

## FACT SHEET: Changes in College Student Mental Health Needs

A significant growing concern during the past ten years is the increasing number of students coming to college counseling centers with severe psychological problems. Well documented in the field is an increase in both numbers of students seeking services and a rise in pathology (Benton, Benton, Tsing, Newton, Robertson, and Benton, 2003).

- In a recent survey, ninety-two percent of counseling center directors stated that this problem has continued to increase in recent years (Gallagher 2006). A total of 1.6 million students are estimated to have sought counseling or psychological help in the 2006-07 academic year (Federman, 2007).

A recent study at a large Midwestern public university found that 30% of respondents reported that they had sought counseling with 20% reporting they were currently in counseling (Soet and Sevig, 2006). Psychotropic medications usage was 6.8% currently taking and 14.2% having taken at some time. The self-reported diagnosis of the surveyed students was:

- 20% with depression,
- 6.1% with eating disorder,
- 5.9% with anxiety,
- 4.2% with ADHD,
- 3.4% with PTSD,
- 3.2% with social anxiety,
- 3.2 % with OCD,
- 2.9% with substance abuse,
- 2.6% with bipolar,
- 1.7% with psychosis.

The most recent American College Health Association 2006 survey involved the largest randomized sample since the survey's inception - 94,806 students from public and private universities across the country. Within the past year:

- 94 out of 100 students reported feeling overwhelmed by all they had to do.
- 44 out of 100 - almost half - have felt so depressed it was difficult to function.
- 8 out of a 100 reported having a depressive disorder.
- 12 out of 100 had an anxiety disorder.
- 9 out of 100 or approximately 1 out of every 11 students reported having seriously considered suicide within the past year.
- 1.3% actually did attempt suicide.

Changes in mental health issues on campus:

- Research conducted at Kansas State University from 1989 to 2002 found that students seen for anxiety disorders doubled, for depression tripled and for serious suicidal ideation and intention tripled ((Benton, et. al., 2003).

- 92% of counseling center directors report an increase in the number of students with severe psychological disorders in 2006 as compared to 81% reporting this in 2002 (Gallagher, 2006).
- 16.4% of counseling center clients were referred for psychiatric evaluation in 2006 as opposed to 12% in 2004 (Gallagher, 2006).
- 25% of counseling center clients were on psychiatric medication in 2006, as compared to 20% in 2003, 12.2% in 2002 and 9% in 1994 (Gallagher, 2006).
- Greater numbers of counseling center directors are concerned about the following categories of increased demand for service provision (Gallagher, 2006):

	2004	2006
Self injury reports	54.9%	66.8%
Crisis counseling	44.8%	55.9%
Students with eating disorders	36.0%	37.9%
Sexual assault cases	18.3%	22.6%
Students reporting earlier sexual abuse	19.5%	22.9%
Referral for long term care	54.3%	67.0%

- For 2006, on average, a little over 8 students per school were hospitalized for psychological problems during the past year, a total of 2,462 students. In 2001 only 5 students per school, on average, were hospitalized. (Gallagher, 2006).
- However, the rate of completed suicides for college students are at 7.5/100,000, representing approximately one half the rates of matched peers who do not attend college. (Silverman, Meyer, Sloane, Raffel, and Pratt, 1995).
- Directors reported 154 suicides in the past year which has remained fairly constant in recent years. It should be noted, however, that 127 of the 154 students who committed suicide had never sought assistance at their campus counseling or mental health service. (Gallagher, 2006).

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### References:

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**Resources, further information sources, etc.**

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