

MENTAL HEALTH AND COLLEGE STUDENTS:
THE UNSPOKEN WORDS THAT SPEAK VOLUMES

by

Alyssa Gomez

HONORS THESIS

Submitted to Texas State University
in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for
graduation in the Honors College
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DEDICATION

This thesis project is wholeheartedly dedicated to all those that have played a part in my life, especially during this stage of my higher education journey. None of this would not have been possible if it were not for your continued love and support. You all have shown me that anything is possible if you just set your heart and mind to it. As a first generation student, there was a time where I could have never imagined getting ready to walk the stage to receive a degree with the highest honors. I am beyond grateful for those that believed in me and made it all possible.

And to those that struggle with their mental health, as I do, I hope this can serve as a steppingstone for all of you to enact change in your community and help break the stigma. Or even enable you to have these conversations with your friends or family. Nothing is ever too small and even the littlest of things can have the greatest impact.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my special thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Harlan Ballard and second reader, Officer Jessica Kinney. The two of you have shown nothing but enthusiasm for this topic and were more than willing to assist me in this endeavor. Although our time spent together was a mere semester, I was able to learn so much from the two of you and the guidance along the way helped me formulate this project. I would also like to thank the Texas State Honors College for allowing me this opportunity to create a project over an area that I am passionate about and personally have a connection to. Additionally, thank you to any department that I corresponded with throughout the semester, your help was greatly appreciated. Lastly, thank you to my friends and family who have stood beside me to witness this all come to fruition.

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ABSTRACT

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It also contributes to how we may feel, act, or think and plays an integral part in each stage of our life. Considering recent events, mental health among college and university students has continued to become a growing concern throughout our nation. However, due to the negative stigma associated with mental health, the topic is often ignored and/or not taken seriously. Consequently, not addressing these mental health issues may oftentimes result in students either dropping out, feeling left out, or prevent them from reaching their full academic potential. For this project, I chose to investigate this problem here closer to home. Unfortunately, many of these students impacted by this are members of historically underrepresented groups or part of marginalized communities. During this research, I discovered that there are areas in need of improvement. Not enough is being done to foster mental health consciousness or promote disability awareness. Using a multi-modal and multi-collaborative technique, I have been able to reach every aspect of the university and enlist the help of the community. As a result, I have created a proposal to be presented to the President, Provost, and other senior leaders of Texas State University highlighting my efforts throughout the Fall 2021 semester. I provide findings as well as possible visuals to be utilized and offer recommendations for enacting change in the culture and climate as it relates to student mental health.



TEXAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Mental Health and College Students: The Unspoken Words that Speak Volumes

PREPARED FOR

PRESIDENT DENISE M. TRAUTH, PROVOST, AND
OTHER SENIOR LEADERS OF TEXAS STATE

DECEMBER 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Hello, my name is Alyssa Gomez! I am a senior at Texas State University, majoring in Criminal Justice with a minor in Forensic Psychology.

I am writing on behalf of my fellow peers, we believe that there should be resources and easier accessibility to mental health resources on campus. I am proposing that the university offer an additional EVERFI course (Mental Health Wellness). It may also be a possibility to make it a requirement to discuss during University Seminar, New Student Orientation, and/or for those living on campus. Texas State has already made headway for mental health by being among the 1st Texas Universities to implement a mental health liaison for their university police department. In order to keep up with this momentum, it is in the best interest of the school to continue its efforts regarding mental health and to provide their full support for students and faculty.

About Honors Thesis

To graduate in the Honors College one must complete a thesis of their choice. Hence, I decided to do something hands on and to work on something that I believe needed improvement. I can personally relate to mental health and I feel that there needs to be more resources on campus that will educate individuals while provided help to those that may need it. I have joined together with Dr. Harlan Ballard and Officer Jessica Kinney (as well as others around campus) to formulate this extensive project. In hopes that we can shine a light on mental health and accommodate the growing demand for support.

Our goal is to enact some form of change at Texas State and urge the university to partake in additional services that prioritize mental health for not only students, but staff and faculty as well.

Our Team

STUDENT

ALYSSA GOMEZ

SUPERVISORS

DR. HARLAN BALLARD

OFFICER JESSICA KINNEY

SPECIAL THANKS

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

COUNSELING CENTER

HONORS COLLEGE

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES



EVERFI Mental Wellness Course

It has been brought to our attention that before registering for classes your first semester of college, students are required to take EVERFI courses relating to sexual assault and alcohol/substance abuse training. Yet, EVERFI also happens to offer an additional course that is prevalent in today's society and will continue to grow for years to come. This course is a mental wellness course.

We feel that students should also be required to partake in this course seeing that EVERFI is already an approved organization by the university. We also believe that mental wellness is an important topic that should have as much emphasis as the other modules students are required to take. As someone who had to complete the Alcohol Education and Sexual Assault Prevention modules, those were very informational and critical to learn about as I made that transition. I can only imagine how EVERFI's mental wellness is and what we may be missing out on.

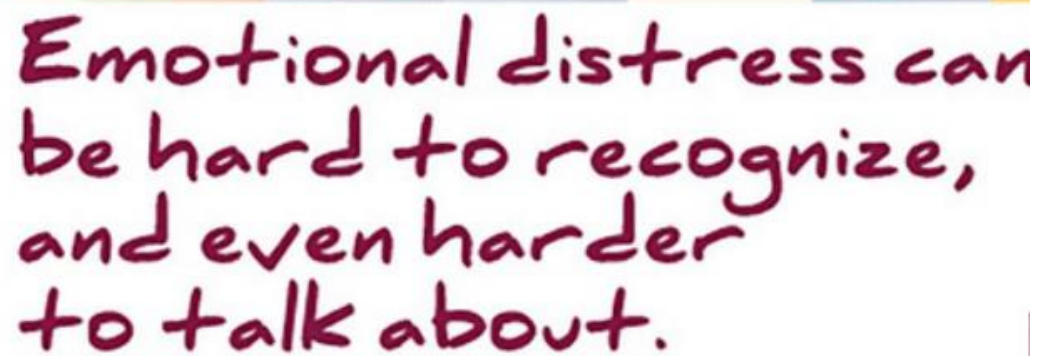


EVERFI

At Risk Training

At Risk happens to be a fully online, self paced training module that is available to all staff, students, and faculty. This program is to help each of us be able to recognize the signs of distress. As well as the ways we can approach certain situations in order to offer our support and communicate the resources that can be utilized.

As a former Resident Assistant at Texas State University, the first time I ever heard and had to conduct this module was during my training. If it took me until my junior year to discover this, imagine how long it may take my peers to come across this. This is a free resource that should be advocated more on campus, what good is it to have something that's not being utilized fully? I think this is something that should be taken advantage of and a great way for students to be exposed to these situations.



Emotional distress can
be hard to recognize,
and even harder
to talk about.

New Student Orientation

New Student Orientation is where incoming students learn more about the available resources on campus. It would be a disservice to not inform and provide services pertaining to their wellbeing. The university states they are committed to the success of its students and NSO provides a good foundation. Henceforth, including mental health in the agenda would show incoming students that they truly matter and Texas State is committed to fostering an environment where students can be vocal and honest about their mental health.

This is a perfect time to inform all students and participating faculty on the importance of maintaining their mental health. Not only their own but also being able to identify the signs and help others who may be going through a difficult time. This can be done through a presentation given by a respected faculty member(s) that has experience with this topic. Or even having students who are willing to provide their testimony and lead discussions.





University Seminar 1100

University Seminar is a course intended to meet the transitional needs of new Texas State students. It is designed to have the students' best interest in mind while helping them navigate through their first semester. University Seminar is an opportunity for students to have a class where they can lean on their first semester. It can be overwhelming and a chance for students to receive additional information about college and make a few friends along the way.

I realize that a lot is left to the discretion of the instructor and that there are general guidelines to follow. Yet, a day should be designated to having the instructors discuss mental health and reiterate the resources available on/off campus. Or even have a guest speaker come in to answer any questions or give a presentation of their own. This could be a counselor, health center representative, or any faculty that is knowledgeable on mental health.



Housing and Residential Life

Living on campus is something that is new and foreign for incoming students which is why we should be looking out for students, mentally and physically. For most, this is the first time these young adults are living on their own and where they begin to really find themselves. As exciting as it is to be starting college, it doesn't mean that it isn't daunting at the same time.

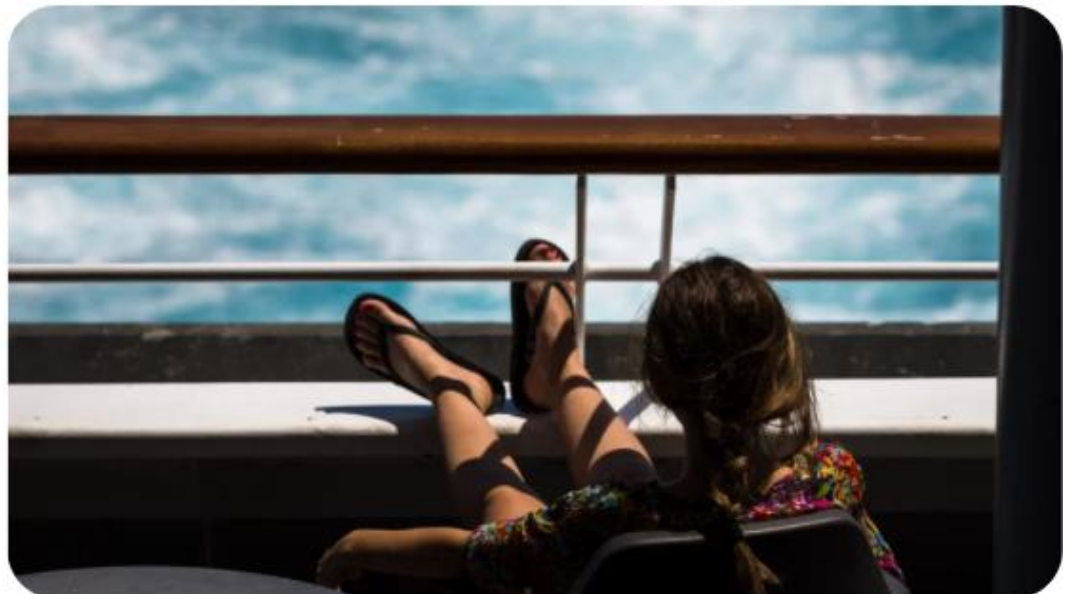
It should be incorporated into the curriculum that Resident Assistants are taught and instructed to utilize when working with fellow students throughout on-campus living facilities. Even though it is implemented once a semester, I strongly believe it should be discussed more than that or there should even be an interactive event that residents can partake in. My suggestion would be near the start of semester and near the end, especially for first year students. Topics to be covered could be homesickness, imposter syndrome, or anything that is typically experienced by this group.



Making it Acceptable for Students to Take a “Mental Health” Day

Recent events have led to uncertain times for most of us and it can easily become overwhelming. Syllabi are distributed at the start of every semester, setting the ground rules for that particular class. A majority require attendance and have set forth a list of “acceptable excuses.” However, taking a mental health day is still not a sufficient reason to not show up to class.

Hence it is my belief, that professors/instructors should be made aware of the diverse needs of students and accept taking a “mental health” day seriously. Of course, there would have to be some form of discretion to prevent certain individuals from taking advantage. But, this should not stop professors from allowing their students to put their mental health first.



The Counseling Center

According to the Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds (2018), "There is a tremendous **lack of services** in colleges and universities: On college campuses, the ratio of certified counselors to students overall is about 1:1000–2000 (small to moderate size schools) and 1:2000–3500 (large universities).

1. Dedicate a week for Mental Health Awareness during the fall and spring semesters. There could be spirit days that students and faculty could participate in (e.g. wear different colors for different causes).
2. Collaborate with other related departments to educate students, even fellow faculty members, on mental health. An example would be the athletic department's workshops for student-athletes with the help of those from the social work department.
3. Attempt to update social media sites with relevant information and content that captures followers' attention.
4. Promote Mental Health organizations on campus or offer small groups for mental health related topics.



The Office of Disability Services

The purpose of including ODS in my thesis is to raise awareness of this department and the numerous resources they can provide for students. It is seldom known that ODS not only focuses on the physical aspect of disability, but also the mental/Invisible disabilities. I feel that it is important to educate students about invisible disabilities (e.g. anxiety, PTSD, OCD, etc.) because there are some that may not realize they are suffering from it or if they do, they are not informed that it can be accommodated in the classroom.

Over the course of the semester, I was able to work closely with Dr. Harlan Ballard, my thesis supervisor, and assist with several projects hosted by ODS. These include World Suicide Prevention Day, Epilepsy Training, World Aids Day Campus T-Shirts. For all ODS related events, I have helped with promoting these events via social media.



Athletic Department: Integrating Mental Health

In collaboration with the TXST Athletic Department, specifically Mr. Matt Phelps (Director, Student-Athlete Development).

1. Create signage that could be broadcasted at sporting events promoting/supporting mental health related initiatives or the Office of Disability Services and the Counseling Center
2. Push for an Infomercial of sorts with current Texas State student-athletes advocating their mental health or each saying a snippet of a statement
3. Another Idea would be to have Boko going to the counseling center (showing how to get there and the resources offered)
4. The aim is for these visuals is to not take away from the excitement and enthusiasm from the sporting events but rather to acknowledge and support these topics.



Texas State University Police Department

After working with Officer Jessica Kinney and hearing her personal testimony on being the first Mental Health Liaison for UPD, it can be concluded that more needs to be done despite this big step in the right direction.

1. Having more than one mental health liaison:
 - Maybe one male and female officer with those qualifications
2. Investing in officer training:
 - Having funds available for officers to attend additional training regarding mental health.
3. Informing the public of their efforts:
 - Keeping the community in mind
4. Look toward other campuses' police department:
 - UTSA Police Department to receive new training when it comes to mental health calls. They are to be trained by professors from the Department of Counseling (according to Capt. Thomas Calcucci).



Facts and Figures

LOOKING AT THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS FOR EACH DEPARTMENT, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THERE ARE DISCREPANCIES.

THIS PAST SEMESTER, THE UNIVERSITY WELCOMED ONE OF ITS BIGGEST CLASSES OF STUDENTS. WITH THAT SAID, FUNDING NEEDS TO BE ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY TO BE PREPARED FOR THEM.

BREAKDOWN OF BUDGETS PROVIDED BY THE OPERATING BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

[HTTPS://GATO-DOCS.ITS.TXSTATE.EDU/JCR:6A55C661-80B8-4F78-B858-D49DDB088C4B/FISCAL%20YEAR%202021%20OPERATING%20BUDGET.PDF](https://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/jcr:6A55C661-80B8-4F78-B858-D49DDB088C4B/FISCAL%20YEAR%202021%20OPERATING%20BUDGET.PDF)

●	COUNSELING	
	CENTER	
	2020	\$10,822.84
●	2021	\$10,822.84
●	UPD	
	2020	\$238,957.65
	2021	\$145,921.65
●		
●	ATHLETICS	MORE THAN A PAGE AND IT WAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT MORE MONEY WILL BE GOING TO FOOTBALL.

TXST Budget and Finances

POOR STUDENT RETENTION USUALLY MEANS LOSSES IN TUITION, FEES, AND ANY ALUMNI DONATIONS. SO I BELIEVE IT IS IMPERATIVE TO INVEST IN SUPPORT SERVICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH.

IN A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS, A STRONG CORRELATION BETWEEN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO DROP OUT OF COLLEGE AND DEPRESSION WAS DISCOVERED. AROUND TWO-THIRDS (64%) OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE US QUIT THEIR STUDIES BECAUSE OF MENTAL DISORDERS. THE STUDY FURTHER REVEALED THAT 50% OF THOSE WHO DROPPED OUT DIDN'T ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

ENROLLMENT IS A HUGE FACTOR WHEN IT COMES TO FUNDING FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS. STUDENTS ARE WHAT MAKE THE UNIVERSITY, SO IF THERE ARE LARGE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS DROPPING OUT DUE TO MENTAL ILLNESS. WOULDN'T YOU THINK IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE INSTITUTION TO PROVIDE AND PROMOTE RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH TUITION? IT MAKES SENSE TO REALLOCATE FUNDS TOWARD MENTAL HEALTH AND THE DEPARTMENTS THAT CORRESPOND WITH IT. INVESTING IN MENTAL HEALTH IS INVESTING IN THE STUDENTS AND THEIR FUTURES AS SUCCESSFUL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.



TXST Texas School Safety Center

Mission:

Serve schools and communities to create safe, secure, and healthy environments.

A non-profit organization funded in part through a direct appropriation from the Texas Legislature within Texas State University's budget.

- Disrupt educational environment thus negative outcomes for students will emerge.
- We need new initiatives and fresh perspectives in order to improve the overall climate of the university.
- The ones that compromise this center or head certain programs, needs to a diverse group representative of the student population.
- The site should be updated and promoted regularly while be engaging for students or anyone else for that matter.
- A program they should consider adding is one related to mental health, there are currently ones covering tobacco use yet none promoting individuals to take care of themselves mentally.



School Safety Law: Senate Bill 460 & Senate Bill 11

These should also be kept in mind and potentially implemented for college campuses, if it is not already. I think this would be a great thing for higher education and could help improve the wellbeing of all. These are in place for a reason and we should be treating them as a priority. Maybe there is already something that Texas State is abiding by, however, if there is nothing currently in place then it might be time to make some changes.

SB 460 REQUIRES INSTRUCTION IN THE DETECTION AND EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL DISORDERS AS PART OF EDUCATOR TRAINING PROGRAMS. THE TRAINING IS REQUIRED FOR TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, PRINCIPALS, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE STAFF. TRAINING AT THE ELEMENTARY CAMPUS LEVEL COULD BE PROVIDED ONLY TO THE EXTENT THAT SUFFICIENT FUNDING AND PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE. THIS IS NOT TO SAY TEACHERS ARE EXPECTED TO FUNCTION AS PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED MENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS; RATHER, THE GOAL OF THE LAW IS TO EXPEDITE EARLY DETECTION OF MENTAL INSTABILITIES.

SB 11 FOCUSES ON EXPANDING MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES, STRENGTHENS SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS, AND PROVIDES FUNDING TO DISTRICTS TO INCREASE SAFETY AND SECURITY ON CAMPUSES. TEA WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH THE TEXAS SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER (TXSSC) IN IMPLEMENTING SB 11, AS WELL AS WITH OTHER STATEWIDE ENTITIES, INCLUDING THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (ESCS) AND THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION (HHSC).

Related Organizations Around Campus

There are a few organizations on campus that promote mental health yet do not receive as much recognition as fraternities and sororities. Although it is primarily the responsibility of the organization to advocate for themselves, I believe departments can be more involved. Overall, they should receive as much recognition as other organizations do.

MINDS MATTER

([HTTPS://MINDSMATTER.VPSA.TXSTATE.EDU/](https://mindsmatter.vpsa.txstate.edu/))

- FOUNDED BY THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS' MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL. THEIR MISSION IS TO SERVE AS A "MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES, FRIENDS, FACULTY, AND STAFF. IN ORDER TO RAISE AWARENESS AND ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF THE TEXAS STATE COMMUNITY."

BOBCATS BREAKING THE STIGMA (BBS_TXST)

- FOUNDED BY BRITTANY BOUDREAUX (A FORMER STUDENT) IN 2019 IN ORDER "TO TEACH COLLEGE STUDENTS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS."

- I PERSONALLY, I ATTENDED THESE MEETINGS AND FOUND THEM TO BE VERY HONEST AND ENTHUSIASTIC TO TALK TO OTHERS.

ADVOCATES FOR NEURODIVERGENCE (TXST_ANTs)

ACTIVE MINDS (ACTIVEMINDSTXST)

Moving Forward

After reviewing, I urge all of you to be mindful and open-minded to these suggestions and thoughts. In order to continue to be an educational institution that serves its students, it is important to keep them in mind when considering how resources and funding are distributed.


- I THINK ANOTHER WAY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS IS A DIRECTION THE UNIVERSITY WANTS TO PURSUE IS TO CONDUCT A SURVEY OR PETITION TO GET THE COMMUNITY'S OPINION/FEEDBACK.
- THIS IS SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT TO THEIR ATTENTION AND WILL THEN CREATE A BETTER SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION.
- ALTHOUGH THIS PROPOSAL IS NOT HEAVILY FACT/STATISTIC BASED, THE INTENTION IS TO HAVE THIS SERVE AS A STARTING POINT FOR FURTHER RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED.



Sources

The information presented in this proposal were primarily collected from first hand testimonies and what I have drawn from personal observations throughout my time here at Texas State.

THANK YOU



I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THOSE THAT TOOK THE TIME TO READ THROUGH MY PROPOSAL AND I APPRECIATE YOUR CONSIDERATION. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THIS CREATES CONVERSATION AND THAT SOME OF THESE THINGS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY.



NURTURE YOUR BODY


*SETTING TIME
ASIDE FOR
SELF CARE IS
NOT SELFISH*



TAKE CARE
OF YOUR
PHYSICAL
AND
MENTAL
HEALTH

<https://mindsmatter.vpsa.txstate.edu/>

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM



YOUR
MENTAL
HEALTH
SHOULD BE
JUST AS
IMPORTANT
AS YOUR
PHYSICAL
HEALTH

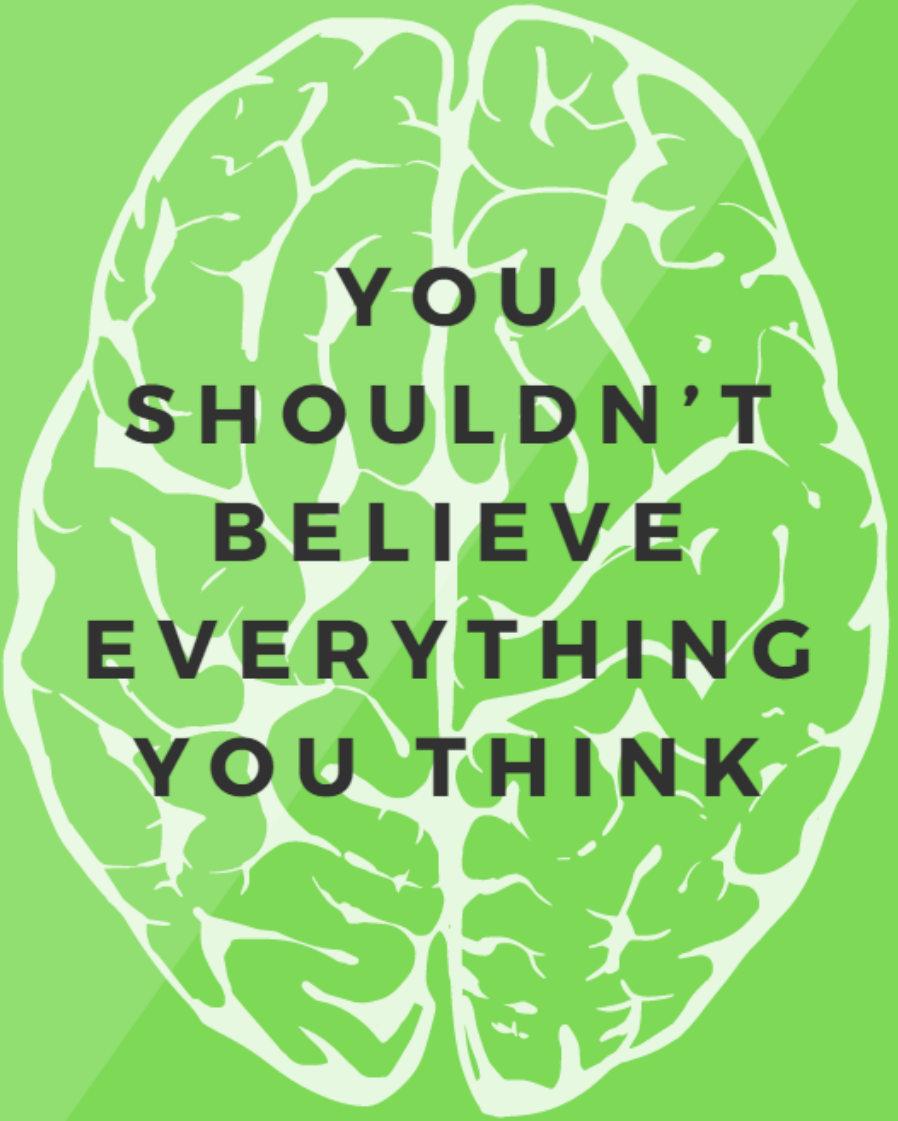
— *TREAT AS* —
A PRIORITY

MEMBER
THE TEXAS
STATE UNIVERSITY
SYSTEM



<https://mindsmatter.vpsa.txstate.edu/>

*End the stigma.
Learn. Reach out. Advocate.*



**YOU
SHOULDN'T
BELIEVE
EVERYTHING
YOU THINK**

Mental Health Matters



Your mental health matters

COMMON AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
1 in 5 adolescents
has a diagnosable mental health disorder.

1 Depression

2 Anxiety

3 Eating Disorder

4 Suicide

5 Substance Abuse

6 Addiction



YOUR FEELINGS ARE VALID

How are you feeling today?



If you're
feeling
overwhelmed
or angry



STOP



THINK



BREATHE

It's okay to not be "happy" all the time
and there are several things you can do
to boost your mood



Invisible Wounds

Not all disabilities are visible

Do you want to talk? Counselors are here to listen. And if you need accommodations, ODS is here to assist you.

Counseling Center: 512-245-2208
Office of Disability Services: 512-245-3451

It may seem like you are the only one, but everyone is fighting a silent battle.
So be kind to everyone you meet.



“

**JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN'T
SEE IT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S
NOT THERE.**



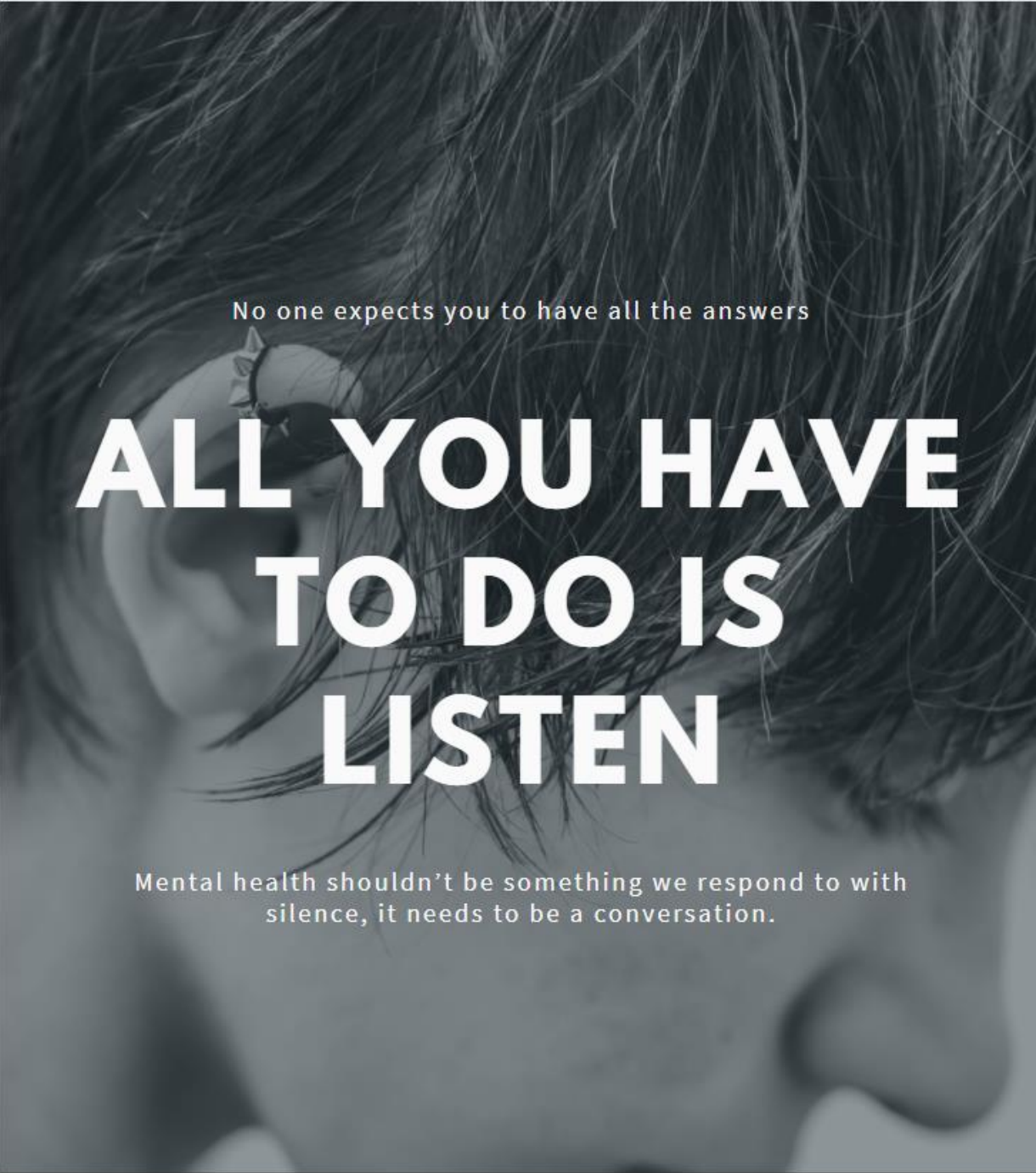
2 out of 3 people usually
suffer in silence because
mental illnesses can't easily
be seen.

YOU CAN HELP STOP THE STIGMA AND BREAK THE SILENCE

IT'S OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY



It's normal to feel depressed, angry, stressed,
fearful, anxious, or alone sometimes



No one expects you to have all the answers

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LISTEN

Mental health shouldn't be something we respond to with
silence, it needs to be a conversation.

**IT HELPS TO BE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT THESE
THINGS AND HAVE SOMEONE WILLING TO LISTEN**

Student Involvement
Approved Posting
FALL 2021
Expires
Texas State University

TEXAS  STATE
DISABILITY SERVICES

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

Creating Hope Through Action

A 3-day passive programming event held simultaneously throughout campus in recognition of World Suicide Prevention Day, which is observed on September 10 every year to provide worldwide commitment and action to prevent suicides.



LBJSC HUB - QUAD - BOBCAT TRAIL - LBJ MALL - SRC

September 8-10

9AM-5PM

According to the American College Health Association, the suicide rate among young adults ages 15-24 has tripled since the 1950s.

Referral Resources

- TXST Counseling Center: 512-245-2208
- Student Health Center: 512-245-2161
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

If you require accommodations due to a disability, please, contact the Office of Disability Services at (512) 245-3431 or ods@txstate.edu at least 72 hours prior to the start of the event. For more information regarding this event, contact Dr. Harlan Ballard at h.ballard@txstate.edu

The Top Ten Warning Signs of Suicide



1. Withdrawing from friends and family
2. Taking steps to tie up loose ends, such as giving away possessions, settling debts, etc.
3. Looking into or discussing suicide methods
4. Abnormally reckless or unsafe behavior
5. Significant increase in irritability and/or aggression
6. Expressing feelings of being especially depressed, in pain, trapped, angry, sad or hopeless
7. Newfound or increased abuse of drugs or alcohol
8. No longer participating in activities or hobbies that used to bring enjoyment
9. Experiencing extreme mood swings
10. Drastic change in sleeping habits



In collaboration with the following campus supporters!

TEXAS STATE
STUDENT HEALTH CENTER



Coalition
of Black Faculty & Staff

TEXAS STATE
FACES

TEXAS STATE
DEAN OF STUDENTS



Veteran Academic
Success Center



HISPANIC POLICY NETWORK



COLLEGE
DIABETES
NETWORK

TEXAS STATE
COUNSELING CENTER



Veterans Alliance
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY



COUNSELING,
LEADERSHIP, ADULT
EDUCATION & SCHOOL
PSYCHOLOGY



SUICIDE AMONG THE **NATIVE AMERICANS/ INDIGENOUS**

1. SINCE 1999, THE SUICIDE RATE FOR AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN AND MEN, THE INCREASE IS 139% AND 71% (CDC'S NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS).
2. SUICIDE BEING THE 8TH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES ACROSS ALL AGES (NICOA 2019).
3. 1.2% OF THE US POPULATION IDENTIFIES WITH THIS DEMOGRAPHIC AND OVER 830,000 PEOPLE HAD A DIAGNOSABLE MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE PAST YEAR (SAMSHA 2014).

- TXST Counseling Center:
512-245-2208

- Student Health Center:
512-245-2161

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)



SUICIDE AMONG THOSE WITH DISABILITIES



A disability is defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities.

-
- 01 The highest rates of suicide are reported among study populations of persons with multiple sclerosis, followed by persons with spinal cord injury, and then individuals with intellectual disability. (NIH 2010).
 - 02 Data shows that youth with disabilities are four times more likely to think about suicide than their nondisabled peers (ACL 2020).
 - 03 People with disabilities are more than twice as likely to live in poverty, and only 35.9% of working-age adults with disabilities are employed, compared to 75.9% of non-disabled adults. Poverty increases risk of suicide (AJPM 2017).
-

- [TXST Counseling Center: 512-245-2208](#)
- [Student Health Center: 512-245-2161](#)
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK \(8255\)](#)



Suicide among

COLLEGE GRADUATES/INDIVIDUALS WITH SOME COLLEGE/INDIVIDUALS WHO NEVER ATTENDED COLLEGE

1. For men, a college degree halved the risk of death by suicide relative to those who had a high school degree only in 2014.
2. Men and women aged ≥ 25 years who possess a college degree or higher consistently exhibited the lowest rates of suicide whereas those with a high school degree displayed the highest rates.
3. Education is linked to greater access to and use of mental health services, higher levels may reduce suicidal behavior.

Phillips, J. A., & Hempstead, K. (2017, July 27). Differences in U.S. suicide rates by educational ATTAINMENT, 2000-2014. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

— TXST Counseling Center:

512-245-2208

— Student Health Center:

512-245-2161

— National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)



SUICIDE AMONG THE

LGBTQIA+ Community

THE 2020 NATIONAL SURVEY ON LGBTQ YOUTH
MENTAL HEALTH POLLED 40,000 LGBTQIA+
PEOPLE BETWEEN AGES 13-24 FINDING 48%
ENGAGED IN SELF HARM AND 40% HAVE
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED ATTEMPTING SUICIDE

- LGB youth are almost 5x as likely to have attempted suicide compared to heterosexual youth (CDC 2016).
- Each episode of LGBT victimization, such as physical or verbal harassment or abuse, increases the likelihood of self-harming behavior by 2.5x on average (IMPACT 2010).

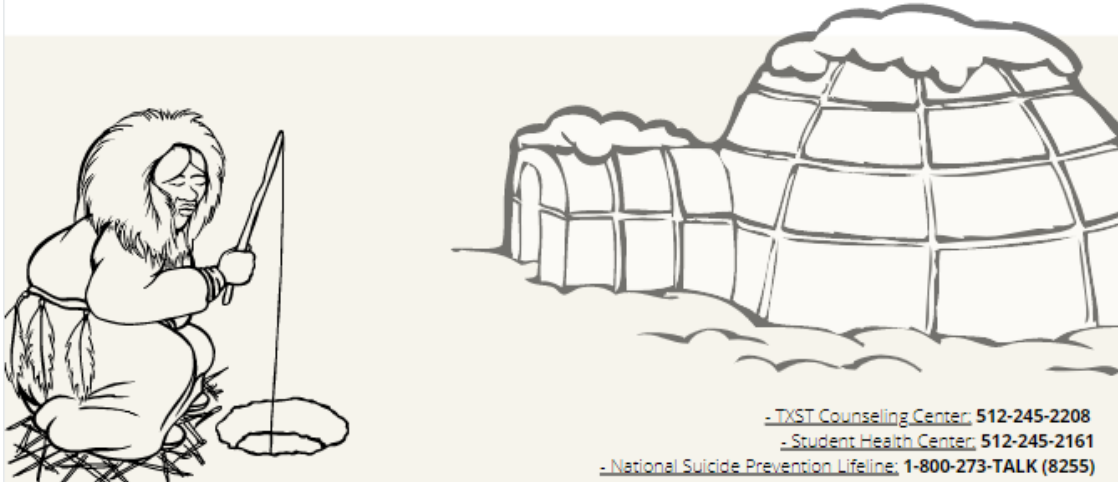
TXST Counseling Center:
512-245-2208
Student Health Center:
512-245-2161
TrevorLifeline:
1-866-488-7386





Suicide among the ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDERS/ ALASKA NATIVES POPULATIONS

- Between 2014 and 2019 suicide has risen 16% among people of Asian and Pacific Island descent (UPI 2021).
- Over the same period, the suicide rate among people of Asian and Pacific Island descent grew to 7.1 per 100,000 people (CDC 2021)
- About 315,000 Asians, Native Hawaiians, or other Pacific Islanders each year. These groups Asians had a lower rate of suicidal thoughts (SAMHSA 2011)
- In 2019, suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death for American Indian/Alaska Natives between the ages of 10 and 34 (CDC 2021).
- The overall death rate from suicide for American Indian/Alaska Native adults is about 20% higher as compared to the non-Hispanic white population (OMH 2021).
- In 2018, the suicide rate for American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) populations (22.1 per 100,000) was much higher than the overall U.S. suicide rate (14.2 per 100,000) (SAMHSA 2018).



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- Student Health Center: 512-245-2161

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)



SUICIDE AMONG

Males in the United States

- The rate of suicide is highest in middle-aged white men (CDC 2019).
- Male deaths represent 79% of all US suicides (CDC 2021).
- Firearms are the most commonly used method of suicide among males (51%) (CDC 2021).
- Men more frequently succeed than women with their suicide rates 3.63x the rate of women (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention 2019).

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- Student Health Center: **512-245-2161**

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Suicide among Females in the United States

- Females attempt suicide 3x as often as males (CDC 2021).
- In 2018, 6.2 female deaths by suicide per 100,000 resident population in the United States (Statista 2021).
- Among females, the most common methods of suicide were firearm (31.4%), poisoning (30.0%), and suffocation (29.0%) (NIH 2019).
- Rates of death by suicide from 2000 to 2016, the increase was significantly larger for females — increasing by 21% for boys and men, compared with 50% for girls and women (NPR 2018).



SUICIDE AMONG THE HISPANIC/LATINX POPULATIONS

- ▶ 1 in 4 teen girls and 1 in 10 teen boys in the Latino community has had suicidal thoughts (LW Tech 2021).
- ▶ Among Hispanic populations, suicide rates remain somewhat steady across the lifespan (CDC 2020).
- ▶ As in the overall U.S. population, the suicide death rate for men is more than 3x the rate for women in Hispanic populations (CDC 2020).
- ▶ Texas ranks second in the nation in Hispanic suicide attempts (SAMHSA 2020).
- ▶ Alarmingly 1 in 7 Hispanic girls living in the US will attempt suicide (SAMHSA 2020).

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The toughest battles aren't always physical

SUICIDE AMONG VETERANS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL

2-4x more likely to commit suicide
U.S. is comprised of 8.5% Vets
18% of Veterans commit suicide
20 Veterans take their life every day.

2019 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report
U.S. Department of Veterans



-Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support **24/7** and **365 days a year**. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available.

SUICIDE AMONG

African Americans

The death rate from suicide for black or African American men was 4x greater than for African American women (MinorityHealth 2018).

The percentage of past-year suicide attempt was higher in Black adult populations than the overall U.S. (SAMHSA 2020).

Suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death for blacks or African Americans, ages 15 to 24 (MinorityHealth 2019).

Among Black populations, suicide rates peak during adolescence and young adulthood, then decline (CDC 2020).

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EFFECT EXERCISE HAS ON SUICIDE



- **HIGHER LEVELS OF EXERCISE LED TO LOWER LEVELS OF DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS.**
- **A PERSON WHO EXERCISES REGULARLY IS LIKELY TO SEE CONCRETE IMPROVEMENTS IN PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOOD AND GAIN A SENSE OF SELF-EFFICACY.**
- **HIGHER LEVELS OF EXERCISE LEADS TO HIGHER LEVELS OF SLEEP QUALITY, WHICH LEADS TO LOWER SUICIDE RISK.**

Davidson, C.L., Beaton, K.A., Bonn-Miller, M.O., Souter, T., & Venzon, S. (2015, January 25). The impact of exercise on suicide risk: Examining pathways through depression, PTSD, and sleep in an inpatient sample of veterans. Wiley Online Library. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/with.12094?casa_token=6U00AAAAAA/134-cm05N6Gfcm=Q1Izgmde:R6d4183-8855-10F07-5-bu4b1Hf0y-GedM0w4v0m0GdK0v0b

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
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Suicide Among **CAUCASIANS**

- In data released in 2017, the rate for white Americans was around 19 per 100,000 (NY Times 2020).
- As in the overall U.S. population, the suicide death rate for men is more than 3x the rate for women in White populations (CDC 2021).
- In 2014, 38,675 Caucasian Americans died by suicide. This number accounts for the vast majority of the 42,772 suicides in the US that year. The overall rate per 100,000 was 15.43 (CDC 2015).





Suicide regarding

First Generation/ First Year College Students

LOW-INCOME, FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES SOCIALLY ISOLATED — A SITUATION THAT CAN ERODE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH (WGBH 2019).

2014 NATIONAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT, WHICH CAPTURED NEARLY 80,000 STUDENTS AT 140 SCHOOLS, FOUND THAT MORE THAN HALF FELT "OVERWHELMING ANXIETY" AND MORE THAN A THIRD FELT "SO DEPRESSED IT WAS HARD TO FUNCTION" IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION 2014).

-
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Suicide among

SES LEVELS

**(LOWER,
MIDDLE,
AND UPPER)**



- County-level suicide rates in the United States had a strong positive relationship with county poverty rates.
- It may be the general lack of resources and opportunities for obtaining help in high-poverty areas that lead to higher suicide rates.
- This highlights the importance of targeting suicide prevention efforts toward impoverished communities.

Kerr, W. C., Kaplan, M. S., Huguet, N., Caetano, R., Giesbrecht, N., & McFarland, B. H. (2016, November 13). Economic Recession, Alcohol, and Suicide Rates: Comparative Effects of Poverty, Foreclosure, and Job Loss. *AJPM Online*.

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— [Student Health Center](#): 512-245-2161

— [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Suicide among

VARIOUS AGE GROUPS (15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 54, 55-64 AND 65+ YEARS AND UP)

– TXST Counseling Center:

512-245-2208

– Student Health Center:

512-245-2161

– National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

1. In 2019, adolescents and young adults aged 15 to 24 had a suicide rate of almost 14 per 100,000.
2. In 2019 ages 25-34 had a suicide rate of 17.5 per 100,000.
3. In 2019 ages 45-64 had a suicide rate of 19.5 per 100,000.
4. In 2019 the age group with the highest suicide rate was 85+ with about 20 per 100,000.



American Foundation for
Suicide Prevention. (2021,
July 21). Suicide statistics.
American Foundation for
Suicide Prevention.



Breathe and notice how you feel,
it's okay to stop and slow things
down

1

PAUSE



From COVID-19 content, social
media, and even from work or
school every once in awhile

2

TAKE BREAKS



To sleep and exercise, as well as to do
anything else that brings you joy and
comfort

3 MAKE TIME

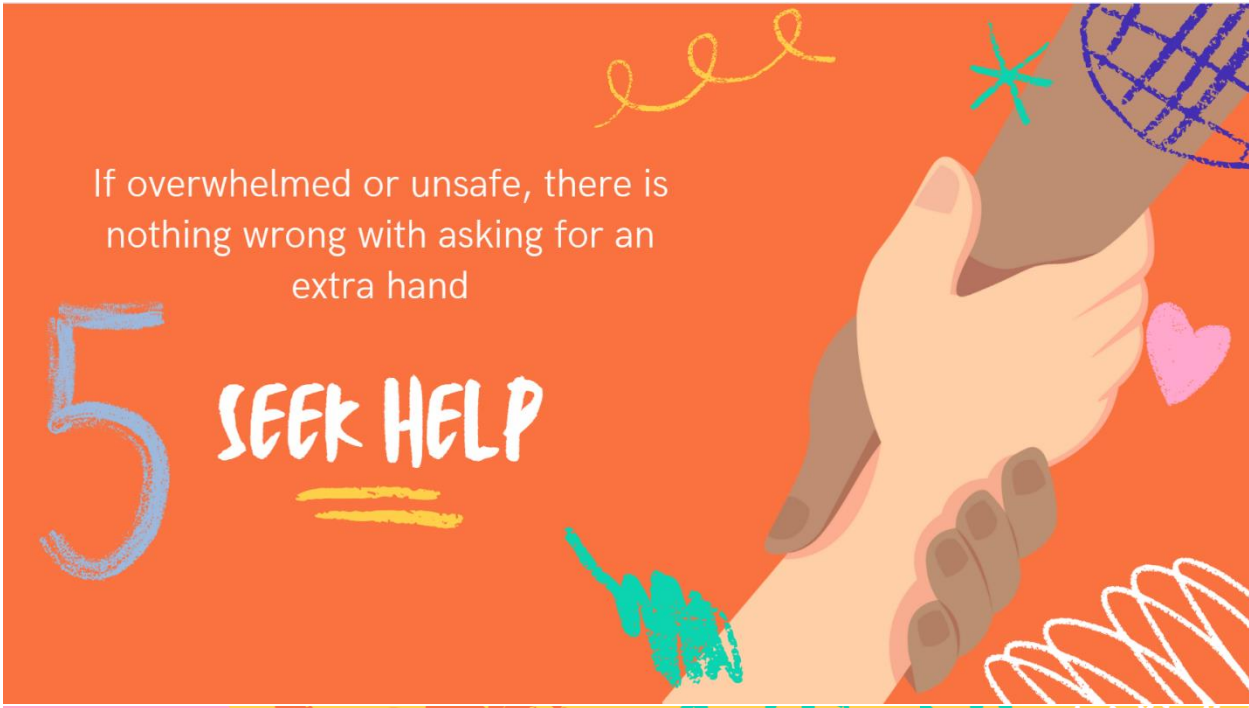


eee



Stay connected with your friends
and family

4 REACH OUT



If overwhelmed or unsafe, there is
nothing wrong with asking for an
extra hand

5 SEEK HELP



BOBCATS HELPING BOBCATS

Information provided by the CDC