Faculty Response to Graduate Student Mental Health

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National College Health Assessment Data UW-Madison

Any time within the last 12 months (ALL STUDENTS):

- 31% reported they felt so depressed that it was difficult to function
- 55.4% reported they felt overwhelming anxiety
- 7.7% reported they seriously considered suicide
  - 0.5 reported attempting suicide
Health Factors Impacting Academics

Within the last 12 months, students reported the following factors affecting their individual academic performance:

1. Stress: 30.6 %
2. Anxiety: 22.2 %
3. Sleep difficulties: 18.5 %
4. Cold/Flu/Sore throat: 13.9 %
5. Depression: 12.2 %
Stress Curve

- Some stress is good, activating, helpful
- Other stress is destructive, distressing, and reduces productivity and well-being.
- Chronic stress and MH concerns are not indicative of academic achievement, but are often side effects of pressures to perform, achieve, and publish.
- Most grad students report regularly being in the distress category rather than the eustress category. However, maximum productivity is at a lower level of stress.
- Distress levels can be avoided through clear expectations, work/life balance, and self-care.
Graduate Student Characteristics

- Perfectionism
- Procrastination
- High Achievement
- Goal Orientation
- Intellectualization
- 110% mentality

You may also see yourself in some of these descriptions – you once were a graduate student as well!
Prevalence of Mental Health Concerns

Graduate Student Mental Health:

• 18.2% report clinically significant depressive symptoms
  • 17.9% of grad students in the social sciences
  • 21.9% of all other students (undergrad, special, etc)
• 3.8% report symptoms consistent with a major depressive episode
  • 2.9% of grad students in the social sciences
  • 5.2% of all other students
• 15.7% report clinically significant anxiety symptoms
  • 14.8% of grad students in the social sciences
  • 18.4% of all other students

Healthy Minds Study, 2015
Prevalence of Mental Health Concerns

Graduate Student Mental Health:

Recent Nature article:

41% of graduate students scored as having moderate to severe anxiety as compared to 6% of the general population.

39% of graduate students scored in the moderate to severe depression range in our study, as compared to 6% of the general population.

Strong, supportive and positive mentoring relationships between graduate students and their PI/advisors correlate significantly with less anxiety and depression.

Faculty and administrators must set a tone of self-care as well as an efficient and mindful work ethic in order to move to a healthier work and education environment.

Recognizing Mental Health Concerns

- Recent change in mood
- Increased/decreased sleep or lethargy
- Crying more often
- Strange or bizarre behavior
- Change in personal hygiene
- Odd or out of character emotional reactions
- Change in quality of work
- Not showing up for meetings, class, or work
- Isolation or disconnection from friends
- Referencing suicide or not wanting to be around
- New or heightened interpersonal difficulties
- Lowered self-esteem, self-efficacy
Protective Factors

- Conditions or attributes (skills, strengths, resources, supports) in individuals, families, communities or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate health risks.
- A few examples:
  - Accessible care for mental, physical and substance use disorders
  - Awareness of resources/care that exist
  - Help-seeking is normalized/supported
  - Social supports
  - Sense of **belonging**, feelings of connectedness to community
  - Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution
  - Feelings of security/safety
Responding to Mental Health Concerns

• You are one link in someone’s chain of support – be a good link, but know your limits.
  • You often won’t resolve their concern, but you can partner with someone to get them to the next link in their chain of support.
• Listen well – provide empathy and support.
• Ask curious questions, even if it’s about suicide. Asking will not increase a person’s risk of suicide – it actually decreases it.
• Identify specific behaviors or changes you have noticed and express concern.
• Consult with others as needed.
• Follow up later on.
Respond: What to say?

“I’ve noticed that you have been out a number of times in the last two weeks. How are you doing?”

“It sounds like things are pretty tough right now.”

“With all you mentioned about _______, I’m wondering if you have thoughts about hurting yourself? Have you ever thought about suicide?”
Respond: Managing Crises

- Use a Team Approach – get support / consultation
- Gather information first
- Assess safety levels for whether police or emergency medical response is needed
- Consider possible options and discuss – with student, with team, family, etc.
- Make plan and discuss follow-up

If a student is expressing suicidal/homicidal plan, acting out of touch with reality, or verbalizes the need for voluntary hospitalization, consider the following options:

Contact campus police immediately 911 (24 hours)
Call the 24/7 UHS Crisis line for consultation 608-265-5600, option #9
If in doubt....CONSULT.

Not sure what to think?
What to do?

Respecting student privacy,
talk to others.
Navigating Multiple Roles as Faculty

- Teacher
- Supervisor
- Mentor
- Funding Source
- Co-Researcher
- Co-Author
- Evaluators
- Professional Gate Keeper
- Recommendation Letter Writer
- Future Colleague
- Confidant
- Human

Multiple Roles of Grad Students:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>Advocate</td>
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Referring to Campus Resources

Dean of Students Office
70 Bascom Hall
608.263.5700

Graduate School
217 Bascom
608-262-2433

University Health Services
333 East Campus Mall
608-265-5600 Option 2 (mental health) or Option 9 (crisis)

Refer when concerns are severe, student repeatedly comes to you with the same issue, or you see signs of distress.
Referring to UHS Resources

- **UHS Let’s Talk**
  - Locations around campus each day of the week

- **UHS Mental Health Services**
  - Access appointment to get started:
    - Online (myuhs.uhs.wisc.edu)
    - over the phone, or (608.265.5600 option 2)
    - in person (7th floor; 333 East Campus Mall).
  - Individual, group, couple/partner, psychiatry

- **UHS Stress Management Sessions**

- **UHS Survivor Services**
  - Advocacy and counseling for survivors of sexual assault, stalking, intimate partner violence, and harassment.
UHS Online Resources: SilverCloud

Online modules to help address mild to moderate:

- Depression,
- Anxiety,
- Stress, &
- Body Image concerns.

No cost.
Available 24/7.
Students, faculty and staff with a NetID can access!

uhs.wisc.edu/silvercloud/
• **YOU@WISC** is a hub that serves you information and resources based on the things you are interested in, worried about or working toward in your college career.

• Content is categorized in SUCCEED (academic/career), THRIVE (health/wellbeing), and MATTER (community/belonging) and customized to your needs.

• **YOU.UHS.WISC.EDU**
UHS Online Resources: AtRisk by Kognito

kognitocampus.com/login
Use enrollment key: uwmadison
Dean of Students Office - Student of Concern Report

- Report received by DOSO drop in staff member- you should receive an acknowledgement of receipt via email.
- Staff will outreach to student in variety of ways- phone, text, email to learn what is impacting student.
- Staff will reach back out to individual who submitted with an update on next steps, plan in place, update on student status as appropriate.
Dean of Students Office – Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

• BIT is comprised of representatives from: DoSO, Graduate School, International Student Services, McBurney Disability Resource Center, Residence Life, UHS-MHS, UWPD, and University Apartments. It’s primary focus is on prevention through collaborative communication across campus.

• Mission is to identify students who (by engaging in various behaviors) are creating disruptions on campus due to mental health, substance use, or interpersonal conflict.

• The team works to develop appropriate interventions to support the identified student, manage the disruption, and assist the university community members.

Goals of BIT

• Recognize and respond to students of concern prior to crisis escalation;
• Engage with students to provide referrals to assistance and treatment;
• Intervene to diminish the impact of students of concern on the campus community; and
• Provide a coordinated response that effectively engages campus partners and resources.
Dean of Students Office
263-5700
75 Bascom Hall
http://students.wisc.edu/

Rape Crisis Center (24 hour crisis line)
251-7273
333 East Campus Mall, #7901
www.danecountyrcc.org

University Health Services
Mental Health Services
265-5600 (option 2)
333 East Campus Mall
www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health

McBurney Disability Resource Center
263-2741
702 W. Johnson St
www.mcburney.wisc.edu

UW-Madison Police
911 or 264-COPS
http://www.uwpd.wisc.edu/
Health Experiences: Depression in Young Adults

Depression in Young Adults

Thirty-eight young adults across the United States shared their stories about living with depression.

See and hear these young adults describe their experiences.

http://healthexperiencesusa.org/
“As a student you may experience a range of issues that can create barriers to learning. These might include strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. University Health Services is here to help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 608-265-5600 or visiting uhs.wisc.edu. Help is always available.”

https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/prevention/suicide-prevention/facstaff-suicide-resources/