

## CaIMHSA Program Partner Spotlight: University of California Student Mental Health

American college students are experiencing mental health challenges with greater frequency than ever before. In fact, in 2012, the American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment found that over 30 percent of college students reported feeling “so depressed that it was difficult to function” at some time in the past year. “I can tell you that our students are hurting. They are flocking to Counseling Centers in greater numbers than we have ever seen,” said Dr. Taisha Caldwell, Program Manager for the University of California Student Mental Health Initiative.

Recognizing this urgent need, the University of California has declared student mental health one of its top priorities and, in 2007, charged the University of California Student Mental Health Oversight Committee with oversight and implementation of systemwide mental health recommendations. These efforts—supported by the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act and CaIMHSA—include:

- Increasing direct mental health services
- Providing training to faculty and staff to recognize and respond to signs of distress
- Reducing the stigma that prevents many students from seeking services
- Leveraging resources to maximize capacity

These efforts involve innovative and proactive approaches such as anonymous depression screening and leveraging county suicide prevention social marketing campaigns to reach students.

### Interactive Depression Screenings Reach More Students in Need

Two out of three college students with depression never seek treatment. This may be due to stigma or some students may be unaware of available resources. The UC system is taking a proactive approach to address the barriers to seeking treatment. One approach is an anonymous [interactive depression screening program](#) (ISP). Developed by the American Foundation for Suicide





Prevention, the depression screenings have been tested and proven effective throughout the country. The brief online Stress and Depression Questionnaire is emailed to about 200 students at a time who are then invited to answer the questions anonymously. Campus psychologists review the materials and respond to the student within 24-48 hours. The student can choose to engage in a rapport with the psychologist online until he or she feels comfortable seeking services in person. "The point is to reach students who may not seek services on their own," said Dr. Caldwell, "many of our psychologists report making meaningful connections with struggling students utilizing this approach." According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "students who exchanged online messages with the ISP counselor were three times more likely than those who did not to come for an in-person meeting, and three times more likely to enter treatment," and "75 percent of students who entered treatment were described by counselors as not likely to have sought mental health services without the ISP program."

The response rate has been consistent with the national average for the program, and UC campuses have reported reaching students who were actively suicidal.

### Training Faculty and Staff to Know the Signs

Faculty and staff as well as student peers, are often the first to recognize the signs of distress among students with mental health concerns. But far too often, they are unaware of the resources available to help. Equipping faculty and staff with the knowledge and tools to accurately recognize the warning signs and access services is a critical component of the UC student mental health initiative. In 2012, UC launched the ["red folder"](#) initiative, a quick reference guide to recognize the signs and access available resources. "This document pulls together all of the resources in one place so that faculty and staff have a single-source, comprehensive guide," said Elizabeth Gong-Guy, director of UCLA's Counseling and Psychological Services. The folders are accompanied by in-person training and will be available online this year. UC campuses are developing an interactive phone app with the

### Assisting Students in Distress

See Something. Say Something. Do Something.

#### See Something.

UC faculty/staff and graduate teaching/research assistants are in a unique position to demonstrate compassion for UC students in distress.

Both undergraduate and graduate students may feel alone, isolated, and even apologetic when faced with academic and life challenges. These feelings can easily disrupt academic performance and may lead to dysfunctional coping and other serious consequences.

You may be the first person to SEE SOMETHING alarming in a student since you have frequent and prolonged contact with them. The University of California, in collaboration with the California Mental Health Services Authority (CaIMHSA), requests that you act with compassion in your dealings with such students.

#### Do Something.

Sometimes students cannot, or will not turn to family or friends. DO SOMETHING: Your expression of concern may be a critical factor in saving a student's academic career or even their life.

The purpose of this folder is to help you recognize symptoms of student distress and identify appropriate referrals to campus resources.

#### Say Something.

Students exhibiting troubling behaviors in your presence are likely having difficulties in various settings including the classroom, with roommates, with family, and in even in social settings.

Trust your instincts and SAY SOMETHING if a student leaves you feeling worried, alarmed, or threatened.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits communication about a student of concern in connection with a health and safety emergency. Observations of a student's conduct or statements made by a student are not FERPA protected. Such information should be shared with appropriate consideration for student privacy.

Academic Indicators	Physical Indicators	Safety Risk Indicators	Psychological Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notice decline in quality of work and grades</li> <li>Request absence</li> <li>Refrainance in writing or presentation</li> <li>You find yourself being more personal about the student's academic struggles during office hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene, or weight (weight gain/loss)</li> <li>Excessive fatigue/lethargy, absenteeism</li> <li>Insomnia, long naps, or snoring of alcohol</li> <li>Disoriented or "out of it"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unprovoked anger or hostility</li> <li>Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others</li> <li>Academic assignments dominated by demands of someone (domestic partner, roommate, relative, abuser, sibling, non-related dependent relative behavior - "a cry for help")</li> <li>Communicating about his or her suicidal ideation, thoughts, or threat calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-statement of personal distress, family problems, history of affliction, comorbidity, suicidal ideation</li> <li>Excessive nervousness, panic reactions, tremor/shaking or unusual anxiety</li> <li>Verbal abuse (e.g., teasing, badgering, intimidation)</li> <li>Expressions of concern about the student by his/her peers</li> </ul>

UC RIVERSIDE Counseling Center

### Response Protocol

Follow the chart to determine who to contact when faced with a distressed or distressing student.

**Is the student a danger to self, or others, or does the student need immediate assistance for any reason?**

**"YES"**

The student exhibits clear and imminent risk to themselves, others, or property including self-harm behavior.

Call 911 or Campus Police (951) 827-5322

After speaking with police report the concern to:

Critical Student Incident Team (951) 827-4095

**"MAYBE"**

The student shows signs of distress but I am unsure how serious it is. My concerns for his or her being okay and/or really concerned about the student.

Distress Response Helpline: Call the Counseling Center for consultation at (951) 827-5531 or Student Affairs Case Manager (951) 827-9354

After Hours & Holidays: Call the Counseling Center and either the after-hours emergency or be contacted as a live mental health specialist (951) 827-5531

**"NO"**

I am not concerned for the student's intellectual safety, but he/she is having significant academic and/or personal issues and could use some support.

Refer the student to an appropriate campus resource.

See options to the right →

For a complete list of Student Wellness Partners visit: [Counseling.ucr.edu](#)

**On Campus**

Assistant Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students	951-827-6095
Student Affairs Case Manager	951-827-9354
Campus Health Center	951-827-3031
Student Conduct & Academic Integrity Programs	951-827-4208
Counseling Center	951-827-5531
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	951-781-9519
Women's Resource Center	951-827-5337
Title IX Sexual Harassment Office	951-827-7070
Student Support Services	951-827-4536
Office of the Ombudsman	951-827-5313
Campus Housing	951-827-4300
The Well	951-827-5555
International Education Center	951-827-4113
Graduate Division	951-827-4382

**In the Community**

UC Riverside Police Department	951-827-5322
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255
Riverside Healthcare District	951-686-3337
Riverside Community Hospital	951-788-3000
Riverside County Medical Center	951-486-4800
Riverside Area Rape Crisis Center	951-686-7273

Support for faculty, staff, and peers after working with a distressed student:

UCR Counseling Center (951) 827-5531  
 Student Affairs Case Manager (951) 827-9354  
 And/or EAP (951) 781-9519



red folder's tools, which should be complete in 2013.

Additional training programs include peer bystander trainings, which will be launched on all ten campuses, and cultural competency to ensure school psychologists are equipped to meet the needs of the UC's diverse student population.

#### Finding Creative Ways to Increase Capacity

UC campuses are coordinating with their local counties and the Community College and State University systems to leverage resources and increase capacity of their student mental health efforts. One example is leveraging local county stigma reduction and suicide prevention marketing campaigns. The campaigns include public service announcements that will air on campus television programs and materials that are disseminated throughout the campuses. While many campuses are partnering with [Know the Signs](#), the statewide suicide prevention social marketing campaign, some are working with their local county's campaigns. For instance, UC San Diego recently partnered with San Diego county's [It's Up To Us](#) suicide prevention campaign. To date, 1,925 brochures, 73 Displays, 262 Posters and 336 Display Points have been distributed to 28 unique departments across the UCSD community. At UCSD, the *It's Up to Us* campaign has also delivered 5,000 newsletters as mailers to students, faculty, staff, and made available to all student residents.

An electronic clearinghouse will be developed showcasing the various mental health resources and best practices offered throughout the UC system to promote resource sharing between the UC, California Community College, and CSU systems past the lifespan of the CaIMHSA student mental health grant.

"We are working to make our programming sustainable past the life of the contract by leveraging and collaborating with other systems. As we are successful, we will likely increase the number of students seeking services and will need more staff to serve them," said Dr. Caldwell.

Through on-campus counseling services, direct student outreach and faculty training, the University of California is addressing the growing concern around student mental health and reaching more students in need. "It's exciting to hear the success stories. We often only hear about the students who are not reached," said Dr. Caldwell.