

NC Department of Health and Human Services
**Mental Health First Aid in the
 Community College Setting**

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June 21, 2018

On a scale of 1 to 5
 1- Extremely uncomfortable 5- Very comfortable

**How would you feel about having
 someone with a severe mental illness**

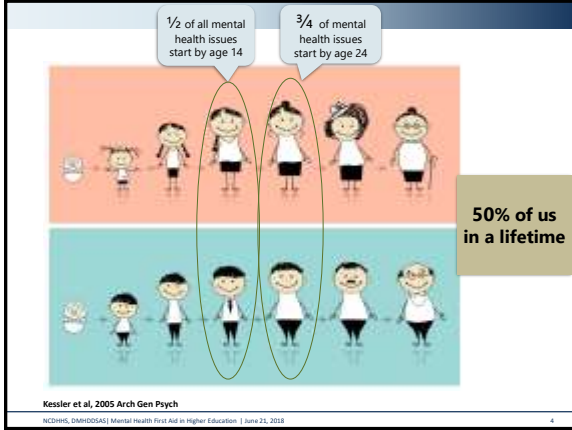
- working alongside you in your job
- on your street as a neighbor
- in your club as a personal friend
- as close kin by marriage

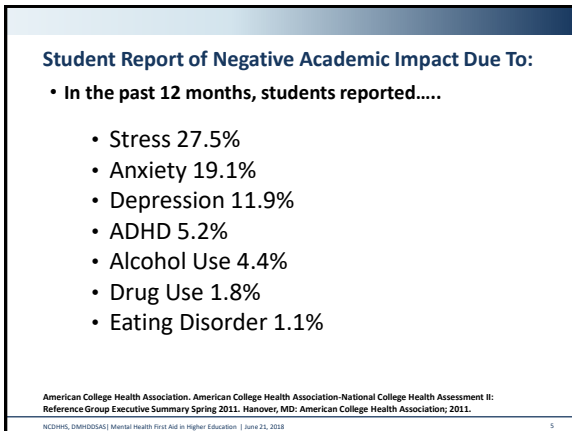
SOURCE:
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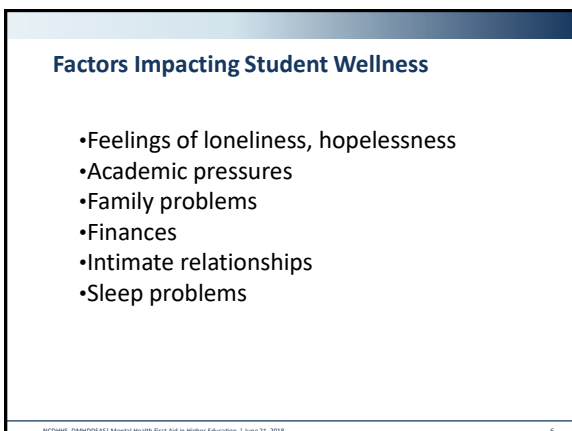
What is Stigma?

- There is something about people with mental illness that makes it easy to tell them from “normal” people.
- People with mental illness should not be given responsibility.
- A main cause of mental illness and addiction is a lack of self-discipline and will-power.
- As soon as a person shows signs of mental disturbance, s/he should be hospitalized.
- People with mental illness are a burden on society.
- Anyone with a history of mental problems should be excluded from....
- Locating mental health facilities in a residential area downgrades the neighborhood.

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Too Distressed to Learn

- In the past 4 weeks, 57.2% reported mental health affected academics

Number of Days	
1-2 days	25.3%
3-5 days	15.7%
6 or more days	16.2%

Eisenberg, D., Goldrick-Rab, S., Lipson, S. & Broton, K. Too Distressed to Learn? Mental Health Among Community College Students Wisconsin HOPE Lab Report. (2016)

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The Need is Here

Mental Health Conditions	Community Colleges	Four-Year Schools
Depression	35.6%	24.4%
Anxiety	29.1%	20.4%
Suicidal ideation	11%	10.2%
Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI)	15.4%	18.5%
Eating disorder	9.8%	8.8%
Any mental health problem	49.4%	43.8%

Eisenberg, D., Goldrick-Rab, S., Lipson, S. & Broton, K. Too Distressed to Learn? Mental Health Among Community College Students Wisconsin HOPE Lab Report. (2016)

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What is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid is the help offered to a person who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received or until the crisis resolves.

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Why Do We Need Mental Health First Aid?

- Mental health problems are common
- Stigma associated with mental health problems
- People with problems often don't seek help
- Other people often want to help, but don't know how to respond, so they do nothing

Mental Health First Aid Training

Notice



Intervene

Mental Health First Aid

- Created in Australia in 2001
(University of Melbourne)
- Adapted for US in 2008
- Currently in 21 countries
- Over 1,000,000 trained in US and over 54,000 in NC
- Supplements for unique populations
 - Higher Education
 - Older Adults
 - Public Safety
 - Rural
 - Spanish
 - Veterans



What Participants Learn

- **Prevalence** of mental health problems
- **Risk factors and warning signs** of mental health and substance use problems
- **Information** on depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis and substance use
- A **5-step action plan** to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or in crisis
- Available evidence-based professional, peer and self-help **resources**

Mental Health First Aid Action Plan

- A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- L**isten nonjudgementally
- G**ive reassurance or information
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage self help and other support strategies

What is a Mental Disorder?

A **mental disorder** or **mental illness** is a diagnosable illness that:

- Affects a person's thinking, emotions, and behavior
- Disrupts the person's ability to
 - Work / Learn
 - Carry out daily activities
 - Engage in satisfying relationships



What Causes Mental Illness?

Early life experiences
 Trauma and stress
 Environment
 Substance overuse
 Genetics
 Biochemistry

Depression: Signs and Symptoms

Behavioral

- Crying spells
- Withdrawal from others
- Neglect of responsibilities
- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Loss of motivation
- Slow movement
- Use of drugs and alcohol

Physical

- Fatigue
- Lack of energy
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Constipation
- Weight loss or gain
- Headaches
- Irregular menstrual cycle
- Loss of sexual desire
- Unexplained aches and pains

Depression: Signs and Symptoms

Psychological

- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Anger
- Mood swings
- Lack of emotional responsiveness
- Feelings of helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Irritability
- Frequent self-criticism
- Self-blame
- Pessimism
- Impaired memory and concentration
- Indecisiveness and confusion
- Tendency to believe others see one in a negative light
- Thoughts of death and suicide

Anxiety: Signs and Symptoms

Physical

- **Cardiovascular:** pounding heart, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, blushing
- **Respiratory:** fast breathing, shortness of breath
- **Neurological:** dizziness, headache, sweating, tingling, numbness
- **Gastrointestinal:** choking, dry mouth, stomach pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- **Musculoskeletal:** muscle aches and pains (especially neck, shoulders and back), restlessness, tremors and shaking, inability to relax

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Anxiety: Signs and Symptoms

Behavioral

- Avoidance of situations, obsessive or compulsive behavior, distress in social situations, phobic behavior

Psychological

- Unrealistic or excessive fear and worry (about past and future events), mind racing or going blank, decreased concentration and memory, indecisiveness, irritability, impatience, anger, confusion, restlessness or feeling "on edge" or nervous, fatigue, sleep disturbance, vivid dreams

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Societal Impact of Severe Mental Illness

25 years less life expectancy

90% of people who die by suicide have a mental disorder

1/3 of those who died by suicide had alcohol or other drugs in their toxicology reports

People who have severe mental illness are nearly 3 times more likely to be *victims* of violent crime

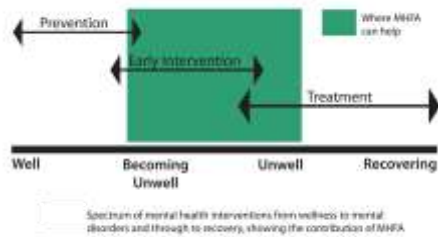
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Without Early Intervention

- Poorer long-term functioning
- Disruption of education and employment
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Strain on relationships and subsequent loss of social supports
- Greater chance of problems with the law
- Increased risk of depression and suicide
- Slower psychological maturation and slower uptake of adult responsibilities
- Loss of self-esteem and confidence

Spectrum of Mental Health Interventions





Wilson, Matthew. For college students grappling with mental illness, the world can seem colorless USA Today 3:59 pm EDT May 4, 2017. Graphic: Sophia Tulp

Dana Hashmonay, now 21, took a medical leave during her sophomore year of college after struggling with anxiety at school.





Photo: Eva O'Leary, Record Numbers of College Students Are Seeking Treatment for Depression and Anxiety — But Schools Can't Keep Up. **TIME**, March 19, 2018.

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I didn't want to be alive,.... I didn't want to see anyone else. I didn't want to see another day.



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I didn't know what it was. I didn't know why I didn't want to do anything. I had never experienced anything like that.

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Mental Health First Aid Training

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So What Do I Say?



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Seize the Awkard

“I’d like to know if you’re really all right.”

“I haven’t heard you laugh in a while. Is everything OK?”

“I’m worried about you and would like to know what’s going on so I can help.”

“We have missed you in class. Where have you been? ”

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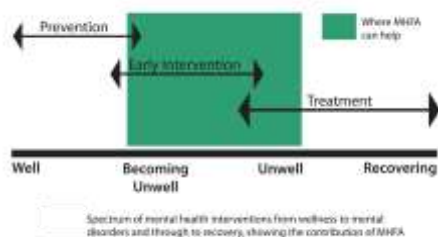
“You know you can tell me anything. I won’t judge.”

“Maybe it’s me, but I was wondering if you were all right.”

“I’ve noticed you’ve been down lately. What’s going on?”

“Seems like you haven’t been yourself lately. What’s up?”

Spectrum of Mental Health Interventions



It took me a while to get my stuff together to go. You know what? If you're not happy, you have to do something about it.



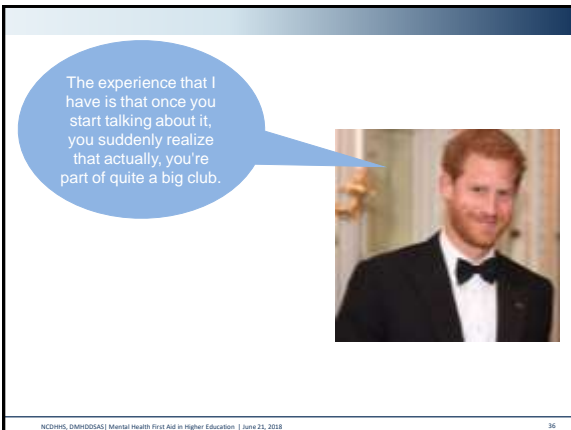
Huffington Post. Photo: Paul Archuleta via Getty Images



It's hard to accept that you have a problem. You have to look in the mirror ... and say, before you can go or grow into anything, you have to say you love yourself.

Huffington Post. Photo: Axelle/Bauer-Griffin via Getty Images

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The experience that I have is that once you start talking about it, you suddenly realize that actually, you're part of quite a big club.

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Testimonials

“This class was a real eye opener for me because honestly I knew very little about mental health issues and how to guide someone to the proper help.

It's funny, right after the class my niece opened up to me about her anxiety and panic attacks, and the next day I received an email about a study here at UNC that she qualified for. Had I not been through your class, I probably would not have given that study email a second thought. “

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Testimonials

“I can’t even explain how beneficial it is...”

“To call it helpful is an understatement...”

“I learned so many resources on campus that I didn’t even know existed.”

“Even my wife noticed a difference in how I respond...”

For More Information

Mental Health First Aid USA

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>

QUESTIONS?

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