MENTAL HEALTH

CHALLENGES
Challenges on Campus

• Adjustment problems
  – Separation from family
  – New to Aggieland
  – Financial stress

• Academic problems
  – Challenging academics
  – Lack of study skills
  – Learning disabilities
  – Shame and fear

• Illicit drug or alcohol use

• Eating disorders

• Mental health disorders
  – PTSD or anxiety
  – Depression
  – Other disorders

• Changing relationships
  – Social isolation
  – Violence (rape, aggression)
  – Feeling misunderstood

• Media influences
  – Bullying or isolation
  – Binge gaming
Warning Signs of Depression and Suicide

- Persistently sad mood
- Feeling hopeless
- Lack of interest in aspects of life once enjoyed
- Difficulty eating or sleeping
- Isolation or social withdrawal
- Deterioration of personal appearance
- Significant behavioral changes
- Gives away personal possessions
- Thinking or talking about suicide or death
- Thinking “no reason to live” or “better off dead”
Risk Factors for Suicide

- History of depression or other mental health problems
- Substance abuse
- Impulsive, aggressive, or antisocial behaviors
- Past suicidal behavior
- Family history of depression, substance abuse, aggression, or suicide
- Easy access to lethal methods (like firearms)
SELF-CARE & MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION
Mental Health in Context

Natural
Social / Relational
Physical
Mental
Emotional
Spiritual
Exercise

• 30 minutes a day, 4-5 days/week
• Walking
  – Choose a safe place
  – Preferably with others and outdoors
  – Early morning or late afternoon
• Swimming
• Go easy and build slowly
  – Stay safe
  – Accountability
  – Strive for consistency
  – Celebrate progress!
Healthy Diet

• Fruits & vegetables – preferably raw
• Meats grilled, broiled or baked without skin or fat
• Smart carbs
• “Tasty morsel” desserts
• Less fast food
• 3 regular or 5-6 small meals
• Use common sense
• Prescribed diets take precedence
Hydration

- **Water**
  - Improves circulation
  - Eliminates toxins
- **Goal: 64 ounces/day**
  - 8 cups (8 oz each)
- **Dress it up!**
  - Mint
  - Citrus slices
- **Electrolytes**
  - Usually not needed
  - Use with caution during times of great physical exertion
Caffeine

- Highly addictive
- Disrupts sleep
- Increases anxiety
- Can worsen anxiety or PTSD
- Can destabilize bipolar or psychotic disorders
- Rule of thumb: “1 or 2 finished by 2”
  - Energy drinks = 2 or 3 other caffeinated drinks
- Taper slowly for success
Sleep

• Critical for mental and physical health
  – Adult: 8-9 hours/night
  – Teen (17-19 years): 9-10 hours/night
  – Children: 10 or more hours/night

• Optimal sleep
  – Restful and restorative
  – Consistent schedule
  – Dark, quiet environment
  – No electronics or exercise before bedtime
  – Awaken slowly (not abruptly) on schedule to sunlight, activity, sound

• Sleep disruption or deprivation
  – Affects mood, relationships, academics, health
Rest, Relax & Relate

- Spiritual care
- Rest “guilt free”
- Recreation
- Hobbies
- Family
- Friends
- Service
- Community
Balance

Time use on an average weekday for full-time university and college students during the traditional school year (September through May), 2005–09

Total = 24.0 hours

- Sleeping, 8.4
- Educational activities, 3.6
- Leisure and sports, 3.5
- Work and work-related, 2.9
- Traveling, 1.5
- Eating & drinking, 1.0
- Grooming, 0.8
- Other, 2.3

GETTING HELP
STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICES (SCS)
About SCS

• Funded by student fees
  – Available to current students
  – Bridge charge for summer access
• Confidential (within limits of law)
  – AD military may have exceptions
  – Military member responsible for regulations
• Outreach
• Education
• Training
• Promotion of self-care and mental health
• Triage & evaluation
• Provide direct services, as appropriate
• Coordination with appropriate community services
SCS Staff

- Associate Staff
- Licensed Professional Counselors
- Social Workers
- Psychologists
- Testing Specialists
- Psychology Interns
- Practicum Counselors
- Case Referral Coordinator
- Counseling & Development Specialists
- Psychiatrist
- Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
SCS Support Services

• Outreach
• Education
  – Pacifica App
  – QPR Gatekeeper Training for suicide prevention
  – Train practicum counselors
  – Supervise psychology interns
• Stress reduction
  – Biofeedback center now at Beutel SHS
• Special situation coordination
  – Tell Somebody:
    http://tellsomebody.tamu.edu
  – Sexual assault resources
    Differences exist in reporting requirements for counselors and faculty or staff
• Community coordination
SCS Direct Services

- Workshops
- Group counseling
- ADHD and learning disability screening
- Career testing and career counseling
- Alcohol and drug abuse assessment and treatment
- HelpLine (979) 845-2700
- Crisis intervention
- Short-term couples counseling
- Short-term individual counseling
- Psychiatric services (by referral only)
• Record and track mood
• Track healthy habits
• Think more positively with thought recording tools
• Stay organized with goal-setting
• Relaxation exercises
• Skill building

• *Pacifica Premium App is FREE to students with Texas A&M email!*
Biofeedback

• What is it?
  – Self-regulation skills for stress and anxiety
  – Improves awareness of biological responses
  – Self-paced practice

• What does it do?
  – Reduces stress
  – Improves symptom control

• How do I access this?
  – Beutel Student Health Center
Workshops & Groups

• Workshops
  – 3-sessions on a specific topics

• Groups
  – Semester-long commitment
  – Topics change each semester

• Examples of groups offered in the past *when there is interest*
  – Returning Veterans
  – Women’s or Men’s
  – Managing Anxiety
  – Worthiness/Self-Worth
  – Understanding Self/Others
  – First Generation College Students
  – International Students
  – LGBTQ+
  – Graduate Students
Individual & Couples Counseling

- Relationships (romantic, peers, parents, and roommates)
- Academic difficulties or probation
- Homesickness, loneliness, isolation, not fitting in
- Career options
- Stress management
- Grief and loss
- Depression and anxiety
- Eating disorders
- Self-injury
- Suicidal thoughts
QPR Training

- Ask a Question, Save a Life
- Focus: Suicide Prevention
- Learn to
  - Question
  - Persuade
  - Refer
- Student Counseling Service provides training
- QPR Institute: www.qprinstitute.com
Prevent or Treat Promptly

• Prevention
  – Self-care and health promotion
  – Optimize mental health

• Prompt intervention
  – Individual or group therapy may be enough
  – Support
  – Self-care skills
  – Medication may still be necessary for some problems

• Delayed treatment
  – Symptom progression
  – Medication more likely
  – Hospitalization
  – Crisis intervention

• Neglecting treatment
  – Decline in functioning
  – Damage to relationships
  – Risk of harm to self or others (suicide/homicide)
  – Multiple hospitalizations
  – Homelessness
When to Get Help

• Issue of safety
• Issue is beyond your competency
• Issue is beyond your comfort
• Individual is hesitant to talk about issue
• Previous efforts have not resolved the problem
Access SCS Services

• Online: http://scs.tamu.edu
• Call: (979) 845-4427
• In person: SCS Registration
  – Modular Building 3 at White Creek
  – Weekdays 8am-5pm
• If it’s a crisis, let someone know!
  – Life-threatening or life-altering situations or severe distress
  – Can’t wait 2-3 days
  – Crisis counselors available
    Weekdays 10am-12pm and 1-4pm
TAMU Bus Route 3

http://scs.tamu.edu/whitecreek
Call the HelpLine

- Weekdays 4pm – 8am during semesters
- Weekends 24/7
- (979) 845-2700
- V/TTY
- Number on back of student ID
Report: “Tell Somebody”

- For troubled or at-risk faculty, staff, and students
- Special Situations Team
- Online: http://tellsomebody.tamu.edu/
- E-Mail: specialsituationsteam@tamu.edu
- Not for emergencies. For emergencies, call 9-911 or 911.
In an Emergency

If you find someone . . .

- Is unconscious
- Has attempted suicide
- Has overdosed on medications, alcohol, or illicit drugs
- Appears to be hallucinating
- Expresses thoughts not grounded in reality
- Threatens to use a weapon on themselves and has it available
- Threatens to harm or kill someone else

Call 911 (cell) or 9-911 (campus phone)
Presenter

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