MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH SITUATIONS IN THE ADVISING OFFICE

PRESENTED BY:
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Understanding Students with Mental Health Needs

- Increasing mental health illness in the college environment (Larkin, Crumb, Fountain, Glenn, & Smith, 2015)
- Students experience psychological, emotional, and behavioral issues in the academic setting (Larkin et al., 2015; The National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2012)
- Mental health issues impact academic success (GPA, retention, unemployed) and, sometimes, personal safety (Hudson & St Clair, 2004; Harper & Peterson, 2005; The National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2012)
- Unpreparedness in the advising office can intensify challenging mental health situations

Understanding Students with Mental Health Needs - Statistics

- 25% of college students have a diagnosable mental health illness
- 73% of students living with a mental health condition experienced a mental health crisis on campus
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death on college campuses
- 40% of college students with diagnosable mental health conditions did not seek help (stigma is the #1 reason)
- 64% stopped attending college due to a mental health related reason

(The National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2012)
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Understanding Students with Mental Health Needs – Underrepresented Groups
- Face additional challenges and pressures in the academic setting that may impact their psychological well-being (Grant et al., 2014; Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2009; Mier, Boone, & Shropshire, 2009; Muses & Ravello, 2010; Shadick & Akhter, 2013)
- Increased risk for:
  - Isolation
  - Language barriers
  - Cultural biases and prejudices
  - Depression
  - Suicide

Understanding Students with Mental Health Needs
- Top mental health issues among college students: (Van Pelt, 2013; Kitzrow, 2009; The National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2012)
  - Mood disorders – depression, bipolar, anxiety
  - Suicidal ideation
  - Schizophrenia
  - Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
  - Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
  - Addiction issues and eating disorders
- Students may:
  - Be undiagnosed and in need of psychological services and resources
  - Have a formal diagnosis with or without prescribed medications
  - Engage in intentional noncompliance with psychotropic medications

Crisis Prevention in the Advisement Office
- Maintain awareness
- Display an approachable attitude
- Establish trust with students and advocate for their needs (The National Behavioral Intervention Team Association, 2009)
- Know your school’s policies and procedures
- Know the names, locations, and phone numbers of campus psychologists, counselors, health clinics, public safety, and other campus resources
- Be active participants in your campus’ behavioral/crisis intervention team
- Participate in professional/staff trainings on crisis prevention/intervention
- Observe, assist, and pay attention to students who are experiencing distress and meltdowns (Harp & Peterson, 2005)
De-escalation Techniques

- Preventing a distressful situation from developing into a crisis
- Two important aspects - prevention and communication
- Primary focus is on de-escalating yourself and the situation and connecting students to needed resources (Mier et al., 2009; Dufresne, 2003)
- Remember to use a team approach and call for assistance or the police if needed

De-escalation Techniques:

What it is NOT (Johnson, 2011)

- A teaching opportunity (although it is a chance to learn)
- A guarantee that the behavior will stop
- Something you will only ever need to do once

What NOT to do (with an emotionally charged person)

- Threaten
- Argue or contradict
- Challenge
- Order or command
- Use logical and rational reasoning
- Shame or disrespect

Self-Control

1. Appear calm and confident (even if you don’t feel it)
2. Be aware of your own response
3. Recognize personal limits
4. Ensure your safety
5. Avoid reacting defensively (even with insults and criticism)
6. Make sound and intentional decisions
7. Trust your instincts
8. Stop de-escalating if it is not working

(Mier et al., 2009; Johnson, 2011)
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Physical Stance
- Display a supportive physical stance
- Display a nonjudgmental attitude
- Provide undivided attention
- Maintain at least three (3) feet of distance
- Remain at the same eye level (sitting or standing) with appropriate eye contact
- Use intentional strategies
- Refrain from physical touch
- Be aware of exits

(McClellan, 2005; Johnson, 2011)

De-escalating Communication
- Use respectful communication
- Speak clearly and calmly in a low monotone voice
- Respond appropriately and selectively
- Identify and empathize with feelings
- Access the triggers
- Allow silence
- Clarify messages
- Explain limits and rules in a respectful tone
- Develop a feasible plan with choices

(McClellan, 2005; Johnson, 2011)

Crisis Intervention in the Advisement Office
- Remain calm
- Assess the situation for the student’s risk of harm to self and others
- Secure the office environment to maintain safety for all individuals (e.g., relocate, seclude in a private area)
- Contact the appropriate persons/resources who can assist the student immediately
- Debrief with a trusted colleague after a major incident

(Dufresne, 2003)
Crisis Intervention in the Advisement Office

- Maintain a soft tone of face, body, and voice
- Assess feelings, behaviors, and actions

Resources for Collaborative Assistance

- Students emphasized the critical need for campus services.
  - Mental health training for faculty, staff, and students
  - Suicide prevention programs
  - Peer-run, student mental health organizations
  - Mental health information provided during campus tours, orientations, health classes, and other campus-wide events
  - Walk-in student health centers
  - Ongoing individual counseling, screening, and evaluation services
  - 24-hour crisis hotlines
  - Comprehensive referrals to off-campus services and supports

Resources for Collaborative Assistance: Institutional Resources

- Personal Counseling or Psychological Services
- Behavioral / Crisis Intervention Teams
- Public Safety / Campus Police
- Student Health Services
- Disability Services
- TRIO Student Support Services
- Health, Wellness, and Recreation Programs
- Learning and Tutoring Centers
- Mentoring and Leadership Programs
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Resources for Collaborative Assistance

External Resources

- American Association for Suicidology
  - https://www.aas-suicidology.org
- American College Counseling Association
  - http://www.acca.org/
- American College Health Association
  - http://www.acha.org/
- Active Minds
  - www.activeminds.org
- Half of Us
  - http://www.halfofus.com/
- Jed Foundation
  - https://www.jedfoundation.org/
- Kognito
  - www.kognito.com
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAM)
  - www.nami.org
- National Institute for Mental Health
- Resources for Collaborative Assistance
  - http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/resources/threat
- Half of Us
  - www.halfofus.com

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References

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