

College Mental Health  
Understanding the  
Current Campus Climate

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# Why This Presentation?

- Over the past several years, Mental Health has increasingly become a primary issue of concern on the college campus
- Tragic events have heightened concerns about personal and community safety
- Mental Health affects student success
- Mental Health affects the student, the learning environment, the institution
- We need a community-wide effort
- It starts with education

# Goals and Objectives

- Increase the awareness of staff about the current Mental Health challenges we face on the college campus and in the nation
- Broaden our understanding of Mental Health
- Increase understanding of how you can help - create a campus wide effort
- Increase awareness and understanding of how we address Mental Health issues - philosophy
- Let you know what we are doing and how we can help
- Make you aware of what you can do

# Our Campus Environment

Do you have concerns about the increase in college Mental Health problems that have affected your thoughts, feelings, or actions related to doing your job at the University?

If so, what concerns do you have?

How have you been affected?

# Student Counseling Service Mission

The Student Counseling Service supports the academic and student development missions of Texas A&M University and the Division of Student Affairs. Through service, training, and research we are committed to the development of the whole person. In order to accomplish this mission, we provide a full range of professional services including, personal and career counseling, testing, outreach programming, psychiatric services, consultation, and crisis intervention. Research is conducted to benefit the practices of counseling, psychology and psychiatry, and to advance our knowledge in these areas.

We also train individuals from a variety of disciplines within the University, and from other institutions of higher learning.

# Our Scope of Care

The SCS provides short term counseling and consultation to students who are experiencing adjustment, emotional and psychological problems that are interfering with their ability to be successful in school and with their individual personal development.

We are not able to provide intense treatment for severe, chronic, or long-term mental illness or mental health problems.

# Accessing Counseling Center Services

- **\*ONLY\*** for Students....
- Must be Currently Enrolled
- All Services Free\*
- Initial Consultation Guaranteed
- Crisis, Urgent, Routine
- Referral Out (Case Referral Specialist)

\*Funded through UAF fee

# CRISIS

- If you find yourself in a life threatening or life altering crisis situation and you urgently need to speak to a counselor, you may come to the Student Counseling Service in B103 of Cain Hall. This service is available anytime during business hours Monday through Friday; however, we do ask that students present themselves before 4:00 p.m. so that we can devote a full hour to discussion of their issues before we close. **No appointment is needed for crisis counseling.** Information, support, and crisis intervention are available after business hours through HelpLine at 979-845-2700 (V/TTY).



# URGENT

- If you urgently need to talk to a counselor, but are not in crisis, please complete the registration form (click the link at the bottom of this page) and call 979-845-4427 to speak to a staff member who will try to arrange for you to meet with a counselor as soon as possible. Have your class and work schedules available as these openings become possible when there are appointment cancellations and vary throughout the day and week.

# ROUTINE

- Students who are not in crisis or an urgent situation are encouraged to make an appointment through our online registration process. This is done by clicking the registration link at the bottom of the page and completing the form. At the end of the registration process, students are able to make an appointment to speak with a counselor. Routine appointments may take up to 10 business days to be scheduled. At extremely busy times of the semester, time-to-appointment may be 15 days.

# What Would You Do?

A student worker in your office is unusually quiet and is just sitting at a desk doing nothing. She appears to be holding back tears. You ask if anything is wrong and she tells you that her grandmother died unexpectedly last night. She tells you that she has missed all of her classes today but she came to work because she needs the hours.

# Potential Violence? Assessing the risk....

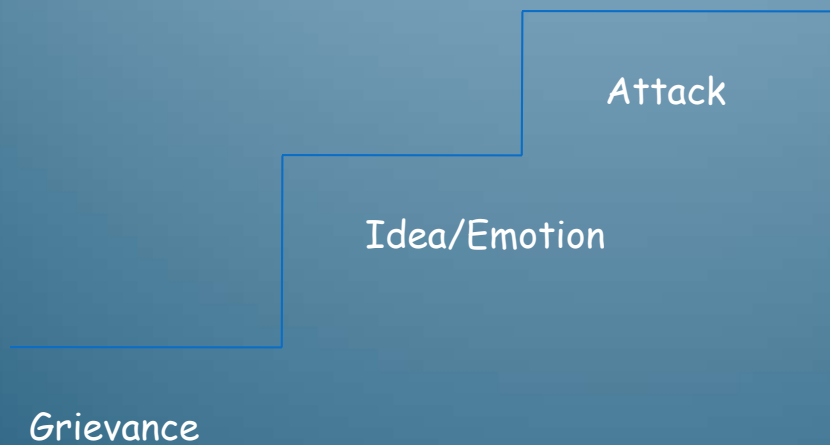
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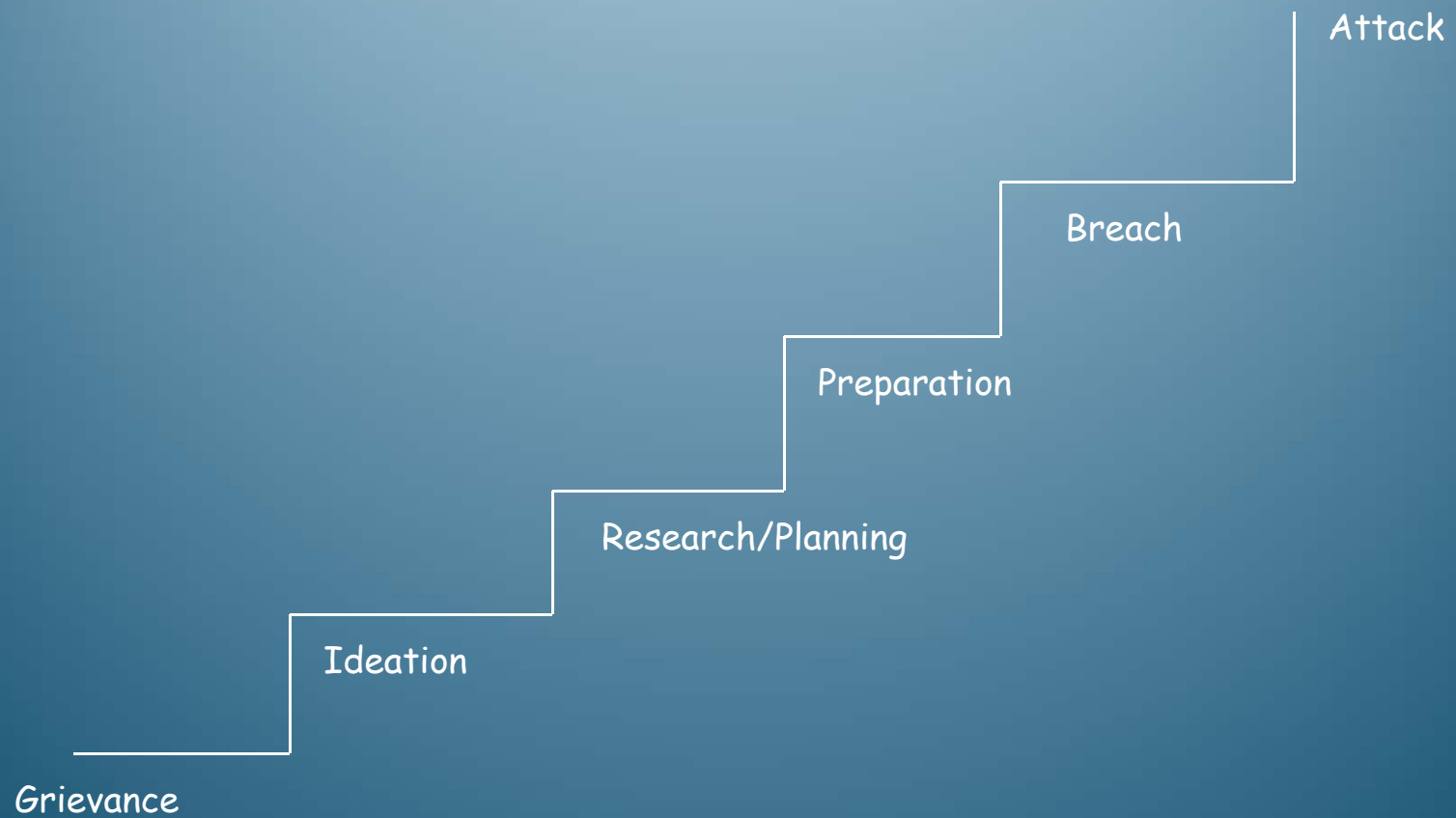
PREDATORY

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# Path to Affective Violence



# Path to Predatory Violence



# Traditional Reasons Why Students Seek Counseling In The Counseling Center

- Stress and Anxiety
- Relationship Problems
- Reactive (Mild) Depression
- Personal Trauma (Abuse, Assault, etc.)
- Alcohol/Drug Related Problems
- Learning Problems
- Study Skills

# What Has Changed?

- Increases in the number of students seeking counseling
- Increases in the number of students being referred for counseling by faculty, staff, students, parents
- Increases in the number of students with more severe or crisis oriented psychological problems - students in more distress
- Increases in the numbers of students with previous significant mental health treatment
- Increased stressors - Less coping skills



# Increased Demand For Counseling Services

At TAMU over the past several years we have seen significant increases in:

- Individuals seeking counseling
- Appointments scheduled
- Visits
- Individuals seen
- Calls of concern from faculty/staff
- Calls and contacts from parents
- Late night & weekend calls to HelpLine
- Crisis interventions
- Hospitalizations

# What Do We Mean By Mental Health Problems?

## Health

Colds/sprains ←-----→ Severe Illness  
(Cancer)

## Mental Health

Distress ←-----→ Mental Illness  
(Bipolar)

# Research Sources

- Directors Surveys
- ACHA Student Surveys
- Objective and Individual Research
- Collaborative Resources
  - National Research Consortium
  - Center for Collegiate Mental Health

# Research Summary

- **Student Problems**
  - Stress - primary impediment to success
  - Depression, Anxiety, Relationship - the most prevalent problems
  - Increase in more severe, crisis oriented problems
  - More distress
  - Increase in sleep deprivation and quality
- **Counseling Center Clients**
  - Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Relationships - most prevalent
  - 25% on medication
  - 21% engaged in non-suicidal self injury
- **Student Suicide**
  - Nationally 1100/yr. - > 10% consider in 12 months
  - General rate = 7.5/100K; 4.5W, 10M
  - Students with suicidal ideation tell friends/peers first!

# Research Summary

(cont.)

- **Student Veterans**

- TAMU has a growing enrollment
- Approximately 30% experience transition and adjustment problems

- **Transition Problems**

- War zone stress reaction
- Transition to unstructured environment
- Adjusting to academic demands
- Cognitive functioning (TBI) problems
- Sleep problems
- Mental health - depression, anger, anxiety, classroom adj.
- Physical health problems
- Age difference with traditional students

# What Would You Do?

A student in your class receives a rejection for a program you advise. He is dissatisfied. He comes to your office during office hours looking tense and angry. You explain why he was rejected, but he will not accept your answer. His voice keeps getting louder as he keeps repeating "THIS.IS.NOT.ACCEPTABLE."

# What Are We Seeing?

## Disorders and Disordered Lives

- Stress, distress and more stress
- Inability to cope
- Chronic and Severe Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Chronic and Intense Anxiety Disorders
- Personality Disorders
- Cutting Behavior
- Schizo-Affective, Paranoid Disorders
- Eating Disorders
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders, hair-pulling, etc.
- Neuro-based Disorders, Asperger's Syndrome, etc.

# Distress

- Can result from inability to cope, mental illness, lack of resources, poor decisions
- Can appear as.....
  - Depression and/or Anxiety
  - Anger
  - Suicidal Ideation
  - Psychotic Behavior



# So far this year.....

- Academic Problems 2301
- Anxiety 1994
- Grades 1582
- Depression 1543
- Concentration 1378
- Procrastination 1344
- Stress 1301
- Attitude 1251
- Self-Esteem 1194

## More....

- Time Management 1176
- Loneliness 1126
- Decision Making 1027
- Anger 775
- Romantic Relationship 703
- Family of Origin Issues 737
- Alcohol Abuse 497
- Suicidal 52
- Sexual Assault 12

# Why Is This Happening?

- Characteristics of the Millennium Generation
  - Helicopter parenting
  - High expectations
  - Emphasis on performance and achievement
  - Minimal coping skills
- Less Family Stability
- Over Stimulating and Competitive World

# Why Is This Happening?

(Cont.)

- Effects of Psychotropic Medication
- Increased Alcohol Abuse
- More Cultural Diversity
- Greater Media Attention to Mental Health
- Greater Awareness of Mental Health Problems
- Positive Shift in Attitudes About Mental Health Care

# Why Is This Happening?

(Cont.)

- Reflection of General Society
  - 27% of 18-24 year olds have a diagnosable mental illness (NAMI)
  - 14% of college students treated for depression before entering college
- Traditional College Adjustments and Challenges
- The Economy

# The Challenges Presented

- Problems are more crisis oriented
- More time & resource demanding
- More parent involvement and demand
- Limited and finite mental health resources
- Many problems beyond the scope of our care
- Mental health an ADA covered disability
  - requires accommodations
- Cost of mental health care
- Inadequate community resources
- Poor insurance coverage
- Many students without health insurance
- Climate of fear on campuses

# What We Are Currently Doing-Principles

- Serve the individual student
- Protect the learning environment  
(other students)
- Reduce institutional liability

*Do the greatest good for the greatest  
number of students...*

# What We are Currently Doing

- Individual, Couple, and Group Counseling
- Psychiatric Services
- Outreach Programming
- Faculty, Staff, Parent, and Student Consultation
- Crisis Intervention
- Staff Training
- Emergency Hospitalization
- HelpLine



# What We are Currently Doing

(Cont.)

- On-Line Screening
- Center for the Study of College Student Mental Health Participation
- Student Behavior Intervention Team
- Special Situations Team
- Task Force for Campus Emergencies
- [Tellsomebody.tamu.edu](http://Tellsomebody.tamu.edu)

# SCS Statistics for FY12

- Individual Appointments - 8362 
- Individual Sessions per Student - 3.56 
- Urgent/Crisis Appointments - 374 
- Group Sessions - 1038 
- Individuals Seeking Counseling - 9400 
- Outreach - 110 to a variety of groups 
- Consultations - too numerous to count! 

# How You Can Help

- Attempt to recognize student problems
- Call Student Counseling Service
- Reach out to students who are having problems
- Seek consultation
- Make active referrals
- Be patient
- Follow-up
- Staff, in particular, can have a dramatic impact on a student's well-being.

# If you are concerned about.....

- A student in distress - Call the Student Counseling Service - Ask for an Administrator or an available Counselor (845-4427)

A student's disruptive or concerning behavior - Submit a Tell Somebody Report ([tellsomebody.tamu.edu](http://tellsomebody.tamu.edu)) or call Student Assistance Service (845-3113) or UPD (845-2345).

# What Would You Do?

A student is standing outside of your office waiting for the previous group to exit. Several students are standing around waiting to see you. As you approach you notice this student is acting strangely, seems disoriented, and is making odd comments to people as they walk by. She keeps repeating a non-sensible phrase over and over. The other students are looking at her somewhat anxiously and appear to be keeping their distance. She seems agitated but is not being violent.

# Recognizing Student Problems

- Communications about hopelessness, depression, or suicide in written assignments, group discussions, work settings, etc.
- Disruptive behavior in organizations - especially if repeated, in service offices, etc.
- Repeated requests for special consideration
- Over dominating in any discussions
- Exaggerated emotional responses obviously inappropriate to the situation
- Obstinate beyond reason

# Recognizing Student Problems

- Change in personal hygiene or dress
- Detection of alcohol abuse
- Radical change in class/work attendance
- Hyperactivity or very rapid speech
- Over emotionality - depression, euphoria
- Mental confusion - inability to comprehend directions
- More signs on our website (Faculty and Staff link) <http://scs.tamu.edu>

# If You Identify Signs of Distress

- Speak directly to the student (respect the student's confidentiality if you can!)
- If you recommend counseling do so in a non-threatening way
- Express your concerns directly
- Explain why you are concerned
- Use specific behavioral examples
- Avoid generalizations
- Be honest



# Help the Student Understand How Counseling May Help

- For some there is still a stigma
- Your referral may be interpreted as a comment about severity
- Reassure them that counseling is for students with a wide range of concerns
- Seeking professional help is a sign of strength
- On the SCS website click on the Services link
- In non-crisis situations, leave the option to the student

AVAILABLE M-F 4:00 p.m. -  
8:00 a.m. and 24 hours on  
weekends

HelpLine

979-845-2700

# How To Refer

- Go online for an initial appointment
- If crisis, ask to speak to Crisis Counselor
- If crisis situation - after consultation, walk student to Counseling Center in Cain Hall (B-103)
- Understand confidentiality
- Students can sign a release to contact you
- Follow-up with the student

# What Would You Do?

One of your reliable student workers has not shown up for work for two days and has not called in. You are aware that she and her boyfriend recently broke up and she has been very upset about it. You have called but have only gotten voicemails.

# What Would You Do?

A student shows up in your office late to work. He appears anxious and rattled. He apologizes for being late and tells you that he had to take the long way across campus because there are people watching him and tracking his every move electronically. He says he doesn't know who they are for sure but believes they are people hired by his church to watch him to make sure he does not commit mortal sins.

# CRISIS Situations

- Call the Counseling Center (845-4427)
- Ask to speak to a Crisis Counselor
- If the student is violent, suicidal, has severe loss of emotional control or gross impairment in thinking ability

- Call UPD 845-2345

OR 9-911

# Web Resources

- Counseling Center - [scs.tamu.edu](http://scs.tamu.edu)
  - Self Help Resources - Virtual Pamphlet Collection.
  - Mental Health Links
  - On-Line Screening
- Jed Foundation - [www.jedfoundation.org](http://www.jedfoundation.org)
- Campus Blues - [www.campusblues.com](http://www.campusblues.com)
- U Lifeline - [www.ulifeline.org](http://www.ulifeline.org)
- Counseling Center Village - [www.ccvillage.buffalo.edu/vpc.html](http://www.ccvillage.buffalo.edu/vpc.html)
- MyStudentBody - [www.mystudentbody.com](http://www.mystudentbody.com)

Thanks For Attending

Student mental health is  
a campus challenge requiring a  
collaborative campus wide effort