BestColleges and Mental Health Experts Unite to Discuss Mental Illness Among College Students

BestColleges and a panel of experts explore the challenges students with mental health problems face when navigating postsecondary education.

SEATTLE (PRWEB) January 03, 2019 -- BestColleges, a leading provider of college planning resources and higher education research, welcomed a panel of experts in mental health and counseling to discuss the academic implications and institutional issues surrounding mental health among college students. This discussion was the subject of the fifth and final publication in a series dedicated to examining student educational barriers in the United States.

Recent studies show that mental health is one of the most predominant concerns for college students. According to the National College Health Assessment, over half of college students report feeling overwhelmingly anxious during their studies, while 20% report feeling so depressed that it’s difficult to function and complete academic and social activities. In response to this growing issue, BestColleges and experts -- including mental health professionals and college counselors -- discussed how schools can increase their support services and disability accommodations to enable learners who struggle with mental health issues to excel at the same level as their peers and graduate with a college degree.

“In many cases, students struggle because their school lacks adequate mental health resources such as counseling and psychiatric services. This is a major concern for both parents sending their children off to college for the first time and for students dealing with the many stressors of college life,” said Stephanie Snider, Director of BestColleges. “As many on our panel point out, colleges can work to destigmatize mental health problems around their campuses by talking about these issues openly and providing the necessary support services to accommodate their students.”

The publication also addresses how students can discover and use various tools and support systems while developing coping skills to facilitate their transition into college. Snider continued, “By building knowledge and communication channels with regard to their mental health issues, students can begin to get the help they need and overcome the stigmas surrounding mental health so they can succeed in college.”

To view the complete publication, please visit: https://www.bestcolleges.com/perspectives/college-barriers-mental-health/

Meet the Panel

Janet Ferone, President, Ferone Educational Counseling

“Before even asking any questions, students should soak in the atmosphere and do a ‘gut check’ of how they feel on the campus. Do they feel comfortable and welcomed, can they envision themselves on the campus?”

Dr. Arian Elfant, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist

“Someone with a mental health challenge should spend even more time thinking ahead about how the university experience might impact their overall state of mind. For some individuals, this means staying away
from a rainy, cold climate. For others, it means ensuring a small class size.”

Dr. Mark Scholl, Associate Professor of Counseling, Wake Forest University

“I would encourage students to consider the overall climate of the university. Though it is important to consider the specific goals of a given student (such as attending a highly competitive university), some universities focus more on providing a supportive climate for students and are generally more student-centered.”

Rhonda Lesley, Director of Counseling Center, Missouri State University

“Speak up and ask about not only the type of care provided but evidence of the quality and satisfaction of mental health and counseling services. Many schools publish student satisfaction and outcome data and comparing this info, school by school can help you in making a better informed decision.”

Katie DiMuzio, Partnerships Manager, Zencare.com

“Struggling with a mental health issue or disability doesn’t mean you can’t survive and thrive in college! Given the proper tools and resources to succeed, you might be surprised at how resilient and capable you are, even in a new and at times stressful environment like college.”

Anisha Makhija, Support Community Lead, Supportiv

“Mental health challenges are really common among students -- 1 in 4 young adults have a diagnosable mental illness. For those who don’t believe they can attend college because of such challenges, I would suggest seeking out the systems and resources in place at prospective colleges that can enable you to manage your mental health and still give you the opportunities to do your best.”

Amelia Dillon, Director of Employment and Education Services, Open Sky Community Services

“If a student doesn’t ask for help, then no one knows that he/she needs the help. At the college level, professors expect students to be independent and to ask for help if they need it. Professors will typically list their phone number, email address and office hours, so that students know how to reach them for extra support.”

Lauren Rigney, Licensed Mental Health Counselor

“If you do not want to disclose a disability, you do not have to. You can go your entire college career without anyone on campus needing to know your struggles. However, still know where services are in case you need them. You can always get help after your acceptance or anytime during your college career.”

About BestColleges
BestColleges helps prospective students find the school that best meets their needs through proprietary research, user-friendly guides, and hundreds of unique college rankings. They also provide a wide array of college planning, financial aid, and career resources to help all students get the most from their education and prepare them for the world after college.
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