high school)
– Improved treatment options
– Decreased stigma (high school & college)
– Increased accessibility/availability
– Greater use of structured screening tools, web-based resources
– Improved accommodations
– Greater parity with physical health
– More students working, increased stress
Alcohol

Five or More Alcoholic Drinks at a Sitting
During the Last 2 Weeks

Cognitive impact of substance abuse

Two to three standard drinks can directly:

• Interfere with restful sleep
• Cause slow thinking processes-
  Lack of glycogen to the brain
• Impair sustained concentration
• Impair reaction time
• Impair ability to use abstract thought processes
Academic Consequences

• A significant inverse correlation was obtained between GPA and weekly alcohol consumption. This was evident for persons with GPAs below 2.5. Students reporting lower GPAs (1.5-1.9) also reported a significantly greater weekly consumption of alcohol.

• Data indicated negative correlation between the students’ average weekly alcohol consumption and their GPA. Students in the lowest GPA category (1.5-1.99) had the greatest mean alcohol consumption rate.

Consequences to alcohol use and abuse

• 37% did something they later regretted
• 15% had unprotected sex
• 30% experienced blackouts
• 18.5% physically injured
• Only 4.1% report experiencing substance abuse problems, 7.6% indicate that use affected academics

(NCHA, spring 2005)
Sleep

Correlations between sleep patterns and reported GPA

• Consequences of sleep loss: poor academic performance, increased medical illness and increased rates of depression and anxiety.
  (Armitage, R., 2004)

• 24.8% report that sleep has affected academics,

  (NCHA, spring 2005)
Sleep Quality, Sleep Propensity and Academic Performance

• 15% of college students experience poor sleep quality.

• The median length of sleep reported by college students has decreased by over one hour across the last three decades. (Hicks, Fernandez, Pellegrini)

• Higher GPAs were associated with waking up less often during the night, taking fewer naps, and sleeping somewhat longer on school nights.
Sleep Quality and Academic Performance

• For a sample of 148 undergraduates that those who slept on the average less than six hours per night had lower self-reported GPAs than those who slept nine hours or more. (Kelly, Kelly, Clanton)

• Lower GPAs were significantly associated with later weekday and weekend bedtimes, later weekday and weekend wake-up times, and longer hours of sleep on weekend nights. (Trockel, Barnes, Egget)

Howell, Andrew; Jahrig, Jesse; Powell, Russell. “Sleep Quality, Sleep Propensity}
The increasingly frequent and severe occurrence of mental health issues, along with the increased demand for services, impacts all areas of campus life.

- Academic
- Residential
- Administrative
- Extracurricular
- Etc.

So what can be done?
Academic Difficulties

Encourage faculty to notice students who are:

• Absent
• Withdrawn
• Excessively anxious about performance
• Engaging in disruptive behaviors
• Exaggerated emotional response that is inappropriate to the situation
• Talk about giving up
• Present with hopelessness or helplessness
Training and Education

- Techniques for assessment and identification (observing & asking)
- Skills for listening and providing support
- Procedures for referral
- What constitutes “a cry for help”
- Audience: faculty, coaches, clergy, residential staff, academic advisors, student advisors, tutors
Creating partnerships...
From the very beginning...........

• Parent orientation welcoming session during “drop-off day”
• Parent website:
  – warning signs of ........
  – how to talk to your child about........
  – how to/when to reach us about ........
  – how we can help/what we can do about........
  – identifying the limits of our
Campus-Wide Public Health Education

- Student newspaper articles/radio spots
- How to be a good friend/neighbor
- How to manage “winter blues”
- How to seek help
- How to recognize signs/symptoms of……
- What is a “cry for help”/warning sign
- The role of alcohol in this community