

# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

The current generation of college students experience more loneliness, depression, and suicidal thinking and behavior than previous generations (1). We periodically survey our students about their experiences with mental health challenges. Here is what we know:

## CC STUDENTS ARE OVERWHELMED



68% of students experienced emotional or mental difficulties that hurt their academic performance during the previous month. (3)

Most (91%) of CC students have felt overwhelmed by all they had to do in the previous year.(2)

11% of CC students thought seriously about suicide in the previous 12 months. (3)



**61%** of CC students said they had needed help for emotional or mental health problems in the previous 12 months. (3)

## THEY WOULD LIKE TO GO TO ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

47% said they would talk to a professor, and 32% said they would talk to an academic advisor if they had a mental health problem that was affecting their academic performance. (3)



Only 19% of CC students had actually talked to any academic personnel about mental health problems that were affecting their academic performance. (3)

## MANY WHO NEED HELP AREN'T CONNECTING WITH IT

CC students identified a number of barriers that reduce their access to mental health services. (3)

37% said that they prefer to deal with issues on their own

16% said they had difficulty finding an appointment

57% of students believe that their peers think that receiving mental health treatment is a sign of weakness (although 90% of them disagreed with this idea!)

11% said they were unsure where to go

33% said they didn't have enough time

17% reported financial barriers

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### BREAK DOWN BARRIERS, MAKE CONNECTIONS, & ENCOURAGE HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIORS

- Normalize the need for help—mental health issues are common
- Point students toward resources like the Counseling Center, Accessibility Resources, and the Wellness Resource Center
  - Practice (and model) your own self-care
    - Follow these three steps:

#### NOTICE

Learn to identify the signs of mental health challenge, illness, and crisis

#### RESPOND & REFER

Provide an empathic response, validate their experience (i.e., "that sounds difficult), and refer to the appropriate skills and supports

#### FOLLOW UP

Ask how they are doing, check in to see if they connected with the referral, let the HUB know about your concerns for the student

1. Twenge, J. (2017). iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood. Atria International.

2. National College Health Assessment Survey, 2017

3. Healthy Minds Survey, 2018

Adapted from Active Minds' "Mental Health Matters Among High Achievers"



# MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES EXIST ON OUR CAMPUS

Healthy People 2020 defines a *health disparity* as “a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on . . . characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.” (1) We periodically survey our students about their experiences with mental health challenges. Here is what we know about mental health disparities for Students of Color on the CC campus:

## STUDENTS OF COLOR FEEL LESS BELONGING ON CAMPUS

Psychological sense of community is the strongest contributor to thriving for all students. (2)

**26%** of Students of Color don't see themselves as part of the CC campus community compared to 14% of White students (3)

**36%** of Students of Color don't feel they fit in well at CC compared to 14% of White students (3)

**"It is really discouraging to think that, like, there are only a few comfortable spaces for POC's on campus."**  
—Marshall, Student of Color at CC (4)

## THEY EXPERIENCE MORE DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

Students of Color experience significantly more anxiety and depression than White students at CC (3)

**13%** of students of color thought seriously about suicide in the previous 12 months (3)

## THERE ARE BARRIERS TO SEEKING & RECEIVING MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

**Trust**      **Cultural Competency**      **Time**  
**Stigma**      **Relevance**      **Finances**

**"Finding a counselor that's representative to you but also focuses on the area that you need counseling in, can be very hard, if not impossible."**

--student from Fall 2019 Wellness Focus Group (6)

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### BASIC

- Notice and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health challenge and crisis
- Incorporate diverse perspectives and examples into curriculum (5)
- Create opportunities to engage around national and international issues/events that may be especially meaningful for marginalized communities (5)
- Point **all** students (not just those you see as struggling) toward resources like the Colket Center, Counseling Center, Accessibility Resources, and the Wellness Resource Center

### ADVANCED

- Help students connect with their strengths
- Get to know students so that you can provide culturally relevant referrals
- Create spaces that welcome feedback and accountability

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010) Recommendations for the framework and format of Healthy People 2020. Available from: [http://www.healthypeople.gov/sites/default/files/Phase1\\_0.pdf](http://www.healthypeople.gov/sites/default/files/Phase1_0.pdf).  
2. Schriener (2016). National Symposium on Student Retention presentation  
3. Healthy Minds Survey, 2018  
4. Figueroa, C.(2020). The Culture of Mental Health at CC.  
5. Equity in Mental Health Framework  
6. Fall 2019 Wellness Focus Groups