

CU Mental Health Framework

Overview

Cornell's comprehensive and integrated public health approach has informed and continues to reflect the best practices represented by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center/Jed Foundation Model for Comprehensive Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion. That model is drawn primarily from the overall strategic direction of the US Air Force Suicide Prevention Program, a population-based strategy to reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors for suicide.

FOSTER A HEALTHY EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

• Campus-wide committees

Executive Committee on Campus Health and Safety: Senior administration provides oversight of health policy and strategies including mental health-related initiatives.

Council on Mental Health and Welfare: Staff, faculty, graduate and undergraduate student leaders guide development of the University's mental health strategies on the continuum from promoting thriving to suicide prevention.

President's Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs: Staff, faculty, graduate and undergraduate student leaders oversee development of prevention and intervention strategies related to AOD abuse, associated violence, and hazing.

The Council on Hazing Prevention: provides a leadership structure for developing and guiding the university's hazing prevention strategies. It also advises the Vice President for Student and Academic Services and President on opportunities for fostering cultural change, reducing risks, and increasing support for members of the community affected by hazing.

The Council on Sexual Violence Prevention: Through its meetings, committees, and workgroups, this group studies and evaluates the campus environment, prevention strategies, policies, procedures, and services and explores opportunities for fostering cultural change, reducing risks, and increasing support for members of the community affected by sexual violence.

Student Assembly: deals with quality of life issues for students, making sure that

student issues are heard and addressed. Most recently, the SA submitted Resolution 8, advocating for a syllabus statement on mental health.

The Graduate and Professional Students Assembly: takes up issues and concerns of particular interest to graduate and professional students. The GPSA sends representatives to the various campus-wide councils on student health and well-being.

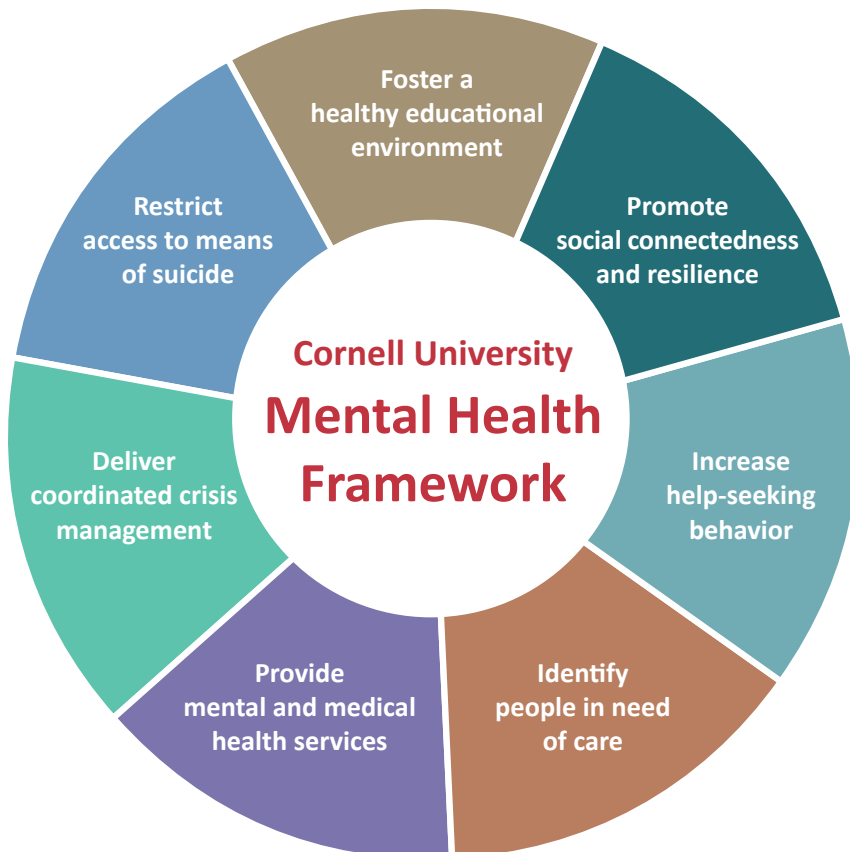
- **Leadership statements:** President David Skorton began his tenure making a call for Cornell to be an "ever more caring community," providing a philosophical foundation for Cornell's comprehensive approach to mental health and well-being.

In the wake of the 2010 suicide cluster, President Skorton echoed this call and implored Cornell students: "If you learn anything at Cornell, learn to ask for help." In "The Way Forward" (an op-ed in The Cornell Daily Sun, 4/10), he called upon the campus community to engage a comprehensive examination of the student experience in order "to have a broader and more holistic view of our support for students."

- **Strategic plan:** The Cornell Strategic Plan (2010 - 15) includes the following goal in service of Educational Excellence: "Promote the health and well-being of students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) as a foundation for academic and life success." (See especially pp. 23 and 25.)

• Policy initiatives

Faculty conducted a review of the academic calendar and implemented a February Break. The Faculty Senate passed a resolution discouraging professors from assigning extra academic work over breaks. Both actions were taken to support student mental health & well-being and reduce unnecessary stress.



Mental Health Policy Group: Faculty and staff collaborate on development and implementation of policies and protocols aimed at identifying and supporting students in distress. The MHPG's current focus is an examination of faculty opportunities to address student mental health within the academic environment.

Promotion of restorative natural areas: Cornell Plantations, Cornell Outdoor Education and the Gorge Stewards provide opportunities for experiences in the natural environment that reduce stress and promote mental health.

Disability services: Facilitation of services and accommodations enabling Cornell students with disabilities to enjoy the same educational opportunities as their peers.

PROMOTE SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND RESILIENCE

- **Gannett Health Promotion:** Provides resilience and stress management workshops (e.g., Thrive (don't just survive) @ Cornell programs for students), a six-week resilience course, and ongoing advising of the Greek Health & Wellness Chairs program.
- **Cornell Minds Matter:** This student mental health advocacy group promotes the overall mental and emotional health of all Cornell students, works to reduce the stigma of mental illness, and holds events open to the entire Cornell community that foster a healthy, balanced lifestyle.
- **EARS outreach programs:** Provide interactive workshops on a range of topics (e.g., personal growth, communication, relationships, using mindfulness to relieve stress and anxiety).
- **Learning Strategies Center:** Provides time management and study skills tools and workshops.
- **Alcohol education:** All incoming first year students are expected to complete Alcohol Wise, an online educational program, before arriving on campus.
- **Online resources:** Mental health self-assessments and stress management materials help students develop coping strategies and learn when and where to turn for help. A model for Fostering Student Resilience is also available with downloadable materials.
- **Promotion of social connections**
Residential and community initiatives: Community-building efforts through

Residential & New Student Programs, West Campus Houses, Fraternity and Sorority Affairs, and graduate and professional school initiatives (e.g., the College of Veterinary Medicine's Peer Support Network) foster interpersonal connectedness and enhance the University's safety net for students.

Diversity programs: Multiple efforts, such as the availability of campus Program Houses and a Pre-Freshman Summer Program, as well as events designed to foster inclusiveness (e.g., the "Tapestry Program") help promote student well-being.

Let's Meditate Guided Mindfulness Meditation Series: Cosponsored by Gannett Health Services and multiple groups across campus, these sessions are open to all members of the Cornell community, including students, faculty, and staff of all ages, genders, sizes, shapes, and abilities to practice a restorative technique supported by scientific research.

INCREASE HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOR

- **"Real Students, Reel Stories:"** This health and well-being program welcomes new students to the Cornell community, setting the tone for self-awareness and self-care, watching out for each other and introducing them to campus resources. Video stories, in which Cornell students share their challenges and triumphs, help new students learn how to navigate their first year and encourage them to ask for help.
- **Media communication:** Advertisements, posters, resource cards, and web pages promote the concepts of the Caring Community, stress management and strengthening personal resilience along with availability of campus resources and attentiveness to others in distress.
- **Caring Community website:** This site is Cornell's gateway to information about campus and local resources, events, leadership statements, and news in support of the campus health and well-being [caringcommunity.cornell.edu].
- **EARS (Empathy, Assistance, and Referral Services):** Student volunteers (trained and supervised by the Dean of Students Office of Student Support and Diversity) provide anonymous telephone or walk-in peer counseling for undergraduate and graduate students.
- **Parent education:** Written materials (e.g., "Family Guide," electronic newsletter, and a parent website [parent.cornell.edu])

and on-campus events (e.g., Orientation Resource Fair, Convocation, Family Weekend programs) inform parents about mental health issues and services.

IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS IN NEED OF CARE

- **"Notice and Respond"** gatekeeper training for faculty, staff, and students:
"Assisting Students in Distress" Seminar: helps faculty departments, TA clusters and staff workgroups explore how to assist students. New facilitators have been added to expand the reach of this program.
"Friend 2 Friend" Program: helps students learn to recognize and reach out to other students in distress. This program is provided to 1st year students in college seminar classes, peer advisors and mentors, as well as other student groups and organizations.
Notice and Respond web content: The Gannett website provides extensive information and resources to assist members of the Cornell community [www.gannett.cornell.edu/notice].
- **Faculty handbook, staff handbook:** *"Recognizing and Responding to Students in Distress:"* Print and web-based resources provide information on signs of distress, mental illness, and strategies for promoting student well-being in the living and learning environments.
- **Community consultation and intervention through Gannett:** CAPS staff members provide guidance and support for faculty and staff concerned about distressed students and coordinate interventions as needed.
- **Mental health screening by Gannett:**
Health history form: First-year and transfer students who identify (on pre-matriculation health form) a history of mental health concerns and/or treatment receive information about services and support available at Cornell before arriving on campus.
Primary care mental health screening: Medical patients are assessed at the time of their visit. Those indicating high levels of distress are given referrals to counseling and/or resources or self-care.
Interactive Screening Program: Web-based outreach program administered by CAPS to identify, engage, and refer to treatment students with depression, anxiety or other serious mental health conditions.

BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students): A service of Gannett Health Services for students to explore their alcohol and other drug use. Students are referred to the program by residential staff, judicial administrators, and health care providers, as well as by self-referral.

- **Alert Team:** Staff members from key departments meet weekly to discuss situations (often pre-crisis) involving students whose behavior or well-being is of concern to others.
- **Professional Academic Advising Leaders (PAAL):** Staff members from academic advising and deans offices within undergraduate colleges coordinate strategies and share best practices related to student support.
- **Victim Advocacy Program:** Supports victims of crimes, violence or other traumatic experiences.

PROVIDE MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- **Gannett Health Services:** Interdisciplinary staff is committed to a collaborative approach to caring for the physical and mental health of patients. Medical and counseling professionals work in integrated “teams” and partnerships to provide care for students with complex health issues (e.g., eating disorders, substance abuse, or chronic illness).

General Medicine, Sports Medicine:

Physicians, nurse practitioners, physician's assistants and nurses often are the health care providers of choice for students who are . . .

- Experiencing emotional distress related to medical problems
- Not yet aware of the emotional cause or component of physical symptoms
- Not comfortable with or ready to access mental health care

Care Managers: provide a valuable bridge between Gannett's internal departments (medical, CAPS, PT), and campus and other services in an effort to provide Cornell students with integrated medical and mental health care. Care Managers facilitate the coordination of services to meet the needs of an individual student.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): Counseling and psychiatry staff provide on-campus services for students, including individual and group counseling,

same day triage and emergency care, and referral to community providers for off-campus and specialty care.

Let's Talk: Walk-in consultations with CAPS counselors at nine campus locations increases access to services, particularly for students who are unlikely to come in to CAPS.

DELIVER COORDINATED CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- **Gannett phone consultation:** : 24/7 phone consultation with a health care provider or counselor for students and people with concerns about a student's well-being.
- **911:** 24/7 emergency call to police
- **CU Police:** 24/7 for concern, urgent or emergency assistance
- **Crisis Managers:** Staff members are on-call at all times to coordinate the university's response to crisis situations.
- **Community Support Team:** Staff members from across the university provide support for individuals and groups in the aftermath of tragedies or other crises.

RESTRICT ACCESS TO MEANS OF SUICIDE

- Secure access to chemicals and equipment
- Barriers on bridges
- Means restriction study and website
[meansrestrictionstudy.fs.cornell.edu]

Learn more

Contact: Timothy Marchell, PhD, MPH
Director of Mental Health Initiatives at
Gannett Health Services
E-mail: tcm9@cornell.edu