Suicide Prevention

Student Health and Counseling Services
Updated Summer 2019
What does UW-River Falls do to identify and support struggling students specifically in relationship to suicide prevention?
• Drawn from the United States Air Force (USAF) Suicide Prevention Program (Knox et al., 2003).
• Also based on what is known about how to decrease risk factors and increase protective factors for mental health and suicide among adolescents, college students, and the general population.
• Based on an understanding of the student mental health problems that campuses face and existing best practices.
• Campus planners are cautioned to ensure that adequate institutional capacity exists and that linkages to community services are in place before they create programs that will significantly increase the number of students seeking services.

Anxiety – National College Health Assessment (NCHA)

Within the Last 12 Months, Felt Overwhelming Anxiety

- Males: UWRF 2009 (31%), UWRF 2012 (43%), UWRF 2015 (43%), UWRF 2018 (65%)
- Females: UWRF 2009 (63%), UWRF 2012 (56%), UWRF 2015 (53%), UWRF 2018 (63%)

Within the Last 12 Months, Diagnosed or Treated by a Professional for Anxiety?

- Males: UWRF 2009 (6%), UWRF 2012 (11%), UWRF 2015 (11%), UWRF 2018 (16%)
- Females: UWRF 2009 (10%), UWRF 2012 (17%), UWRF 2015 (17%), UWRF 2018 (22%)

Anxiety continues to increase among UWRF students, now higher than depression.

UW System 2018: 46% Males, 62% Females

UW-System 2018: 10% Males, 22% Females
Depression - NCHA

Within the Last 12 Months, Felt So Depressed It Was Difficult to Function

Within the Last 12 Months, Diagnosed or Treated by a Professional for Depression?

UW System 2018: 34% Males, 43% Females

UW System 2018: 13% Males, 25% Females
Rates increasing for UWRF, UWS, and National for Psychiatric Condition

Disabilities – NCHA

UW-River Falls
Do you have any of the following?

ADHD
- 2009: 6.1%
- 2012: 6.7%
- 2015: 8.3%
- 2018: 7.7%

Chronic illness
- 2009: 3.0%
- 2012: 4.0%
- 2015: 4.0%
- 2018: 3.7%

Learning disability
- 2009: 5.1%
- 2012: 5.1%
- 2015: 5.5%
- 2018: 5.5%

Psychiatric condition
- 2009: 2.8%
- 2012: 4.3%
- 2015: 8.8%
- 2018: 10.0%
Main Goal:
To Create and Maintain a Caring and Safe Campus Environment

• Policies and initiatives that support healthy lifestyle choices
  • Alcohol/tobacco Tobacco-free campus policy
  • Sponsorship policy that prohibits alcohol and tobacco companies from advertising and sponsoring events
  • Campus alcohol sanctions and policies that promote legal and responsible use of alcohol, etc.

http://www.uwrf.edu/TobaccoFreeCampus/Index.cfm

• Step Up/Bystander Intervention
  • Hired a Violence Prevention Coordinator
  • Campus Victim Advocate on Campus
  • Center of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging
Addressing Mental Health from a Public Health Perspective

1. Identify Students At-Risk
2. Encourage Help-Seeking Behaviors and Reduce Stigma
3. Provide Mental Health Services
4. Establish and Follow Crisis Management Procedure
5. Restrict Potentially Lethal Means
6. Encourage Life Skills Development
7. Promote Social Networks

From the Education Development Center, Center for College Health and Safety, Campus Health and Safety, Funded through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2008
http://www.campushealthandsafety.org/
1. Identify Students At-Risk

• For new and transfer students:
  • Information and sessions for new students and their parents
  • Letter sent via email prior to school starting
  • During Orientation all new students learn about services and come to Student Health and Counseling Services office

• For current students:
  • Reaching out to all students through outreach, specifically populations of need with tailored interventions such as international students, students studying abroad, underrepresented groups, athletes, lower income or first-generation college students, etc.

• For faculty and staff:
  • Education and information to identify and refer students who may be in distress (Student Affairs and Residence Life staff, new faculty/staff, other departments such as Academic Success Center, etc.).
  • Mental Health First Aid Training offered as a day long training for staff, faculty, and students.
  • We work with student health, crisis and threat assessment teams, campus and community police, res life, and with faculty and deans, to promote a consistent message for the need to communicate and share concerns about students and provide action steps to support these students in an efficient and effective way.

• Information is available on the web page and distribute through campus regarding what to do for emergencies/crisis situations, including what to do if a student is in crisis or is suicidal now, including “Assisting Students in Distress”

• Online mental health screening available 24 hours per day on our web page

• Regular college population needs assessments to effectively monitor and track mental health issues for our students to adapt our programming to better fit their needs.
1. Identify Students At-Risk

Why Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. This 8-hour training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care.

Resources

Concerned About a Student?

Resources for faculty/staff and family/friends

How to Respond to a Student in Distress

How to Refer a Student to Counseling Services

Confidentiality

Online Mental Health Screening

Behavior Intervention Team

Parenting Your College Student Resources

5 Steps to Help a Distressed Student

1. Express Concern/Validate:
   “I’m happy you came to me. What’s been going on? Things will get better. Let’s work together to figure this out.”

2. Be Direct (it shows you care enough to go there):
   “Have you had any thoughts about suicide? Do you have a plan? [If YES call 911 or Counseling Services—office hours/info below]"

3. Get a Commitment to Live:
   “What is your plan for the next few days? Let’s write down a few names of people you could call if you start to feel really overwhelmed or sad again.”

4. Increase Support Network:
   “I am a support for you but I want you to know that I believe counseling can actually help you. I know other students who have been helped by it, and it’s the only time in your life it will be this easy to access.”

5. Refer to Counseling:
   “Would you like me to help make an appointment?” Or “Would you feel more comfortable if I walked with you to counseling?”

Don’t
   Dismiss: “You don’t mean that.”
   Invalidate: “You just need a good night sleep.”

Do
   Consult: Tell us what you are seeing (don’t worry alone), ask for support when you are unsure what to do.

UW River Falls

Student Health and Counseling Services: Counseling Services: 715-425-3884
211 Nagel Hall (M-F, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.)
2. Encourage Help-Seeking Behaviors and Reduce Stigma

• Outreach Events

• Active Minds
  - a college student group that raises mental health awareness among college students, promotes a dialogue around issues of mental health, and educates the entire student body about available resources in and around the campus community (advisor one of the counselors)

• Dan’s Bandana Project
  In taking this bandana and tying it to my backpack, I pledge:
  - I will listen if you need to talk to someone
  - I will talk to someone if I need to be listened to
  - I will help you find a counselor when you need more than listening
  - I will find a counselor when I need more than to be listened to
  - I will be accepting
  - I will be honest
  - I will see a person in need of support

With this pledge, I am declaring support for those suffering with depression and/or anxiety.
You can talk with me
I want to help
You are way too important to feel alone today
3. Provide Mental Health Services

Student Health and Counseling Services provides:

• Access to basic health services through Student Health Services (such as for medication referral to health providers, including access to psychiatry) and to mental health services (licensed mental health therapists, 1:1 and group offerings, along with many outreach events) through Counseling Services for all students.

• We provide over 2000 hour long mental health sessions a year, helping students across a range of ability and functioning, increasing their relationship skills, emotional self-regulation, coping skills, and expanding their ability to access social support; thus, increasing student retention.

• Each counselor manages an individual client case load that can rise to over 90 students. We consciously manage this client load so that we can also do preventative work and be visible in the campus community. This is a choice that we make to serve our mission to not just appear available to a particular portion of the campus community, but to normalize skill building and help seeking across the student body.

• Wellness Workshops focusing on essential oils and stress management including 6 separate workshops throughout the year averaging more than 100 students per workshop to encourage positive mental and physical health.

• Open counseling groups available to the entire student population including Meditation, Grief, Sexual Assault Support Group, International Student Group, Adventure Group, Success Coaching, and Pet Therapy.

• Both Meditation and Relaxation rooms available to the entire campus community providing access to a space to calm self with biofeedback, massage chairs, seasonal affective disorder lamps, zen garden, soothing music, and art therapy.

• Presentations in multiple classrooms, to multiple groups, including first year adventure courses, learning communities, international students, and student support services.
4. Establish and Follow Crisis Management Procedure

- Campus Crisis Management Plan and Team

- Training in emergency preparedness, emergency response, and crisis response

- Behavior Intervention Team: A team comprised of professional representation from key campus units such as Student Conduct and Community Standards, Residence Life, Health and Counseling, and Campus Police.
  - The team meets weekly to review information received from reports made about student behavior, assesses the student for risk based on the information received, engages in intervention, connects the student to appropriate resources, and provides student support/case management if necessary beyond initial crisis response.
5. Restrict Potentially Lethal Means

- Weapons are not allowed in buildings on campus
- Little or no access to places to jump
- Education on prescription drug abuse and misuse and information about disposal
- When a mental health client cannot function safely on campus, despite our available treatment services, we act in concert with other involved campus departments to strengthen the support and monitoring of these students to the degree allowed by law (Behavioral Intervention Team):
  - If we determine that the student represents an immediate danger to health and safety of the campus, we work with the police and area hospitals to connect student to the higher level of care they would need.
  - When a student fails to thrive on campus we help case manage the transition of a student toward a more appropriate community and support network.
6. Encourage Life Skills Development

On our website you will find other ways to encourage life skill developing and Wellness Activities:

http://www.uwrf.edu/StudentHealthAndCounseling/Wellness/Index.cfm
http://www.uwrf.edu/RecreationAndSportFacilities/
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7. Promote Social Networks/Connectedness

Student Involvement

- This year we provided Mental Health related programming each semester. Speaker Kevin Hines came in the fall to share his story on suicide prevention. We had a very solid turnout with around 250 students and community members in attendance. Health and Counseling and Dan’s Bandana both were in the back of the room to share resources.

- In the spring we put on Mental Health Awareness Week in which we did a full week of mental health related events. Tapping into other campus partners such as Campus Rec, Dining, The Paw PADS service dogs, and Health and Counseling we were able to provide robust programming.

- We also brought in a high impact program called Dear World. Dear world specializes in story sharing by taking portraits of people. We had 236 folks take their portrait and share their story. Later in the week we had a live story sharing event in which 5 students told their story on a stage. This event was very impactful as the students were very vulnerable and shared how mental health effected them. There were about 100 folks in attendance and we got a lot of positive reviews. Please see table below that shows the list of events for Mental Health Awareness Week.

- Student Health and Counseling Services have both an Instagram and Facebook account to better connect with student about healthy tips and events on campus.

http://uwrf.orgsync.com/
How Can We Each Play a Role in Suicide Prevention?