Mental Wellness
Hosted by the M&I Peer Mentor Network (PMN)
Presented by Lacey Lopez & Taylor Tibbs

November 5th, 2020
“I heard that we are all in the same boat, but it’s not like that. We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat. Your boat could be shipwrecked, and mine might not be. Or vice versa”. – Nicki Peverett
Mental health disorder stats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorder</th>
<th>US Population</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing major depressive disorder (in a given year)</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experiencing anxiety disorder (in a given year)</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance use disorder or engaging in hazardous alcohol use</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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Disclosure

We will briefly be discussing signs of distress, including acute warning signs of suicide. If you are uncomfortable listening to this material, please mute your sound at this time.
Signs of Distress

Mood Changes
- Expressing helplessness or distress
- Lack of energy
- Increasingly sad or depressed mood
- Very flat; apathetic
- Increased irritability, anger, or restlessness

Behavioral

Interpersonal

Physical

Mood

Self-assessment
https://caps.unc.edu/self-help/line-assessment

For more information, visit: https://caps.unc.edu/support-student
Behavioral Changes

- Extreme procrastination
- Diminishing quality of work
- Missing class or meetings
- Inability to concentrate
- Falling asleep in class
- Impaired speech or disjointed thoughts
- Hyperactivity or very rapid speech
- Strange or bizarre behavior

Signs of Distress

Mood

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Interpersonal

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Interpersonal Changes
- Social withdrawal or isolation
- Unable to enjoy activities that are normally enjoyable
- Having trouble leaving one’s residence
- Threatens, talks about, or hints at doing harm to self or others

Signs of Distress

Behavioral

Interpersonal

Physical

Mood

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Physical Changes
- Sleeping too much or too little, erratic sleep pattern
- Always tired or very restless
- Changes in eating habits and weight
- Apathy about appearance, health or personal hygiene

Signs of Distress

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Suicide Facts

- 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. (NIH)
- 2nd leading cause of death for people between 10-34 years of age (NIH)
- 30% of BBSP students have considered suicide in their lifetime
  - 16% while at UNC
- No leading single cause for suicide
Suicide: Acute warning signs

Verbal
- Preoccupation with themes of death or suicide
- Expressions of unworthiness or failure
- Lack of interest or hope for the future
- Statements of suicidal plan or intent to carry it out

Behavioral
- Giving away cherished possessions or making a will
- Canceling future plans as if there will be no future for the person
- Stockpiling pills or acquiring a weapon
- Sending cryptic emails that suggest wish to harm self, feelings of hopelessness

Sometimes out of a cry for help or ambivalence about acting on suicidal thoughts, indirect statements will be made:
- **Hopelessness**
  - "I'm not sure any of this is worth it anymore."
  - "I'd like this all to go away."
- **Wishes for Escape**
  - "I wish I could sleep and never wake up."
- **Death Allusions**
  - "It would be better for everyone if I were gone."
- **Not Belonging**
  - "No one would miss me anyway."

**Acute Risk Factors**
Risk for self harm increases when the above warning signs and risk factors below are both present.
- Expression of specific plans with active intent to harm self
- Prior suicide attempts
- Recent discharge from a psychiatric hospitalization
- Chronic feelings of hopelessness and suicidal thinking

**Protective Factors**
- Effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders
- Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for help seeking
- Family and community support
- Support from ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent handling of disputes
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support self-preservation instincts

For more information, visit: [https://caps.unc.edu/support-student](https://caps.unc.edu/support-student)
Ways to de-stress & re-center

- Deep breathing
- Meditation
- Getting outside
- Exercise
- Engaging in a hobby and/or creative outlet
- Connecting to your social supports (friends, family, partner, pets)
- Connect to your spirituality (pray, attend religious functions)
- Take a break from media notifications (e.g. 30 min break from your social media, phone & email)
- Change your immediate environment (take a 5 min walk, watch an episode of your favorite show)
Seeking additional resources

If you are struggling to manage your mental wellness on your own, then you may want to seek out professional help

*Common Misconceptions about Therapy*

- **Being in therapy is something to be ashamed of**
  - There is no shame in seeking professional help when you are struggling

- **I have friends to talk to, why do I need therapy?**
  - A therapist is a unbiased professional with no agenda other than to help and advocate for you

- **If I can’t make myself feel better, how can a complete stranger?**
  - Therapists are trained professionals whose goal is to shift self-defeating patterns and be your advocate

- **Therapy is a luxury, not a necessity.**
  - Therapy helps you work through issues so your life can be more manageable (payment options are available and therapy is covered under your graduate student insurance)

Adapted from @thejourneytoiam
How to Seek Professional Assistance

1. **Find an In-Network Health Care Professional**
   - UNC CAPS ([https://caps.unc.edu/services/referral-coordination](https://caps.unc.edu/services/referral-coordination))
   - BCBS Find-a-doctor ([https://www.bcbs.com/find-a-doctor](https://www.bcbs.com/find-a-doctor))
   - UNC Find-a-doctor ([https://findadoc.unchealthcare.org/](https://findadoc.unchealthcare.org/))

2. **Reach out**
   - Contact provider’s office via email or phone
     - Confirm insurance, fill out new-patient paperwork, **book appointment**

3. **Hold yourself accountable**
   - Give yourself a deadline
   - Tell a friend/family member/partner of your plans and have them check in on you

* For a step-by-step guide to seeking professional assistance, please visit the M&I Department Resources page at: [https://www.med.unc.edu/microimm/resources/mental-health-and-safety-resources/](https://www.med.unc.edu/microimm/resources/mental-health-and-safety-resources/).
Additional Resources

Emergencies and Crisis Situations

• **EMERGENCIES** – dial 911
• **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** – call 800-273-8255 (TALK)
  • [https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)
• **Veteran's Crisis Line** – call 800-273-8255 and press 1
• **Crisis Text Line (Mental Health)** – text 741741
• **Disaster Distress Helpline (Pandemic)** – call 800-985-5990
• **Chapel Hill Domestic Violence Hotline** – call 919-929-7122
• **Hopeline NC (Crisis/suicide prevention)** – call or text 919-231-4525 or 877-235-4525
  • [https://compassctr.org/](https://compassctr.org/)
• **Your Life Your Voice (teen crisis hotline)** – call 800-448-3000 / text VOICE to 20121
• **The Trevor Project (crisis for LGBTQ youth)** – call 866-488-7386 / text START to 678-678
• **Trans Lifeline (hotline for transgender persons)** – call 877-565-8860

Mobile Crisis Services

• **Alliance Health** (Durham, Wake, Cumberland, & Johnston Counties) – call 800-510-9132
• **Cardinal Innovations** (Orange, Chatham, Alamance, & others) – call 800-939-5911
• **Sandhills** (Lee, Harnett, & others) – call 800-256-2452

Other

• **Talkspace**: [https://lp.talkspace.com/try](https://lp.talkspace.com/try)
• **BetterHelp**: [https://www.betterhelp.com/](https://www.betterhelp.com/)
• **UNC and SOM COVID-19 Consolidated**: [https://www.med.unc.edu/intranet/covid-19/](https://www.med.unc.edu/intranet/covid-19/)
• **UNC Health Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resources**: [https://www.unchealthcare.org/coronavirus/](https://www.unchealthcare.org/coronavirus/)
Other Articles about Science Careers & Mental Health

Nature Full Collection >>> https://www.nature.com/collections/gnIwffgtr

- What I wish my friends and family knew about my PhD
- Four tips to ward off impostor syndrome
- Overcoming perfectionism during the pandemic
- Is the reproducibility crisis fueling poor mental health in science?
- PhDs: the tortuous truth
- A better future for graduate-student mental health
- I’d whisper to my student self: you are not alone
How to manage pandemic-induced stress

“Lockdown Productivity: Spaceship You”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snAhsXyO3Ck&fbclid=IwAR0fq-DCA1N2f3Gn4sXxnykWYl0m0gibO7ae6rkV5gFdm3nRvY3suPS5lrdkg&app=desktop