



Discussion on Health Issues Impacting Education

September 26, 2019



Presented by Southern Arkansas University education and mental health professionals

Mental Health Issues, School Age Children

Southern Arkansas University

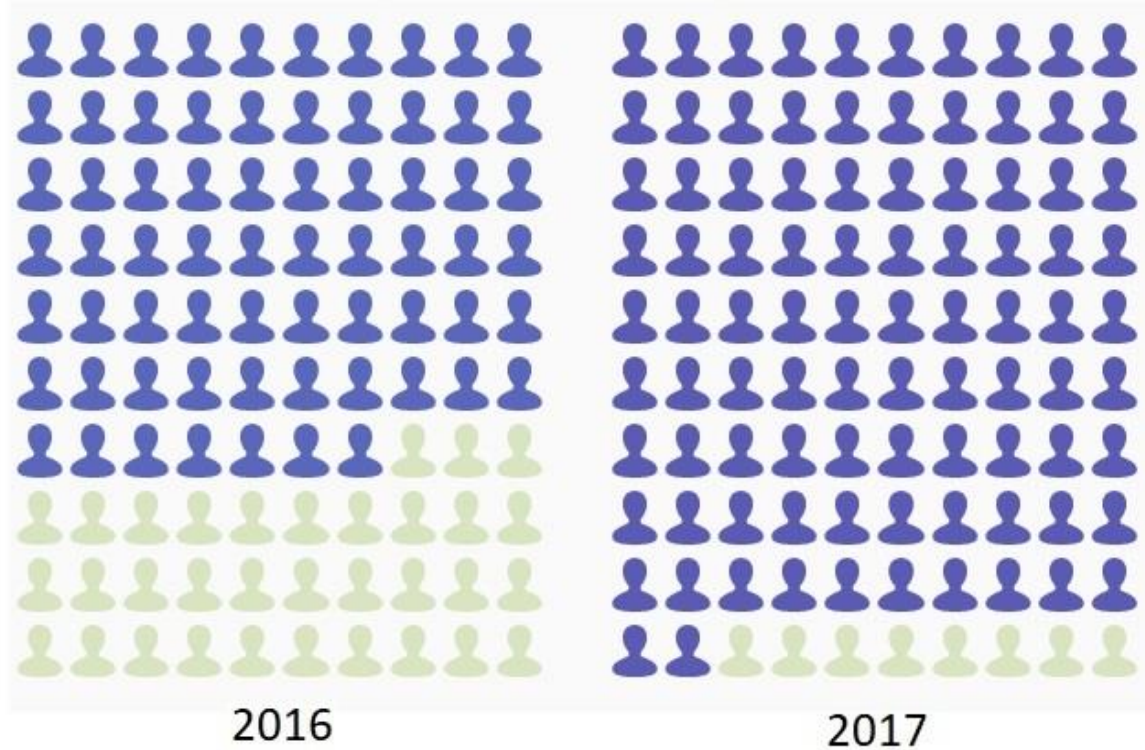
College of Education

Mental Health Issues Students Face

- ▶ Exposure to illegal substances
- ▶ Use of illegal substances
- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Bullying
- ▶ Sleep Deprivation / Screen time concerns
- ▶ Mental health diagnosis
 - ▶ ADD
 - ▶ ADHD
 - ▶ **Anxiety**
 - ▶ Depression
 - ▶ Bipolar
 - ▶ Suicidal / Homicidal Ideation
 - ▶ Suicide / Homicide

What the Numbers tell us

Suicides In Arkansas, ages 10 - 24



(Stromquist, K., 2019)

What this looks like in Schools

- ▶ Inattention
- ▶ Sleeping
- ▶ Absenteeism
- ▶ Low grades
- ▶ Behavior Referrals
- ▶ Suspensions
- ▶ Expulsions

The Good News

- ▶ We are having this conversation
- ▶ Site Based Mental Health Care
- ▶ Emotional Literacy in Schools
 - ▶ Mindfulness
 - ▶ 54321 Grounding Exercise
 - ▶ Trauma Informed Learning
 - ▶ Relationships / Tone
 - ▶ Restorative Practices
 - ▶ Peace Corners

The Even Better News

ACT 190

The School Counseling Improvement Act

February 2019

What this legislation looks like in schools

- ▶ Counselors now have more time for:
 - ▶ Conducting Classroom Guidance Lessons
 - ▶ Teaching Academic, Social Emotional and Career lessons
 - ▶ Forming even more meaningful relationships with students
 - ▶ Identifying troubled students
 - ▶ Facilitating Small Group Counseling Sessions
 - ▶ Data driven
 - ▶ Engaging more in Individual Counseling Sessions
 - ▶ Academic
 - ▶ Career / Post high school planning
 - ▶ Social Emotional Issues
 - ▶ Crisis Response

What we are hearing from our students

- School counselors given more freedom to create their own schedule to include more classroom guidance times
- School counselor having time to form a small group for students experiencing grief
- Several school counselors no longer have testing duties
- A renewed excitement for the job
- Inquiry from principal about the new comprehensive plan schools are to have posted by August 1, 2020.
- School Counselor collaborating with classroom teachers to create Peace corners in every classroom.
- Districts hiring mental health counselors
- Faculty and staff attending national conferences for Trauma Informed Learning Environments
- Morning classroom time for mindfulness exercises

Mental Health in Higher Education



Presented by Sylvia Johnson, LPC and Kasey Jones, LCSW

Top 3 Reasons to Seek Services

- ◌ Depression
- ◌ Anxiety
- ◌ Relationship issues



Suicide



- 2nd leading cause of death among college students
- Risk Factors
- Warning Signs
- Suicide prevention



Barriers to Seeking Treatment

- o Public Stigma – negative stereotypes and prejudices about mental health, i.e., people with MH illnesses are dangerous or unreliable
- o Personal Stigma – personal beliefs about mental illness, i.e., depressed people should pull themselves together
- o Local Barriers – transportation off campus, financial struggles for prescriptions, and no insurance



SAU Student Population

Fall 2019 official enrollment 4,468 – undergrad and graduate

Almost 2,000 students live on campus

2017 statistics 54% female 46% male

58% White 23% African American 14% Non US citizens

<5% Hispanic, Asian or other American ethnicities

In 2017, 43% of students came from households making less than
\$24,000 annually

Mental Health Screening Link

September 2018- September 2019

435 online screenings completed

167 Depression screenings 116 Anxiety screenings

76% were females Nearly 50% were freshmen 8% grad students

69% White 20% Black 5% Multiracial 1% Asian

38% of those who reported suicidal thoughts stated they would NOT seek help

Identified At Risk Populations

- Black teenagers - more likely to attempt suicide than whites (8.3% v 6.2%)
- Native American & White males – over 2 x more likely to die by suicide
- Individuals from rural areas more likely to die by suicide
- Females – highest rate of depression
- African Americans are more likely to fit the criteria for PTSD and twice as likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia than Whites.
- Childhood trauma- abuse, poverty, brain injury, lack of social support, crime victims

Protective Factors

- o Financial security
- o Good physical health
- o Supportive family relationships
- o Sense of self sufficiency
- o Safe living environment: home & community
- o Participation in social or religious group
- o Set of moral standards

Recommendations

- Funding grants: prevention & awareness campaigns, bridging the gap in costs
- Adequate coverage of mental health issues under Medicaid, Medicare and other medical plans
- Prevention efforts: mental health counseling in the schools, educational campaigns
- Ask public officials their stance on mental health issues and vote for advocates
- Adequate training for public officials, i.e. teachers, police officers

Responses to Adverse Childhood Experiences

Presenters: Eunice Walker and Carla Williamson

Who we serve?

- Two-thirds of the participants we serve are low-income, first-generation college students.
- Meet the poverty guidelines to receive federal assistance
- Neither custodial parents has a college education

Responses to Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Inadequate technology skills
- Low College Aspirations
- Limited Access to college information and support
- Rural home environment

Upward Bound Students

- Unaddressed academic, social and economic conditions in the target areas pose serious problems for low-income, potentially first-generation college students.
- 70% of students attending target area schools who qualify for free and reduced lunch have a GPA below 2.5, according to the Arkansas Department of Education, 2015.
- Many have the potential to earn higher grades but lack the proper encouragement, academic support, and motivation necessary to succeed academically.

Poverty & Hunger

- According to the American Community Survey, there is a strong relationship between poverty and educational attainment...this is evident here in Arkansas.
- Hunger affects every community; however, some groups of people are more vulnerable than others.
- A growing body of research shows that the number of college students facing hunger is skyrocketing.

www.moveforhunger.org

Low-Income Families in Target Area

Target Area Counties	Total # of Families in TA	# of Low-Income Families in TA	% of Low-Income Families in TA
United States	76,958,064	8,850,177	11.5%
Arkansas	761,579	108,905	14.3%
Columbia County	6,553	1,271	19.4%
Lafayette County	1,778	371	20.9%
Ouachita County	10,502	1,974	18.8%
Union County	11,404	2,007	17.6%
Hempstead County	5,395	1,068	19.8%
Miller County	11,188	1,745	15.6%
Nevada County	2,196	496	22.6%
Total	49,016	8,932	19.24%

Student Support Services Students

- These students receive tutoring, counseling, and remedial instruction in order to achieve their goals of college completion.

TRiO programs that address students with adverse childhood experiences

- Talent Search provides information about college admissions, scholarships, and various student financial aid programs.
- Upward Bound is an intensive intervention program that prepares students for higher education through various enrichment courses.
- Upward Bound Math/Science strengthens academic preparedness in math, science, and technology.
- Veterans Upward Bound provides services to veterans returning to college, aiding them in the transition process through intensive basic skills development and short-term remedial courses.
- Student Support Services help low-income and first-generation students to successfully begin and graduate from college.
- Educational Opportunity Centers target displaced or underemployed workers from low-income families.
- Ronald E. McNair program encourages and prepares low-income and minority students for doctoral study and to pursue careers in college teaching. The McNair program provides research opportunities and faculty mentoring.

Thank you!

Questions?

