Mental health trends for Colgate and today's college student: Implications for faculty and the classroom setting

Faculty Teaching Table
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Agenda

- Recent trends in mental health issues at Colgate
- Presenting issues from 2014-15
- How the issues impact your classroom/role as faculty
- Ideas to consider
- Questions and discussion
Mental Health Trends

- Continued increased in use of cc services (esp. last 5)
- 25% of Colgate students (N= 730) used clinical services in ‘14-’15 (up from 12% in 1997)
- 49% of Class ‘15 used services during their tenure (up from 33% in 1997)
- Approx. 25% of students using cc services taking RX’s for mental health issues (incr. from 20% in 2001)
Students seen—2005-2015
Hospitalizations and MLOA over past 10 years

- MLOA avg. 20-22/year during past decade
- MLOA in 2014-15 = 39
- MLOA previous high (2012-13) = 29
- Hospitalizations ranged from 1 (‘06-’07) to 12 (‘11-’12)
- Fall 2015 semester:
  - MLOA (9) down by 50% compared with Fall 2014
  - Hospitalizations (7) up by 75% compared with Fall 2014
Top 13 Presenting issues (per students) in 2014-15:

- Anxiety (59%)
- Need for support/encouragement (48%)
- Depression (26%)
- Self-esteem/self-confidence (26%)
- Alcohol/drugs (24%)
- Relationship issues (21%)
- Academic Problems (21%)
- Loneliness/homesickness (13%)
- Family problems (13%)
- Perfectionism (12%)
- Feeling out of control (11%)
- Identity concerns (11%)
- Eating disorder/body image (9%)
Additional issues:

- Sleep (9%)
- Indecisiveness/procrastination (8%)
- Confused thinking (8%)
- Bereavement (7%)
- Conflict with peers (7%)
- Shyness/lack of assertiveness (7%)
- Conflict with parents (7%)
What are the mental health issues that your students are/may be presenting that impact your classroom and role as a faculty member?
Implications for classroom

- **Social anxiety/panic**– lack of class participation, avoidance of classes that require participation and/or class presentations

- **Depression**– avoidance, missed classes, poor concentration, diminished motivation, apathy, low energy, social withdrawal

- **Substance use**– missing class, lack of attention, reduced motivation, compromised cognitive functioning
Implications for classroom

- **Developmental spectrum disorders** (e.g. Asperger’s)- disrupted class discussions, awkward interactions with classmates/social skills, group projects

- **ADHD**– inattentiveness, distractibility, difficulty following directions, follow-through

- **Numerous**– failure to turn in papers/projects on time, requests for extensions, managing classroom dynamics
Additional classroom issues:

- Introvert/extrovert temperament
- Self-confidence (or lack thereof)
- Experience of students from marginalized groups re: feeling a lack of support in the classroom (Chronicle of Higher Ed article, Colgate’s campus climate survey)
Experience of students from marginalized groups

Chronicle of Higher Education article (1/13/16)
http://chronicle.com/article/Many-Black-Students-Don-t/234892

This study “reflects a clear disparity between students who feel comfortable in a college setting and students who do not.”

- African-American students:
  - feel less emotionally prepared than white students
  - more likely to keep worries to themselves
  - more likely to feel overwhelmed and angry
  - almost 2x as likely to report seriously considering transferring after first semester
  - didn’t seek help as often as white students for mental health issues
  - more likely to turn to a religious figure for support
As a faculty member, what to do?
Ideas to consider:

- **Clear expectations** on course syllabi, including class attendance, participation, penalties for late submissions

- **Discuss** expectations during initial class(es)

- Notice and **point out behavioral concerns** as they arise (in private, avoid possible public shaming reaction)

- **Encourage students to seek clarification** if/when feeling unsure about assignments, paper/thesis topics
Ideas to consider

- Structure is often needed by this generation of students

- Consider delivery of material (7 minute attention span)
  See Twenge YouTube video, link follows

- Talk with experienced faculty

- Consult with Counseling Center staff (M-F, 1:30-4:30)
  315-228-7385
Generation “Me”
You Tube video

Generation Me: Teaching and Working with Today’s Students– Dr. Jean Twenge

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdiin1DnTyo&feature=youtu.be
Questions & Discussion