Mental Health Allyship in Academic Settings

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About Me

- Licensed clinical psychologist with an MA and PsyD from Pepperdine University
- 15 years of experience in higher education mental health working with students, faculty and staff
- California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) Mental Health Initiative Grant coordinator for a UC campus from 2012 - 2016
- Inaugural Coordinator for Office of Faculty & Staff Support Services for UC Irvine
- Oversight and coordination for faculty & staff mental health resources and programs since 2016 at UC Irvine
- Serve on campus Wellness Council, Behavioral Intervention Team (BiT), and Case Management Team for SVSH matters
What we'll discuss this morning:

- What is the role of faculty in mental health on campus?
- What is (and isn't) a mental health ally?
- What are institutions doing?
- How can leadership support their faculty?
The Role of Faculty in Campus Mental Health

87% believe that student mental health has worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic began.
The Role of Faculty in Campus Mental Health

51% report having a good idea of how to recognize that someone is in emotional or mental distress.

The Role of Faculty in Student Mental Health - Boston University School of Health (2021)
The Role of Faculty in Campus Mental Health

73% would welcome additional professional development on the topic of mental health.

61% believe it should be mandatory that all faculty receive basic training in how to respond to mental or emotional distress.
The Role of Faculty in Campus Mental Health

21% agree that supporting students in mental or emotional distress has taken a toll on their own mental health.

The Role of Faculty in Student Mental Health - Boston University School of Health (2021)
The Role of Faculty in Campus Mental Health

30% report having two or more symptoms of depression themselves.

10% screened positive for major depression.

The Role of Faculty in Student Mental Health - Boston University School of Health (2021)
The Role of Faculty in Campus Mental Health

30% know what mental health services, if any, are available for faculty members at their institution.
The Role of Faculty in Campus Mental Health

45% agree that their institution should invest more in supporting faculty mental health and well-being.

The Role of Faculty in Student Mental Health - Boston University School of Health (2021)
Impact of COVID-19 & Recent National Events on Mental Health

for students, faculty, and staff

- Increase in depression and anxiety
- Increase in substance use
- Increase in racial trauma
- Increase in dating/domestic violence/stalking
- Disparities further highlighted
- Concerns related to isolation and loneliness
- Pressing financial concerns
- Difficulties with attention and distractability
- COVID-19 and suicide
- Complex grief and loss
Allyship

How can we be mental health allies to our students, colleagues, and ourselves?
Allyship is NOT:

1. Giving someone more help than they will allow you to give
2. Knowing the exact right thing to do in all situations
3. To put yourself at risk to help someone else
4. To solve another person's problem for them
5. To have eyes everywhere at once
Allyship is:

1. Offering a warm/friendly ear to someone who may be hurting
2. Determine to what extent a situation is a crisis and needs intervention
3. Activate a supportive network of trained people who can help
4. Consult and refer
5. Take care of yourself
The State of Faculty Mental Health

- Academic work paradox: Autonomy vs. achievement
- Heavy work-loads intensified by the pandemic and the stress of shifting to online teaching
- Anxiety due to being often under evaluation by peers, universities, students, and granting agencies
- Gender and career stage matter

The Healthy Professional Worker Partnership (2021)
Invisibility and Individuation of the Problem

Challenges Faculty Face Predate the Pandemic

- Mental health dialogue in academia is marred by significant stigma
- High levels of presenteeism
- Mental health resources in universities are difficult to find
- Focus is on individual coping behaviors and less on underlying systemic issues
- Combination of flexibility and focus on individual resiliency can result in "hidden injuries"

The Healthy Professional Worker Partnership (2021)
What are Institutions Doing?
Three-Tier Mental Health Model

Tier 1: Critical Mental Health & Crisis Response Services

Tier 2: Targeted Interventions for Vulnerable Groups

Tier 3: Creating Healthier Learning & Working Environments
What are Institutions Doing?

1. Increased training opportunities for faculty, staff and students

2. Streamline and simplify access points

3. Integrate trauma-informed & well-being concepts into learning and working environments
Mental Health Training

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Learn to start conversations about mental health and substance use problems by improving understanding and providing an action plan that teaches people to safely and responsibly identify and address a potential mental illness or substance use disorder.

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)

This brief training will help individuals learn to recognize signs of crises in order to help reduce suicidal behaviors and save lives by providing innovative, practical, and proven suicide prevention training.

Managing Distressed & Disruptive Individuals

Learn how to recognize and respond to distressed or distressing individuals, how and when to consult, information on resources and policies to support faculty, staff, and student leaders.
Streamline & Simplify Access Points

Who are the stakeholders?

Simplify navigating resources online

Resource guides and messaging

Don't work in silos

Leverage Resources
As part of UC Irvine’s commitment to helping all members of our community prioritize mental health and personal wellness, UCI Be Well offers a tool for searching UCI wellness programs and initiatives for undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff.

From workshops and programs to counseling and basic needs support, UCI Be Well combines a vast array of available campus resources.
UCIRVINE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Wellness, Health & Counseling Services
949-824-4642

Assisting Students in Distress
See Something, Say Something, Do Something.

See Something.
Bystander intervention increases your chances of being noticed in various settings. Being noticed is critical for students in distress. Both undergraduate and graduate students may witness stress, isolation, and even tragedies across campus with academic and life challenges. These findings can reduce the risk of preventing an incident and may lead to an intervention and calming and other temporary consequences. You may be the first to notice. SEE SOMETHING, remove yourself from the situation, and reach out to your campus. The University of California, Los Angeles (UC), requests that you act with compassion in your dealings with such students.

Say Something.
Bystander intervention increases your chances of being noticed in various settings. Being noticed is critical for students in distress. Both undergraduate and graduate students may witness stress, isolation, and even tragedies across campus with academic and life challenges. These findings can reduce the risk of preventing an incident and may lead to an intervention and calming and other temporary consequences. You may be the first to notice. SEE SOMETHING, remove yourself from the situation, and reach out to your campus. The University of California, Los Angeles (UC), requests that you act with compassion in your dealings with such students.

Do Something.
Some students cannot, or will not turn to family or friends. DO SOMETHING! Your expression of concern may be a critical factor in preventing an incident. Call your campus immediately. The University of California, Los Angeles (UC), requests that you act with compassion in your dealings with such students.

Academic Indicators
- Self-efficacy in learning situations
- Management of personal affairs
- Time management
- Self-control
- Job market competitiveness
- Interpersonal skills
- Communication skills
- Critical thinking
- Problem-solving
- Teamwork
- Leadership

Physical
- Exercise habits
- Diet
- Sleep habits
- Stress management
- Substance use

STUDENT AFFAIRS

UCI CONSULTATION TEAM
PURPOSE
The purpose of the Consultation Team is to bring the collective wisdom, professional perspectives, campus management and agency responsibilities to bear on an crisis that, because of its reach, complexity, or potential for risk, demands the involvement of multiple campus departments. The UCI Consultation Team meets to discuss crisis management issues, to review hypothetical and actual cases, and to update campus protocols for responding to these crises. Members adhere to legal, ethical, professional lines and guidelines while working together.

CORE GROUP
The Core Group collaborates to create a plan to address the situation.

ACTIVATED MEMBERS
Those departments not included in the Core are activated as needed or for a need-to-know basis. Activation of the Consultation Team typically begins by a Point of Contact where the critical incident or issue begins.

The role of the University Administrator is to observe and discuss the situation and bring up areas which should be considered. Due to impromptu, the University Administrator does not participate in any decisions made during the meetings.

 What Resource is Right for Me?
When do I need it? For more information about a specific service or program, please call the Counseling Center at 949-824-4642.

Wellness, Health & Counseling Services
949-824-4642

Personnel Services
Counseling Center
Student Health Center
UCI CARES
Campus Social Worker
Administrative/Student Centers
Academic Advising
Division of Undergraduate
Graduate Advisor
Graduate Division
University Registrar
Office of the Ombudsperson
For Fitness or Injury
Newport Beach Student Health Center
Medical Emergency
Still unsure? For consultation.

Behavioral Health Resources
Because mental health and physical health go hand in hand, UC Irvine provides resources for faculty and staff including benefits for mental health services and substance abuse treatment. Faculty and staff can use these behavioral health benefits for personal or wellness needs, such as personal stress or about an employee or colleague. Sessions with counselors, psychologists and/or psychiatrists are available to address a wide range of issues. This guide provides a summary of the resources available to assist you.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free confidential benefit that helps with problems identification, assessment and referral to treatment providers and community resources. The first three sessions are free. EAP Benefits are available 24/7 to you and your dependents.

949-824-3231
goldensources.com/UC (EAP)

Behavioral Health Benefits with Medical Coverage
Depending on your medical plan, faculty and staff have access to behavioral health providers in the community through Wellness Blue Cross, Optum Behavioral Health, HealthMark MHP and Kaiser Permanente.

UIrvine Care Management Services (UCS)
UICare provides free and voluntary support services to UC Irvine faculty and staff with stress, family issues, and relationships. Faculty and staff can access these services for personal or wellness needs. If you have or think you might have a behavioral health issue, call (888) 379-8882 to speak with a trained counselor.

www.ucirvine.edu/caremanagement

Disability Management Services
Disability Management Services (DMS) provides support to faculty and staff with disability, medical and physical accommodations. Disability Management Services can work with you and your provider to ensure reasonable accommodation are made.

402-474-1234
disabilitymanagement@uci.edu

CAMPUS ASSIST LIST
Campus care lists offers campus and community resources for mental health counseling services, medical advice and counseling services.

402-474-1234
counseling.ua.edu

Health Care Plans
UC HealthCare includes faculty, staff, students and their eligible dependents. Faculty and staff are eligible for UC HealthCare and can access the plans you choose, including an HMO and PPO. UC HealthCare provides comprehensive plans along with a network of hospitals and specialists.

This guide provides a summary of the resources available to assist you.

What to do if someone shows signs of mental health distress
When to keep someone else safe
When to protect yourself

What can I do to help someone in distress

What can I do to protect myself

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What to do if someone shows signs of mental health distress

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Integrate Well-Being Concepts into Academic Environments

- Campus mental health & well-being cannot be the sole responsibility of Counseling Centers and Student Affairs staff.

- The academic environment is another very important touchpoint for students and there are small steps and changes faculty can consider that aid in supporting student and overall campus wellness efforts.

- Some campuses have developed guides for faculty with tips and strategies for integrating well-being concepts into learning environments.

- These strategies range from flexibility on deadlines, offering more choice/options, sharing resources consistently with students, fostering connection with students, and promoting professional and personal skills.

https://whcs.uci.edu/sites/default/files/integratingwellbeingguide_full.pdf
Introduction

Positive well-being is a key predictor for learning success. Health and well-being are connected to a student’s academic performance (Keyes et al., 2012; Martin, 2010). Positive mental health is essential to learn with evidence showing that different programs have shown success. Faculty (including TA’s, instructors) play a role in a student’s environment. In accordance with The UCI 2020 Pillar 2: First in Class. In order to foster excellence, support the student life with educational experiences, holistic wellness into the learning environment, concepts into classroom/learning environments, ultimately lead to student/academic success by implementing one or more of the following:

**Suggestion #1: Be Mindful about Deadlines and Workload**

Being mindful about the workload and the deadline set for assignment way to ensure that students are not extremely overwhelmed, which clearly dedicated for their well-being. (Boucher, 2016). For example, you could consider giving assignments to alleviate undue stress major religious holidays throughout the quarter.

- Adjust deadlines for assignments to discourage all-nighters (i.e., don’t consider the timing of exams, or assignments to alleviate undue stress major religious holidays throughout the quarter.
- Set deadlines that offer a work/life balance for yourself and your students.
- Ensure the workload is reasonable and communicate grading and deadlines.
Integrate Trauma-Informed Concepts into Academic Environments

- Trauma-informed principles to guide faculty in the classroom and leadership within departments and institutions

- Trauma is an emotional injury that affects performance and well-being. The same incident can affect different people differently.

- The way organizations support people during periods of trauma is uniquely powerful because in times of trauma, the twin concepts of institutional betrayal and psychological safety come into play.

- The principles of trauma-informed care are:
  - Safety
  - Trustworthiness & Transparency
  - Peer Support
  - Collaboration and Mutuality
  - Empowerment & Choice
  - Cultural Humility and Competency

https://traumainformedteaching.blog/resources/
SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS, also known as compassion fatigue, is emotional distress that mimics post-traumatic stress by hearing about another person's first-hand traumatic experiences.

VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION is the cumulative effect of consistent exposure to hearing other people's traumatic experiences.

Indirect exposure to trauma can contribute to BURNOUT, a form of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion caused by chronic work-related stress.

Can Lead to...

Poor Work Performance
Faculty experiencing chronic emotional stress may not have the emotional resources to function optimally in their roles which may contribute to re-traumatization.

High Turnover
Faculty & Staff who experience chronic emotional stress are more likely to leave the institution, which can impact other faculty, departments, and the institution at large.

May be Addressed with...

Encourage and incentivize self-care activities like counseling, meditation, exercise, and healthy eating.

Provide trainings that create awareness of chronic emotional stress and the importance of self-care.

Foster a culture that encourages faculty to seek support, keeps workload manageable, and provides sufficient mental health benefits and time away.

Implement reflective supervision and/or consultation, during which time faculty can be asked about how their wellbeing and how they are handling emotional stress.
On Campus - with CITI Program
Supporting Faculty Mental Health - On Campus Podcast
MAY 03, 2022      CITI PROGRAM      SEASON 1      EPISODE 8

On Campus - with CITI Program
Supporting Faculty Mental Health - On Campus

LISTEN ON

https://www.buzzsprout.com/1896915
Thank you!

Contact Dr. Shekarabi:
www.DrShekarabi.com
negarshekarabi@gmail.com
@DrShekarabi
949-529-0521
if you have any questions.