

A Practical Guide for 12 Leaders: Student Services Personnel and Mental Health

Mental health is a critical issue facing students in higher education today. The American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment found that in 2018, over 60% of college students reported feeling overwhelming anxiety, and nearly 40% reported feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function.



Developing Your School's Student Support Teams: A Practical Guide for K-12 Leaders, Student Services Personnel, and Mental Health Staff by Steve Berta

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Student services personnel and mental health professionals play a vital role in supporting the mental health of students. This guide provides practical strategies and insights to help these professionals effectively address the mental health needs of students.

Creating a Supportive Campus Environment

Creating a supportive campus environment is essential for promoting student mental health. This means fostering a culture of respect, understanding, and compassion. It also means providing students with access to resources and support services.

Here are some tips for creating a supportive campus environment:

- Educate students about mental health and mental illness.
- Reduce stigma associated with mental health.
- Provide training for faculty and staff on how to recognize and respond to students in distress.
- Make counseling and other mental health services easily accessible to students.
- Create opportunities for students to connect with each other and build support networks.

Identifying Students in Distress

It is important to be able to identify students who are in distress. This can be challenging, as students may not always be open about their struggles. However, there are some signs that may indicate that a student is in need of help.

Here are some signs to look for:

- Changes in behavior, such as becoming withdrawn or irritable.
- Changes in academic performance, such as a decline in grades or attendance.

- Physical symptoms, such as fatigue, headaches, or stomachaches.
- Emotional distress, such as anxiety, depression, or suicidal thoughts.

If you are concerned about a student, it is important to reach out to them and offer support. You can do this by talking to them directly, referring them to counseling services, or connecting them with other resources on campus.

Providing Appropriate Interventions

Once you have identified a student in distress, it is important to provide them with appropriate interventions. This may involve providing counseling, medication, or other forms of support.

The type of intervention that is most appropriate will depend on the individual student and their specific needs. It is important to work with the student to develop a treatment plan that is tailored to their unique circumstances.

Here are some common types of interventions that may be helpful for students with mental health concerns:

- Counseling
- Medication
- Self-help groups
- Peer support
- Academic accommodations

Collaborating with Other Stakeholders

It is important for student services personnel and mental health professionals to collaborate with other stakeholders on campus to provide the best possible care for students. This includes faculty, staff, parents, and community partners.

Here are some ways to collaborate with other stakeholders:

- Develop a campus-wide mental health plan.



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