

# Changing Student Needs and Mental Health on College Campuses

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## CHDC Information and History

- The CHDC has been a part of KSU for over 30 years
- Our client population has changed over the past 10 years to one that closely resembles a community counseling facility.
- The CHDC provides counseling services to 600-800 clients annually totaling over 4000 hours of counseling.

## Changing Student Needs

- 10 years ago – roommates, relationships, stress, money
- Today – mental diagnoses, suicide, debilitating anxiety and depression
- **Why the change?**
  - Medication management allows for more individuals with diagnoses to attend university
  - This can be good, but challenging
  - Problems arise when students stop taking medications and/or consume alcohol on a frequent basis. Both actions create problems with medication management, thereby impacting students' mental health

## Anxiety, Depression, and Suicide

- Anxiety has been the #1 concern in the CHDC for over 2 years
- Until recently, depression was always the #1 concern
- Depression and Anxiety often can be present at the same time (comorbidity)
  - John Doe – stressed, falls behind in classes, depressed, more stressed, falls further behind, more depressed
- Suicide often begins to figure into the equation without the student considering other options

## Suicide

- In 2013 calendar year, the CHDC provided services to 611 new clients.
- 96 of the 611 reported "recent or current suicidal thoughts, plans, or attempts"
- 227 of the 611 reported "past suicidal thoughts, plans, or attempts"
- 52.8% discussed suicide at some level while receiving services
- While thoughts of suicide may come from many sources for individuals, often it can be a result of anxiety and/or depression.

## Decision-Making (or the lack thereof)

- The generation now in college are products of helicopter parents. With the best of intentions, these parents made decisions for their children throughout adolescence.
- **The Result?** – adolescents never learned from their mistakes (or weren't given the chance to make mistakes or decisions) and now are college students who have no decision-making skills.
- Now in College they:
  - Can't decide on a major
  - Can't problem solve when issues arise in or out of school

## Decision-Making cont.

- Examples
  - John Doe – wants to go into accounting, has a 2.6 gpa, doesn't know what to do.
  - Jane Doe – is failing a class for \_\_\_ reason and doesn't know what to do and can't think of options.
  - They could: Talk to their professors, advisors, career services, the tutoring offices – but they don't, they are just frozen and overwhelmed. They can often feel as though their world is ending.
- When a problem arises, they cannot problem-solve
- This leads to stress, anxiety, depression

## What can you do?

- Foster a safe environment
- Work towards teaching problem-solving skills to your students
- Encourage counseling for mental health concerns
- Be honest with students (it's almost impossible for someone who hates math and numbers to be an accountant). Have that tough conversation with your student.
- Put the responsibilities on the student with clear directives (make it a "homework" assignment) – you don't want to fill the role of the helicopter parent.

## How Do You ID Students with Mental Health Concerns?

- Talk with the student
- Ask difficult questions (Have you thought about hurting or killing yourself?)
- Listen for key phrases and watch non-verbal communication:
  - "I can't do this anymore"
  - "It's just not worth it"
  - Anger and profanity
  - Strong emotions, tears
- Provide support:
  - "I know this has got to be disappointing, what are you feeling now?"
  - Refer to counseling as needed
  - Meet the student again very soon if able

## Referring to Counseling

- 3 resources on KSU Campus
  - Counseling and Human Development Center
    - 325 White Hall, 330-672-2208
  - University Psychological Services
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor DeWeese Hall, 330-672-2487
  - Psychological Clinic
    - 1<sup>st</sup> floor Kent Hall, 330-672-2372

