

Mental Health Services in Higher Education Data Trends in CT:

4 Year Institutions: (12 Participants with Varied Responses)

-(12/12) Across the board, College Counseling Centers (CCC's) report increasing demands for counseling, primarily for anxiety, depression, and other social and developmental challenges, but also for a variety of more serious mental health concerns.

-(12/12) Increasing demands are taxing some of the resources available at CCC's, leading to some moderate increases in wait times for and between appointments, though these do not appear to be any worse, and are often better, than wait times for community providers. CCC's have been at the cutting edge of innovation with regard to service efficiency and effectiveness, providing leadership in the development and enhancement of group therapies, brief treatment, training programs, and preventative outreach. College counselors receive extensive, specialized training in the developmental issues specific to college students, and are plugged into campus communities such that they are uniquely aware of the plethora of additional support services available to support students.

-(11/11) While providing the vast majority of mental health care on campus, CCC's are being more deliberate in defining their scope of practice in ways that inform students of the fact that they benefit most from a referral to community providers or agencies for longer-term, more open-ended, higher level, or more specialized care (intensive outpatient treatment, eating disorders treatment, substance abuse treatment, etc.).

-(11/11) Wellbeing promotion and social and emotional learning efforts are increasingly being prioritized on campus through various departments, divisions, and committees. A great deal of educational and prevention programming is being offered throughout the student's collegiate experience, such that multiple offerings are typically available on a weekly basis.

-Campuses are engaging to with all areas of the JED comprehensive model, and most are making great strides in enhancing their responsiveness to the variety of suggestions and best practices identified. Each campus can improve in certain areas, and it would be greatly beneficial to offer further support to campuses in conducting needs assessment and responses to their areas of growth (ie. Develop Life Skills, Promote Social Connectedness, Identify Students at Risk, Increase Help Seeking, Provide Mental Health Services, Follow Crisis Management Procedures, Restrict Access to Lethal Means).

-(9/11) Availability of medication management differs at many campuses, though most have some capacity to offer psychiatric medication management to students. Access to medication management in the community is a constant challenge, and it is extremely difficult to connect students to this service in a timely and effective way.

-(11/11) All CCC's work collaboratively with local hospitals, community mental health agencies, and private practitioners to support student referrals, and many have developed and maintain active referral networks independently or with assistance from services such as Thriving Campus, a national referral database specifically designed for college students.

-(9/11) Most CCC's have been successful in identifying outside funding sources, such as grants and donor gifts, though it appears that additional supports could be extremely valuable to help fund these critical services and initiatives.

-Given the lack of clarity in the definition of telehealth, it is unclear how many CCC's might use aspects of this technology without realizing it (ie. phone intervention). Most campuses utilize a variety of platforms and technologies to provide services (ie. Titanium, Maxient, E-CheckupToGo, ThrivingCampus, NotAnyMore, CampusLabs, etc.).

-(10/11) Nearly all CCC's identified a hope of receiving additional resources to meet the growing mental health demands (ie. funding, staffing). Many campuses identified the need for an increased commitment to mental health, wellbeing, and social and emotional learning in the core mission and strategic planning of institutions moving forward.

Community Colleges: (5 Participants with Varied Responses)

-There is much greater levels discrepancy between the kinds of services and supports offered at community colleges, and typically there is a much broader array of counseling and preventative services available at the 4 year institutions. Many community colleges appear to be doing what they can to address the growing needs of students, including their mental health and basic needs (food, housing, and financial insecurity). Much of this effort relies on referrals to community providers for treatment, and efforts to increase awareness, prevention, and identification of students at risk. Community colleges could benefit greatly from additional resources to address student's mental health needs.