

Traversing the Transition to College: Assisting Students with Mental Health Concerns

Services for Teens at Risk (STAR) Conference 2021

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OBJECTIVES

1

Describe common developmental themes for students transitioning to college

2

Discuss ways to examine mental health services offered by a college or university

3

Identify concrete steps to preparing for the transition to college



Going to college is often exciting, idealized, and highly anticipated



College is stressful under optimal conditions

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS



IDENTITY

- Who Am I (Now)?
- Values
- Major | Career Path
- Social Being
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity

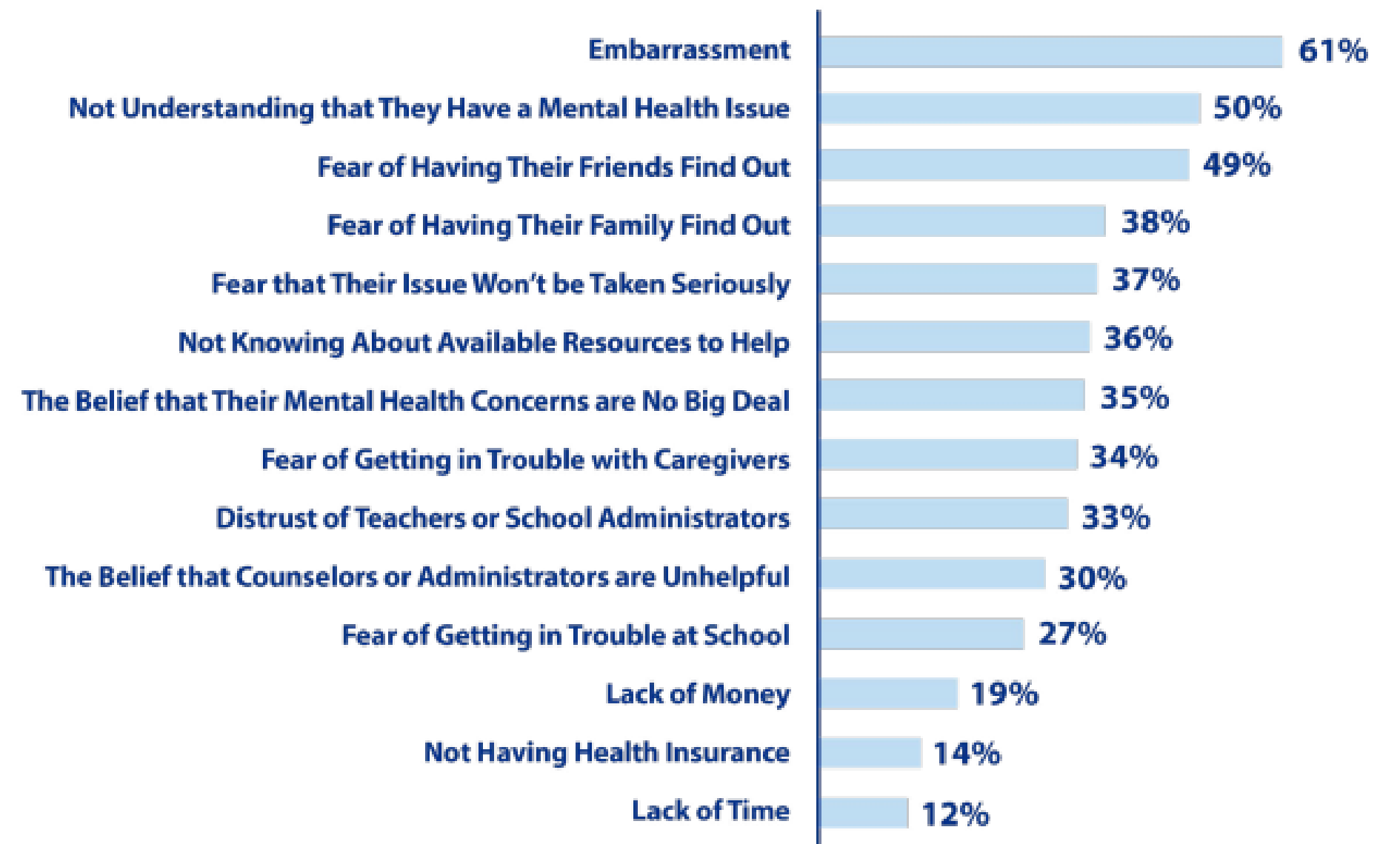
AUTONOMY | INDEPENDENCE

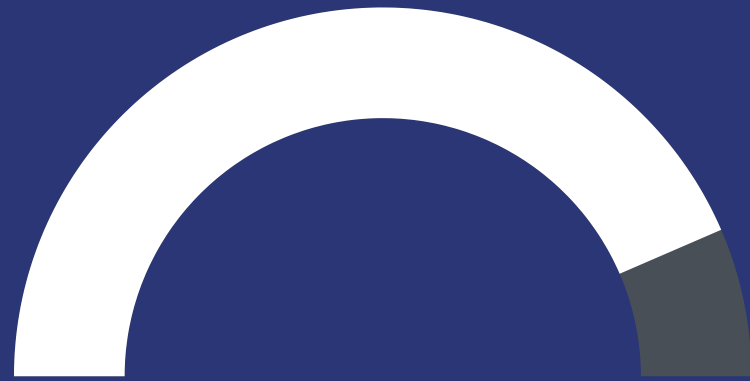
- Adulting
- Activities of Daily Living
- Independence | Interdependence
- Navigating Family Stress

EXPERIMENTATION

- Relationship Intimacy
- Substance Use
- Sexual Behaviors

Top Reasons That Students Don't Seeking Help for Mental Health Concerns





83%



Teens with a history of mental illness reported that the pandemic is exacerbating their condition



64%



Students who screen positive for mental health symptoms are not receiving formal care

University Counseling Centers (UCC) and Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS)



Intake

- Assessment of needs
- In-house counseling and/or referral
- Often virtual during COVID

Referral

- Recommended at any time
- After short-term counseling
- UCC web site
- Consultation

University Counseling Centers (UCC) and Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS)



Individual

- Short-term
- Session limit
- Co-pay
- Primarily virtual during COVID

Groups

- Focused on Identity/theme
- Skill acquisition
- Virtual during COVID

University Counseling Centers (UCC) and Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS)



Psychiatry

- UCC or Student Health Center
- Documentation from previous psychiatrist/MD
- Concurrent participation in counseling

Consultation

- Faculty
- Staff (Residence Life, Student Affairs, Campus Police)
- Parents
- Off-campus therapists



DURING COVID



- Services transitioned to virtual platform
- Fewer students seeking services
- State licensure limits accessibility for counseling/therapy
- UCCs offering broader variety of services
- Increased focus on webinars, groups, skills clinics, outreach programs

CAMPUS RESOURCES



RESIDENCE LIFE

- Resident Director
- Area Coordinator
- Housing = building, Resident = student

CASE MANAGER

- Student Affairs Staff
- Consults with multiple University partners
- Navigates campus & community resources
- Coordinates communication of information

FAMILY RESOURCES

- University "Parent" resource web site
- Campus "Parent" group
- Social media

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



DISABILITY RESOURCES

- Provides accommodations
- Includes mental health diagnoses
- Informs professors of accommodation (not diagnosis)
- Often requires documentation

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

- Student Affairs Staff
- Consults with multiple University partners
- Navigates campus & community resources
- Oversees communication of information

PARENT PREPARATION

- Discuss continuing care with therapist back home
- Discuss mental health care expectations
- Research mental health services – on and off campus
 - Cost of services
 - Session limits
 - Intake process
- Research insurance coverage
 - In/out-of-network mental health benefits
 - In/out-of-network benefits for specialized treatment
 - Recommendations from UCC

PARENT PREPARATION

- Coordinate sharing of information by current therapist
- Locate contact information for campus Wellness Check
- Identify crisis services
 - UCC
 - Text and hotline numbers
- Identify local psychiatric hospital(s), specialized treatment centers

STUDENT PREPARATION AND PRACTICE

- Identify and describe your diagnosis
- Describe how your symptoms impact your life
- Describe your treatment and clinical history
- Describe what has and hasn't been helpful about your treatment
- Know the names and contact information of your treatment providers
- Know the name, dosage, and changes in medication
- Take medication independently
- Refill medication independently
- Carry your insurance card
- Replace lost insurance card

STUDENT PREPARATION AND PRACTICE

- Research university counseling services
- Research psychiatric services on or near campus
- Plan how and when you will contact counseling center to make an appointment
- Find the physical location of the counseling center during orientation (or on a campus map)
- Identify required documents for Accommodations (Disability Resources)
- Obtain all documents required to apply for accommodations
- Research campus crisis/after-hours resources
- Add crisis resource numbers to cell phone contacts
- Transition to managing more Activities of Daily Living (waking independently, laundry, grocery shopping)

RESOURCES

Managing a Mental Health Condition in College | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness

<https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Teens-Young-Adults/Managing-a-Mental-Health-Condition-in-College>

Set To Go Program | JED Foundation

<https://www.settogo.org>

STAR Center | University of Pittsburgh

<https://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/useful-links>

STAR Center Young Adult Transition Group: A Treatment Manual

https://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/tay_star_manual.pdf