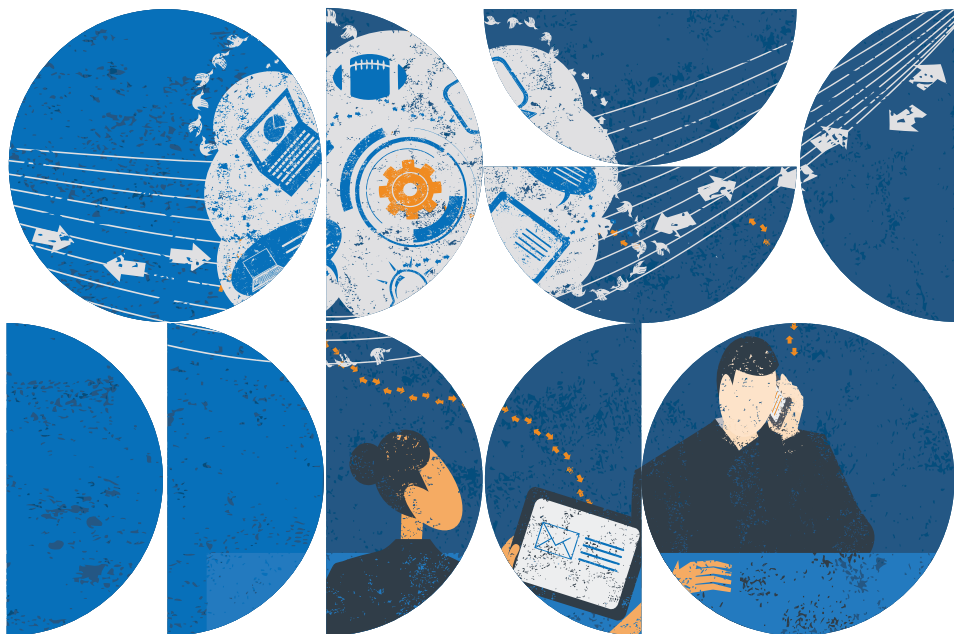




Meeting the Escalating Demand for **Mental Health** and Well-Being Support

Briefing for Senior Institutional Leaders

Student Affairs
Forum





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Project Director

Liz Brown

Contributing Consultants

Hailey Badger

Jeanine Navarrete

Lindsay Kubaryk

Murphy Donohue

Alex Polyak

Managing Director

Liz Rothenberg, PhD

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Executive Summary



Demand for campus mental health services and well-being support continues to grow with no signs of slowing.

National data shows that counseling center utilization has grown five times faster than enrollment. Beyond the counseling center, many other departments, faculty, and staff across campus are experiencing increased demand. Changing social norms, shifting demographics, and intensified external pressures are all factors contributing to the collective surge of demand. By all indications, the demand for campus services will continue to grow as adolescents are experiencing higher rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns.



There are significant risks in failing to meet students' mental health needs.

Leaders recognize the high stakes associated with increased demand and delayed access to mental health supports, including risks related to campus safety and student welfare. Students' mental health concerns and access to treatment also impact key institutional goals, such as academic performance, retention, and completion.



Hiring additional clinical staff is not a sustainable, long-term solution. Even well-resourced counseling centers struggle to keep pace with demand.

Many institutions have already heavily invested in clinical and professional staff. EAB research reveals a growing recognition among campus leaders that investing in staff cannot completely manage students' increased demand. Moreover, continually investing in staff is rarely an option due to limited or tapped out financial resources.



Managing demand requires a coordinated, campus-wide approach.

Institutions must go beyond the campus counseling center to manage the rising demand. Supporting students' mental health and resilience can improve key student success outcomes. EAB identified three recommendations to improve how your institution invests in and supports students' mental health and well-being.

1 Set and Communicate a Sustainable Scope of Service

Clearly define what types of care will—and will not—be available through campus services. Proactively communicate expectations to students and families in order to support early planning.

2 Design a Network of Scalable, Personalized Options Beyond Counseling

Organize campus resources into a network that can be effectively scaled and personalized to a broad spectrum of students' needs. Centralize existing campus-wide supports that help students understand the range of options available to manage their concerns.

3 Proactively Integrate Support Across the Student Experience

Target interventions to known pain points to mitigate common stressors and setbacks from escalating to more significant challenges. Infuse skill-building opportunities and interventions through day-to-day interactions with students, in and out of the classroom.

“Every Year Is Record Breaking”

Demand for Campus Mental Health Services Continues to Soar

Students’ demand for campus counseling service and mental health support continues to escalate. Year over year, colleges and universities struggle to keep pace with the volume of students seeking support on campus. From 2009 to 2015, counseling center utilization grew five times faster than enrollment. National data shows that anxiety, depression, and stress are the most common concerns among today’s college students.

Escalating Demand Makes National News

In 2019...



Colleges Expand Their Reach to Address Mental Health Issues

...And 2018...



Record Numbers of College Students Are Seeking Treatment for Depression and Anxiety - But Schools Can't Keep Up

...And 2017...



Surging Demand for Mental Health Care Jams College Services

...And 2016...



The Number of Students Seeking Mental Health Treatment is Growing Rapidly

...And 2015



More Stress, Less Stigma Drives College Students to Mental Health Services

Demand for Mental Health Services Outpaces Enrollment Growth

Average Growth, 2009-10 to 2014-15

5.6%

Average percent change in **institutional enrollment**

29.6%

Average percent change in **counseling center utilization**

5x

Rate at which counseling center utilization outpaced enrollment growth¹

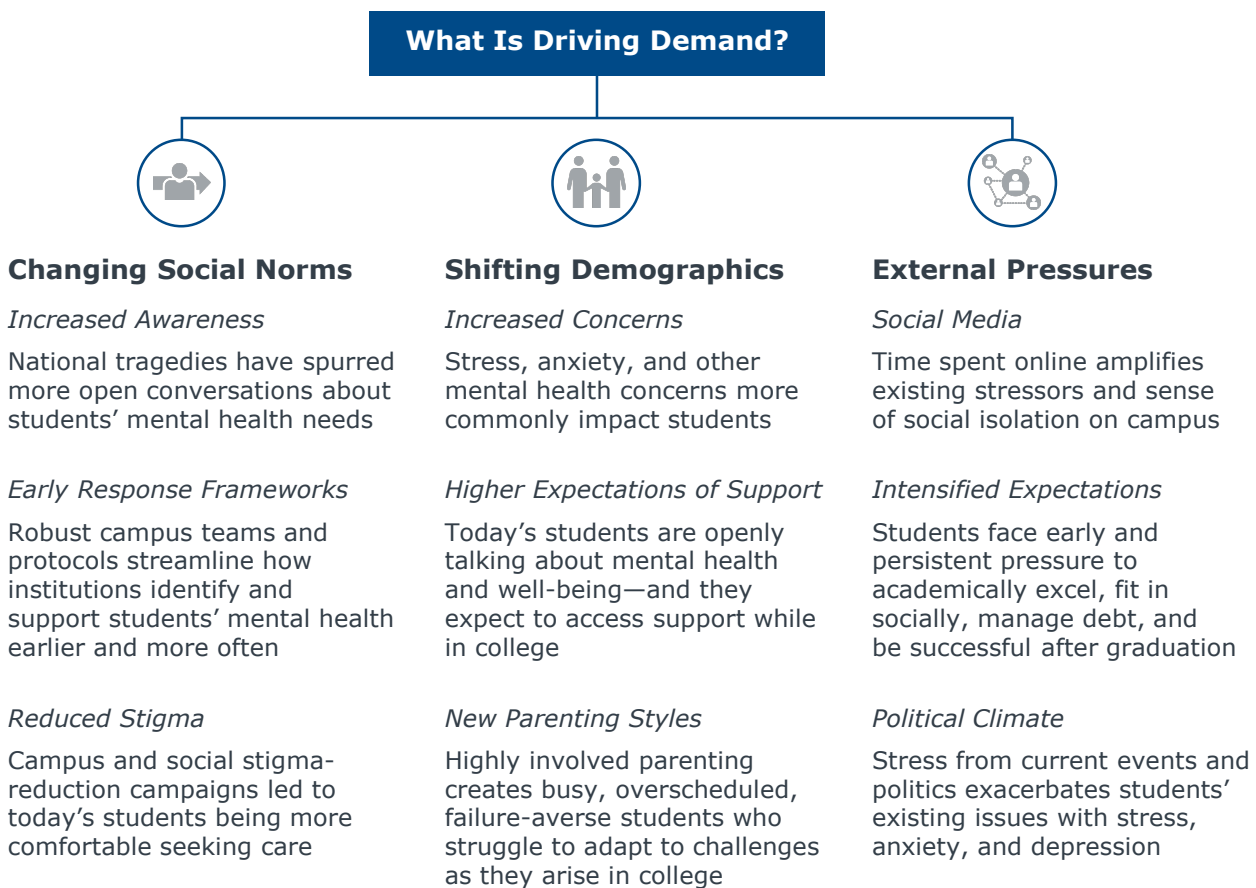
1) 2009-10 to 2014-15

A Perfect Storm

Several Converging Factors Explain the Surge of Students Seeking Support

Changing social norms, shifting demographics, and intensified external pressures are all factors contributing to the surging demand for mental health services on campus.

Decreased stigma and increased awareness about mental health concerns and treatment options, coupled with changing generational perceptions about these issues, are pushing students to seek help earlier and more often. External factors, such as social media, the financial strain of college, and the turbulent political climate, can exacerbate students' mental health and well-being concerns.



No End In Sight

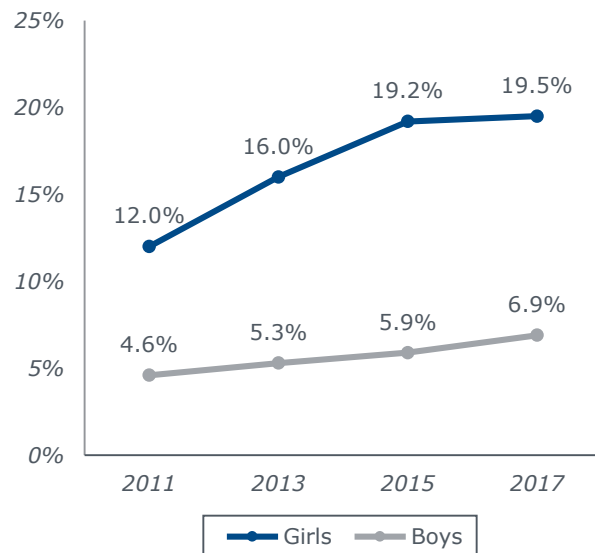
Anxiety and Depression Are on the Rise Among Today's Teens

By all indications, the demand for campus services will continue to grow. Today's adolescents are experiencing higher rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns. The majority of teens see anxiety and depression as a major problem among their peers.

When these students arrive on campus, they are thrust into a new environment with significant stressors that can exacerbate existing concerns. These students—and their families—increasingly expect colleges and universities to provide treatment options and assistance.

Escalating Rates of Depression

Past Year Major Depressive Episode¹ Among Adolescents (12-17), By Gender (2011-2017)



Growing Mental Health Challenges Among Children and Teens

50% Of adolescents have **any mental health disorder**

32% Of adolescents have **any anxiety disorder**

96% Of teens see anxiety and depression as a **problem among their peers**, with 70% saying its a major problem

1) A major depressive episode is characterized as suffering from a depressed mood for two weeks or more, and a loss of interest or pleasure in everyday activities, accompanied by other symptoms such as feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, anxiety, and worthlessness.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health, "Mental Health Information: Statistics," 2019; Pew Research Center, "Most U.S. Teens See Anxiety and Depression as a Major Problem Among Their Peers," Feb. 20, 2019; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s public online data analysis system (PDAS), EAB interviews and analysis.

Not Just Waitlists in the Counseling Center

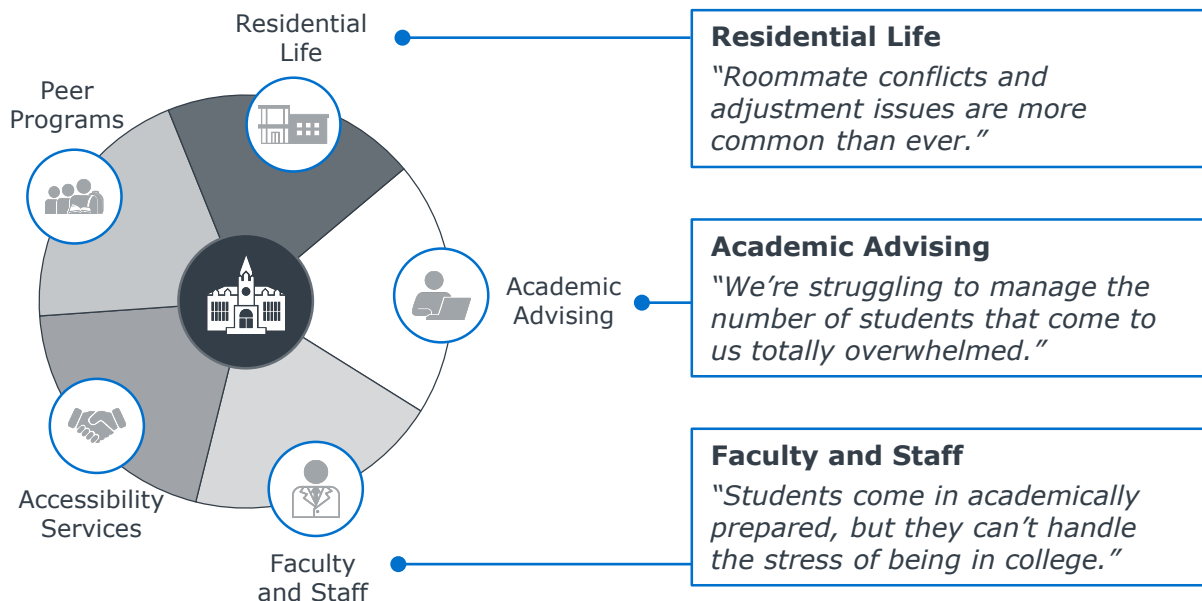
Impacts of Increased Demand Are Felt Across Campus

As more students come forward seeking treatment and support on campus, colleges and universities are feeling the strain on available resources. Most often, counseling centers are feeling the demand through increased waitlists for individual therapy appointments, staff burnout, and less time and resources for outreach, early education, and other priorities.

Beyond the counseling center, many other units across campus are also feeling the consequences of increased demand. For example, faculty and staff are increasingly expected to help students with common mental health and well-being challenges through one-on-one conversations, classes, and day-to-day interactions.



Demand Spills Over to Other Areas on Campus



1) Data covers 2009-10 to 2014-15

The Consequences of Not Addressing Mental Health

A Variety of Impacts

Colleges and universities face significant risks for inadequately addressing students' mental health concerns around campus safety and student welfare. As counseling centers and other campus offices stretch their resources to meet escalating levels of demand, these risks can become more acute.

Far-Reaching Risks for Failing to Meet Students' Mental Health Needs



Campus Safety

“We have to support our students or else we risk endangering—or being perceived as endangering—our entire campus.”



Student Welfare

“Our number one concern is to ensure that students are well enough to take care of themselves as a person. We want what is best for them.”



Student Success

“At the end of the day, it is about **helping students be successful with their academic and personal goals**. If you really want to improve retention, you have to provide these services or else you are going to have a revolving door as students get overwhelmed.”

*Vice President for
Student Affairs
Public Research University*

A Demonstrated Impact on Academic Performance

#2

Mental illness is the second most common reason that students drop out of school

-0.4

Average drop in GPA for students with anxiety and mild to severe depression

Solid ROI

Investing in student behavioral health does have a **quantifiable long-term economic impact**...studies show that 30% of depressed college students will drop out. With treatment, 6% of these dropouts can be averted. If a counseling center works with 500 students, this investment will generate more than \$3 million in lifetime earnings.

*Daniel Eisenberg, Director
Healthy Minds Network*

Source: Eisenberg D and Lipson S, "The Economic Case for Mental Health Services in Higher Education;" Calettstout D, "Mental Health Laws for Students Should Involve Students," *The Cougar*, Jan. 25, 2017; University of North Carolina System, "Wellbeing Today, Prosperity Tomorrow," Feb. 21, 2019; Field K, "Stretched to Capacity," *The Chronicle*, Nov. 6, 2016; EAB interviews and analysis.

Simply Hiring More Staff Is Not a Viable Answer

Sustained Demand Leaves Institutions Searching for a New Model

In recognition of the high stakes associated with helping students manage their mental health and well-being, many institutions have invested additional resources in campus counseling centers and related supports. Notably, several institutions have invested in additional personnel (including clinicians, psychiatrists, case managers, and other professional staff) to meet the need for on-campus support.

However, most colleges and universities do not have the financial resources or available hiring pools to continually invest in more specialized personnel. Because increasing personnel is not a solely viable solution, institutions must explore new approaches to meeting the escalating demand for mental health and well-being support.

Many Institutions Have Invested in Additional Counseling Center Staff...



35%

Of institutions gained FTE clinical or professional staff in 2016-17



7.9 FTE

Number of FTE staff counseling centers gained for every 1 lost in 2016-17, up from 3.9 in 2014-15

“

...But It Is Not Enough

“Even those institutions that funded additional counseling staff report that the ongoing demand continues to outpace the availability of providers. In other words, **colleges and universities have not been, and likely will not be, able to staff their way out of this problem.**”

*Aaron Krasnow, AVP, Health & Counseling Services
Arizona State University*

”

Time for a New Approach

How to Strategically Invest In Campus Mental Health and Well-Being Support

To meet the rising demand for mental health services, EAB identified three recommendations to improve how your institution supports students' mental health and well-being.

The following pages provide an overview of each recommendation and case examples of how progressive institutions are addressing students' needs. EAB recommends senior leaders discuss these recommendations as part of developing and/or refining your institution's strategy to meeting the escalating demand for support on campus.

EAB's Three Recommendations

1

Set and Communicate
a Sustainable Scope
of Service



2

Design a Network of
Scalable, Personalized
Supports



3

Proactively Integrate
Support Across the
Student Experience



Finite Resources Can Only Go So Far

Increasingly, Institutions Can't Do It All

The rising demand for services and the complexity of mental health concerns prompts difficult questions about the scope of campus care, including what services to invest in and what types of concerns should be managed on campus. Institutions increasingly recognize they cannot provide all types of services to all students with finite resources. As campus leaders and administrators determine what to prioritize, they are often weighing two values: accessibility and intensity.

"Where Should We Focus Our Resources?"

Prioritizing **Quick Access** for **All Students**

- Clinical resources used to help a greater number of students solve short-term challenges
- High-need students are referred off campus for long-term care
- Intake, triage, and walk-in hours reduce wait times for all students

Accessibility

Prioritizing **Ongoing Treatment** for **High-Need Students**

- Clinical resources devoted to treat a small group of high-need students
- Little to no reliance on community resources to provide care
- Reduced access or longer wait times for noncritical cases

Intensity



“

As institutions, we all have to determine if we are going to meet every student's needs, reserve resources for students who need them most, or see as many students as we can to get them in an appropriate place to be successful on campus.”

*Gillian Berry, Interim Director of Mental Health Services
The George Washington University*

”

Define Your Institution's Scope of Care

Set and Communicate a Sustainable Scope of Mental Health Services

EAB recommends setting and sharing a clear scope of service statement that outlines the parameters of campus services. The process of defining the scope of care is critical to meeting increased demand and setting and communicating expectations early with students, families, faculty, and staff.

How to Set Your Scope of Care



Articulate Your Institution's Priorities

- How does your mission influence the mental health services offered on campus?
- Do you prioritize providing quick access to all students seeking support or sustained treatment for students with intensive needs? Why?



Analyze Influencing Factors

- Student population, including most common concerns and changing care needs
- Reach and expertise of counseling services and related supports
- Campus characteristics, including location, insurance, and financial implications



Write Your Scope of Care

- Expressly state the mission for counseling services and who is eligible for services
- Consider examples of concerns managed or not managed in the counseling center



Communicate Your Scope of Care

- Prominently post your statement online
- Inform prospective students and families about limitations of on-campus care and recommend alternative care options

However, deciding what types of services to prioritize can be challenging due to strained resources and differing perspectives on the goals of campus mental health supports. On many campuses, there is a disconnect between institutional leadership and counseling center staff about an optimal scope of care.

Your scope of care will be largely driven by several campus-specific considerations, including your student population, depth of campus resources and expertise, and available community supports. To see sample scope of care statements from other institutions and additional guidance on setting and communicating your institution's scope of care, access EAB's implementation guide, *Establishing a Sustainable Scope of Campus Mental Health Services*, available now at eab.com.

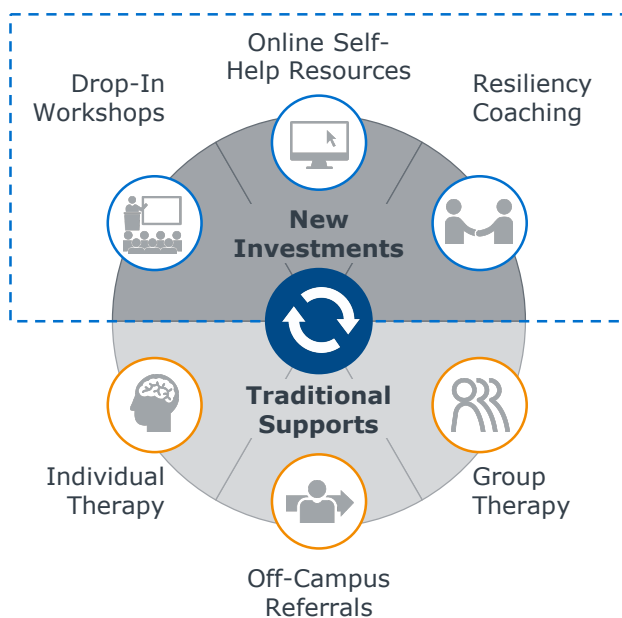
Counseling Centers Can't Do It Alone

Coordinated, Campus-Wide Approach Is Essential to Meeting Demand

Mental health support has traditionally been synonymous with individual or group therapy appointments in the campus counseling center. While these interventions are important treatment options for students, progressive institutions recognize that meeting students' mental health and well-being needs requires a much broader range of options.

Most campuses have invested in self-help resources, online tools, and various workshops to alleviate the demand on clinical services and support students' well-being. But it can be challenging to get students to take advantage of these resources in lieu of individual or group counseling sessions.

New Investments Expand Support Options...



...But Utilization Challenges Persist

- ✗ *Uncoordinated and Unstructured*
Supports are siloed across campus and it is unclear how they fit together to holistically support well-being
- ✗ *Impersonal Recommendations*
New investments are often self-help or self-directed resources, leaving students to find the right resources
- ✗ *Don't Align with Expectations*
When expecting mental health support to be individual or group therapy, it can be challenging to adjust to alternatives

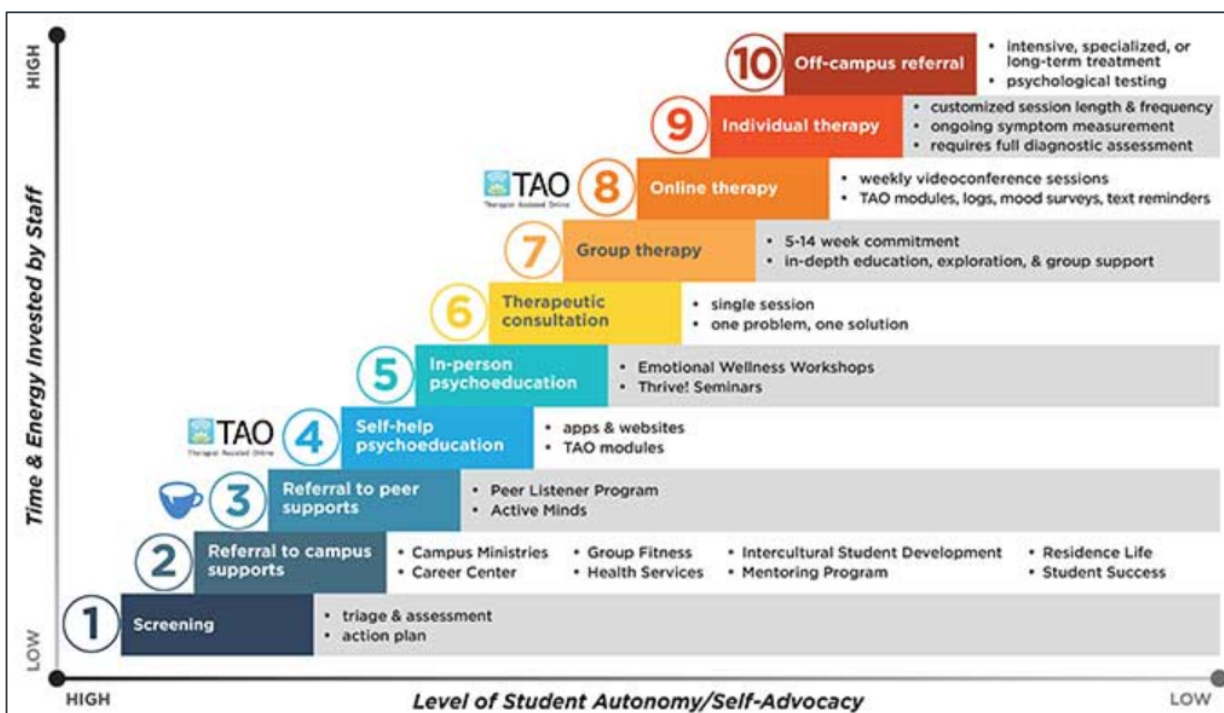
Design a Network of Scalable, Personalized Options

Organize Mental Health and Well-Being Interventions to Target Specific Needs

EAB recommends institutions organize campus resources into a network that can be effectively scaled and personalized to a broad spectrum of students' needs. Having a central support framework helps students understand the range of options available to manage their mental health and well-being concerns.

For example, Calvin College created a stepped care model to demonstrate the broad array of mental health resources available to students. In this model, described below, students can access varying levels of care based on the severity of their specific needs at a given time.

Calvin College's Stepped Care Model



How to Organize a Stepped Care Model

- ✓ Prioritize the most-effective and least-resource-intensive option: personalize care based on students' changing concerns
- ✓ Prompt students to broaden their perspective of mental health support: promote traditional therapy options alongside other campus resources
- ✓ Help alleviate demand for one-on-one support by creating an organized framework of existing campus resources to holistically support students' mental health and well-being

Source: Cornish P, "Stepped Care 2.0: A Framework for Rapid Access and Improved Outcomes," NECCCD Conference, March 13, 2017; Calvin College, "Stepped Care Model," 2019; EAB interviews and analysis.

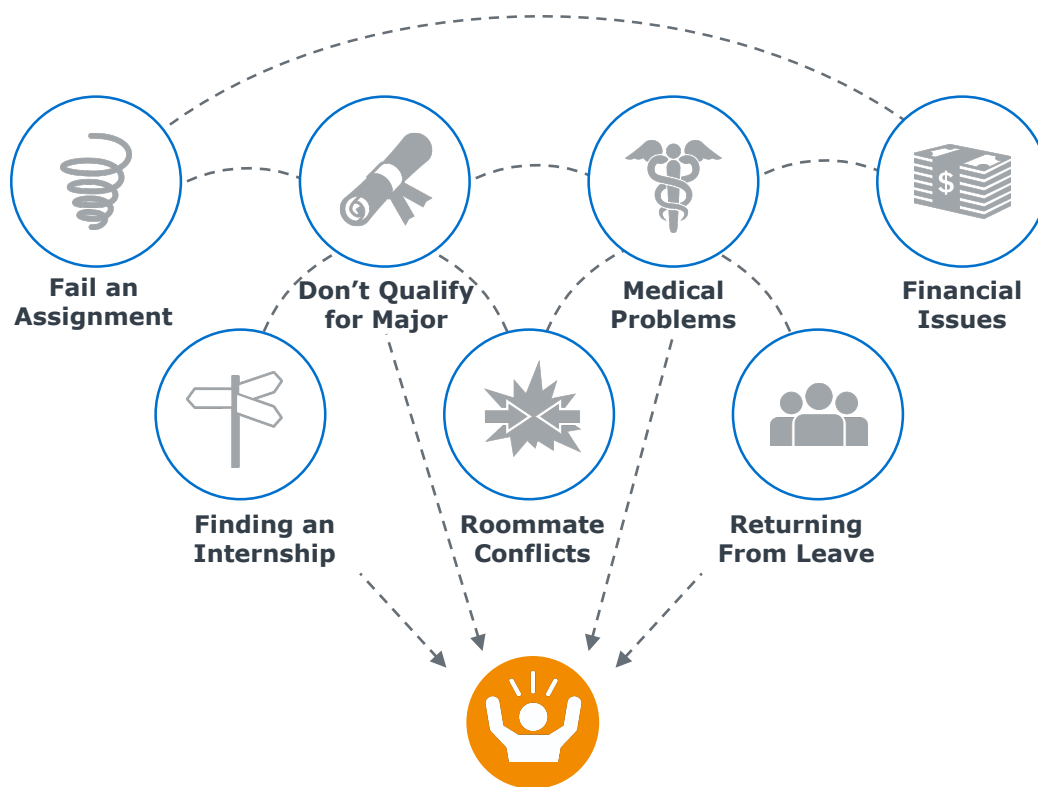
Go Beyond Reactive Support

Prime Students to Build Resilience Early – Before They Experience a Setback

Addressing students' mental health and well-being needs as they come forward is a key first step. The next step is to holistically address students' well-being proactively by integrating support across the student experience.

When transitioning to college, students experience significant stressors that can exacerbate existing mental health or well-being concerns. Common stressors are generally predictable and include everything from failing a test to adjusting to a new roommate to finding a job upon graduation.

Common Stressors Exacerbate Well-Being Concerns



Target Interventions to Known Pain Points

Prevent Setbacks from Escalating to Major Challenges

EAB recommends institutions proactively integrate support to help students successfully navigate common stressors, personal setbacks, and academic challenges. Institutions should target interventions to known pain points to help prevent common setbacks from escalating to more significant challenges. By proactively addressing high-stress moments, institutions can get ahead of demand for more intensive treatment and support options.

Adjusting to College Life

Susquehanna University integrates resilience through their first-year common reading program, orientation, first-year seminars, and campus events

Managing the Career Search

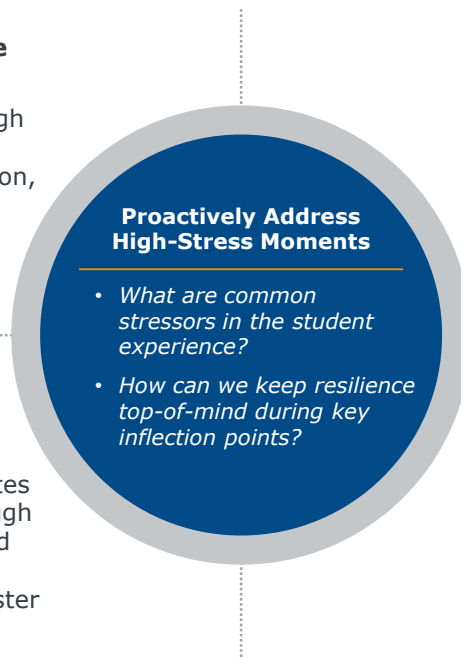
Tufts University emphasizes resilience during the internship search process during a boot camp for sophomore students

Navigating Academic Setbacks

Western University promotes well-being strategies through social media posts targeted to academic and personal stressors across the semester

Returning from Leave

Ryerson University highlights resilience throughout a course to help readmitted students successfully reenter campus life



How EAB Can Help

Research and Resources to Guide Your Next Steps

To equip institutions with the information they need to better manage the escalating demand for campus mental health services and well-being support, EAB has several white papers, tools, on-demand webinars, and more. Members can access, download, and order hard copies of these and related resources at eab.com.

Selected Resources from EAB



Building Stakeholder Awareness

- Expanding Well-Being Initiatives Through Faculty Partnerships
- Trends in Campus Mental Health Services
- Growing Investments in Campus Well-Being Supports



Meeting the Escalating Demand for Mental Health Services

- Setting and Communicating a Sustainable Scope of Service
- How to Maximize Clinical Support on Campus
- Serving High-Need Students: Expanding Referral Networks and Support



Developing Resilience and Coping Skills to Advance Student Success

- How to Prime Students Early in the First Year
- Targeting Proactive Interventions to Key Student Segments
- Centralizing Mental Health and Well-Being Intake



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