Agenda

I. WELCOME

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

III. PRESENTATIONS

- o SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
- o UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO

IV. DISCUSSION – BREAKOUT ROOMS

V. CLOSING

Announcements

Communities of Practice: Benefits Navigator IBHE

Meetings for Benefits Navigators

*Dates Subject to Change

March 4, 2025
1:30 p.m.

June 12, 2025 *
1:30 p.m.

October 22, 2025 *
1:30 p.m.

Register Here

SAVE

THE

DATE

20 MAY
2025

HOUSE Summit
Housing and Opportunities that are Useful for Students' Excellence
FREE EVENT!

ISU BONE STUDENT CENTER
200 N. University St.
Normal, IL

Illinois Campus Cares Technical Assistance Center

Brittany Tolar, LCSW
Deputy Director, ICC TAC

Catherine Melka-Kaffer, LCSW
Initiative Coordinator, ICC TAC

Anita Sego, PhD, MCHES
Director, ICC TAC

IBHE
ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

ILLINOIS CAMPUS CARES
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

Emerging Adulthood & Mental Health: Supporting Student Wellbeing

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Illinois Campus Cares Technical Assistance Center and

University of Illinois Chicago btolar2@uic.edu and melka1@uic.edu

Welcome & Objectives

1   **Emerging Adulthood & Developmental Stage**

2   **Common Mental Health Challenges: College Students**

3   **Identifying & Responding to a Mental Health Crisis**

4   **Strategies to Engage & Support Students**

5   **Continued Mental Health Learning & Support**

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Why This Matters: Emerging Adult Development

1 **Identity Exploration**

Academic, career, and relationship choices shape identity during this crucial period.

2 **Increased Independence**

New responsibilities in finances, housing, and healthcare decisions emerge.

3 **Brain Development**

Ongoing neurological changes affect impulsivity and emotional regulation.

4 **Transition Stress**

Adapting to college, workforce, and societal expectations creates unique pressures.

Impact of Financial & Basic Needs Stress

Increased Risk

1

Students facing food or housing insecurity are more likely to experience anxiety and depression.

Post-Pandemic Instability

2

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated financial and housing challenges for many students.

Recommendations

3

Integrated supports that provide student access to basic need resources.

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Mental Health Prevalence in College Students ([Healthy Minds, 2013-2021](#))

60%

Mental Health Conditions

Over 60% of college students met criteria for one or more mental health conditions in 2021. (Lipson et.al., 2022)

34%

Anxiety

Anxiety is the second most prevalent mental health condition in this population (Lipson et.al., 2022)

40%

Depression

Depression is the most common diagnosis among college students. . (Lipson et.al., 2022)

Recognizing Warning Signs

- Seeming unusually confused or unable to concentrate
- Prolonged depression (sadness or irritability)
- Feelings of extreme highs and lows
- Excessive fears, worries and anxieties
- Avoiding friends or social activities
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Strong feelings of anger
- Strange thoughts (delusions)
- Changes in school performance or attendance
- Seeing or hearing things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- Growing inability to cope with daily problems and activities
- Suicidal thoughts or statements
- Numerous unexplained physical ailments
- Increased substance use

Mental Health America: Additional Resources
NAMI: Warning Signs and Symptoms

Recognizing Mental Health Challenges

Anxiety Disorders

Recognize overwhelm, frequent worry, avoidance of stressors, and physical symptoms like rapid breathing.

Depressive Disorders

Observe low energy, lack of motivation, expressions of hopelessness, and withdrawal from peers.

Trauma & PTSD

Notice hypervigilance, difficulty trusting, emotional numbing, or discomfort discussing experiences.

Identifying & Responding to a Crisis

Recognize Warning Signs

1

Extreme distress, references to self-harm, or disconnection from reality.

De-escalate

2

Stay calm, use a nonjudgmental tone, and give space while maintaining engagement.

Refer & Follow-Up

3

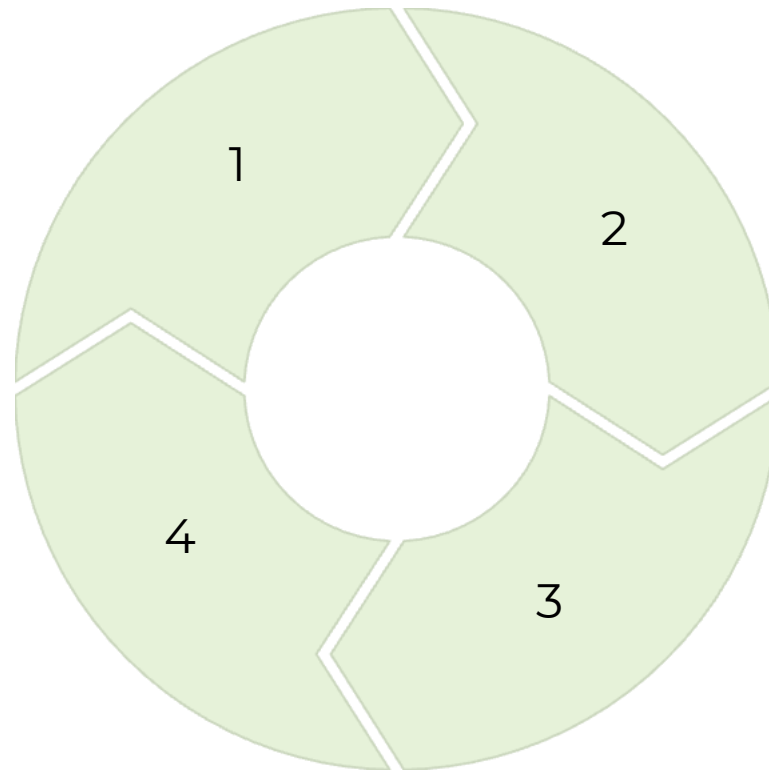Connect to campus resources or crisis services following your institution's protocols.

Be There Certificate: 2-hour interactive, free course on recognizing mental health warning and crisis signs.

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Trauma Informed Skills to Engage & Support Students

Empowerment & Choice

Prioritize safety, trust, and empowerment in all interactions.

Collaboration

Motivational interviewing principles to support student engagement.

Safety

Emotional and physical safety, cultural humility.

Trustworthiness

Clarify your role and limitations in providing support.

1

2

4

3

Institute on Trauma and Trauma informed Care, University of Buffalo and Fallot and Harris (2009)

Empowerment

Empowerment: Involves the recognition of strengths and skills to build a realistic sense of hope and possibility

- Benefit Navigator Role as pathway to improve retention, support student wellbeing, and promote interdependence.

In Practice

- Normalize continuum of skill building: "modeling, doing with, cheering on."

- Assessing student strengths and natural supports at referral or intake.
    - What do you value about yourself?
    - Tell me about any creative or different solutions you tried. How did this work out?
    - Who is important in your life?

Choice

Choice: Making individual choice and control a priority. Student has a right to self-determination and autonomy.

In Practice
- Inform students about options available with options that reflect race, gender, and culture.

- What would be one small step we can take today to improve X
  - Task chunking options

- Support flexibility within parameters
  - Example: Student with anxiety is meeting to complete a benefit application that requires phone interview and reports distress.
    - Validate concern- I know this is difficult and I'm here to support you in this process. (Breathing visual, stress balls, drawing)
    - Offer choices for support: Can discuss what to expect on the call, role play/write a script, help identify quiet location for call.

Collaboration

Motivational Interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2013)
- Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a collaborative, goal-oriented communication style that helps individuals resolve ambivalence and strengthen their motivation for change. It is based on four key principles: expressing empathy, developing discrepancy, rolling with resistance, and supporting self-efficacy.

In Practice
- Seek Ideas & Feedback- ask students what they already know about benefits or resources to support independence.
  - How have you been able to meet your needs?
  - What kind of supports have you used that have been helpful to you?

- Explore with empathy- their perspective on challenges and barriers to develop effective solution.
  - i.e. stigma related 'resistance' to completing benefit application

- Additional Resource: OARS Skill

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness: Maximize trust ensuring clear expectations and having consistent boundaries. Refers to transparency.

In Practice

- Expectation setting: Establish upfront current availability, student priorities for the appointment, and follow up options.

- Clarify role: "I can connect you to available resources, but I may not have all the answers. However, I'm here to problem solve with you."
  - Proactively discuss: your role v. student's

- Boundaries: validate intense emotions or events and connect to appropriate resources as needed if beyond scope of your role.

Safety

Safety: Ensuring physical and emotional safety, including cultural humility. Generally involves protection of self and others.

In Practice

- Awareness of environment where appointments occur (privacy, noise, exits).

- Consequences provided in supportive, non-confrontational language.

- Avoid assumptions about mental health experiences based on cultural background.

- Acknowledge that seeking help may be stigmatized in some communities.
  - Value of peer support, campus cultural organizations, mutual aid, and other community resources.

Resources for Continued Learning

Mental Health Signs & Symptoms

[Mental Health America](#) (signs, symptoms, most conditions).

Motivational Interviewing (MI)

-[Intro to MI](#) (Slides)

-[Navigator Model: MI Overview](#) (Video)

Other Resources

-[Early Intervention & Prevention](#) (B4Stage4)

-[Strengths Based Questions](#)

-[Trauma Informed Care Principles](#)

Mental Health Crisis/Gatekeeper Trainings

-[Question, Persuade, Refer](#)

-[Mental Health First Aid](#)

-[MHFA- Higher Education](#)

-[Be there Certificate](#) (interactive, under 2-hours)

Emerging Adulthood & Mental Health: Supporting Student Wellbeing – Part Two

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Welcome & Objectives

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1 **Finding Resources Basics**

2 **Sources of Help**

3 **Social Services Search**

4 **Think Like A Student**

5 **Resources**

Finding Resources Basics

1 **Local – City, Township, & County**

Local resources are typically organized by city and recognized government bodies, social service organizations, and non-profits.

2 **Region/State**

Larger organizations may be regional (especially as non-profits consolidate) or be state agencies.

3 **National**

Hotlines and other similar resources may be national services. Funding may come from the federal government—low income housing would be an example.

Types of Organizations

Government Offices

City Hall

Township Offices

County Offices

State Agencies

Government Health Agencies

County Health Department

County Mental Health Dept

State Health Department

Other Resources

Churches

Legislative Offices

Legal Aid

Food Pantries

Sororities

Fraternities

Private Clubs (Lions, Elks, Moose, etc.)

Organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)

Foundations

Hospitals

Non Profits

Homeless Shelters/Programs

Domestic Violence Centers

Sexual Assault Programs/Centers

Programs like CEFS/ERBA in your area

What to Know

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1

Who They Help

Who does the agency/organization serve? Which population(s) do they prioritize to help? (Individuals, households, single parents, or children only?

2

How They Help

What actual services do they provide? (Help with rent, emergency loan fund, food, clothing, prescription assistance, gas money, emergency housing, or what?

3

How Often They Help

How often can their services be used? (Weekly, once a month, twice a year, or one time only? Is it per person or per household?

Student Needs:

Who Are they going to call?

Search For Social Services

1   **Search for Social Service Agencies in each city and county you serve**

2   **Check the City Hall/County websites to see if there is a link to local community resources.**

3   **Check at your most active social service agencies and non-profits to see if they have a list/link to services**

4   **Try other search parameters such as Crisis & Community Services**

5   **Put together a list/website of all the resources you find and remove as many barriers as possible**

Think Like A Student

- **Description of services at the agency:**
  - Can they tell what kind of services the agency provides?
  - Can they follow the requirements to apply?
  - Are they likely to qualify for those services?
  - Do they have the means to go in person if required?

- **Will they be able to find the resource guide or link to the organization's information again?**
  - Do you have a paper copy of the resource guide?
  - Is the website page designed in a way they can take a picture of the information they need?
  - How many clicks will they have to make to find the information that pertains to them?
  - How can they access the information if they are out of minutes?

- **Example: Lake Land College Resource Page**

 https://www.lakelandcollege.edu/counseling-services/crisis-and-community-resources/

What Does It Mean?

CEFS is a not-for-profit Community Action Agency incorporated in 1965 to help people achieve their full individual and economic potential. CEFS serves the counties of Christian, Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Montgomery, Moultrie, and Shelby by developing, implementing, and evaluating social service programs to assist economically and socially disadvantaged people in their quest for greater self-sufficiency.

CEFS is a not for profit Community Action Agency serving the Illinois counties of Christian, Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Montgomery, Moultrie, and Shelby.

C.E.F.S. develops, implements, and evaluates social services programs to assist economically and socially disadvantaged people in their quest for greater self-sufficiency. We offer programs as diverse as the needs of the people in the communities we serve.

Things to Watch Out For

- **Saying Yes to Everything**
  - May indicate a language barrier
  - May indicate a reading barrier
    - Dyslexia or other impacting condition
    - Needs glasses or contacts
    - Never learned to read (at any age)
- **Only Looking For Cash**
  - Doesn't accept any resource that would help them with their issue
    - Example: No where to stay tonight
    - Won't go to the homeless shelter/the domestic violence shelter
    - Won't call a friend
    - Won't go to the hospital to the ER when supposedly they were kicked out of the last place for a medical condition
    - May be a more serious problem
- **Non-Compliant or Doesn't Follow Through With Referrals**
  - Pride
  - Lack of gas money
  - Lack of phone minutes
  - Lack of clothing

Ask For Help

- **Ask the students what else they know of that you don't have on your lists**

- **Ask the agencies you work with who updates the list(s) information at their agency**

- **Make sure to keep the information current (student help or intern to periodically call the agencies on the lists or check the websites)**

- **Develop relationships with the caseworkers/agencies that you refer students to the most**

- **Attend local coalition of social service meetings or groups**

- **Find out who schedules the local "bus" services like traveling dental services, mammograms, and etc. and share that information with students or become a site for those services**

Resources for Continued Learning

Community Online Resource Directory

CORD

Help is Here

IDHS Services Website

IDHS Service Locator by County

Other Resources

Food Bank Locator

Laker Food Pantry

ERBA

LLC Cosmetology

LLC Dental

Rotary International

Kiwanis

Salvation Army

Catholic Charities

Sample Resource Lists

Coles County Resource Guide

Coles County Food Assistance

Crisis & Community Resources

CEFS Printer Friendly Resource Guide

Discussion Questions

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Engagement

What engagement strategies have you found effective when working with students under stress?

Identifying Need

What are signs you have noticed while meeting with students that they might be struggling with their mental health when discussing basic needs like food or housing?

Besides referring students to mental health professionals in your community, what are your biggest challenges finding community resources for your students?

What methods do you use to identify students who may need help with basic needs but who may be too embarrassed or timid to ask for help?

Case Discussion

A student mentions having to move between a few different friends' houses lately and starts tearing up during your meeting. They mention feeling hopeless and not sure what the point of working with you on benefits would be. How would you respond?

Survey

https://forms.office.com/r/AiMwcZuT7r

Benefits Navigator Communities of Practice Evaluation Survey