

# Southern Utah University

## Mental Health Implementation Plan

### August 2019 – July 2024

**Background:** In September 2017, the State Board of Regents approved the recommendations of the Regents’ Mental Health Working Group and directed the institutional presidents to act on the recommendations. The Board approved revisions to the recommendations in January 2019. The four recommendations are as follows: (1) Assess the mental health and wellness needs of USHE students, (2) Improve mental health education at USHE institutions, (3) Increase access to mental health services, and (4) Develop institutional five-year mental health implementation plans.

**Purpose:** This document serves as the required five-year mental health implementation plan and addresses the institutional strategies outlined for each of the Regents’ mental health recommendations. The president will also present on progress and efforts on mental health issues during the State of the University address when hosting the Board of Regents.

**Rationale** (tying in campus safety, retention, completion, etc.): Mentally healthy students are more capable and effective students, more likely to make good decisions, feel connected to their education and the institution they attend, feel connected to others, be able to ask for help when needed, find success in the classroom, be retained, graduate, and become engaged and caring members of society.

**Institution funding model for mental health:** SUU incorporates a mixed funding model to address mental health needs of its students. E&G funds, a specific student fee for counseling services, and grassroots voluntary support by members of our campus community help us provide services.

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#### **Recommendation #1: Assess the Mental Health and Wellness Needs of USHE Students**

**Strategy 1a:** In an effort to make more data-informed policy decisions, assure the Chief Student Affairs Officers (CSAOs) of the USHE institutions use the following systematic evaluation tools to assess the mental health and wellness of USHE students: the American College Health Association National College Health Assessment (ACHA NCHA) in the spring semester of odd years starting 2019 and the Healthy Minds Study (HMS) in the spring semester of even years starting 2020. The results of the evaluations will be reported to the Board of Regents.

#### Institution Current Status

- Completed the ACHA/NCHA Spring 2019. Results have been communicated to administration and key stakeholders.
- The Healthy Minds Study will be completed for the first time at SUU in Spring 2020.
- SUU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) will continue to regularly assess the needs of students seeking counseling and counseling related services.

#### Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- SUU has administered the ACHA/NACHA study biannually since 2009, this will continue. The Health & Wellness office provides financial and personnel resources for this effort.

- SUU's 2019 ACHA/NACHA sample size was smaller than expected so a plan will be created to involve more SUU students in 2021.
- The Healthy Minds study will be administered during Spring Semester 2020. Efforts are currently underway to successfully administer the Survey this spring. The CAPS office provides financial and personnel resources.
- Survey results have and will be used to for planning mental health outreach efforts and to adjust and meet direct mental health needs where possible.

Lead and Other Collaborators

- Riley Reynolds, SUU Health & Wellness Coordinator – ACHA/NACHA Survey
  - Curt Hill and CAPS staff – Healthy Minds Survey
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## **Recommendation #2: Improve Mental Health Education at USHE Institutions**

In an effort to more effectively prevent and treat mental health issues within the USHE system, assess and, if needed, modify educational standards for faculty, adjunct faculty, staff, and students. The goal of the standards should be increasing the ability of these groups to identify mental health issues and to refer students to appropriate mental health resources, as needed.

**Strategy 2a:** The Commissioner's Office will: Convene the Counseling Center Directors from each USHE institution at least annually to discuss best practices for training and other strategies or other relevant topics to assure the best mental health practices for students. These topics may include "Okay to Say" or similar awareness campaigns, and collaboration with the Utah Suicide Prevention Coalition, Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, and the Utah Student Association.

### OCHE Current Status

- The first Counseling Center Directors meeting was held June 4, 2018. Regent Patricia Jones, chair of the Regents' Mental Health Working Group, led a focus group to gain the directors' insights into implementing the Regents' Mental Health Recommendations at each of the institutions. Each recommendation and strategy was reviewed and discussed. Edits to some of the strategies were suggested to: (1) make implementation possible, and (2) provide sufficient data to the Regents on the effectiveness of the strategies in responding to student mental health needs.

### OCHE Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measurable goals, action items, and timeline)

- The counseling center directors from all eight USHE institutions are represented on the Regents' Mental Health Advisory Committee, which will meet once a year in June or July, once the survey results are in from the annual mental health survey, to review the data and progress of the 5-year implementation plans.
- SUU is committed to ongoing participation.

### Lead and Other Collaborators

- Lead: Megan Brown, OCHE Project Manager – Academic and Student Affairs
- Collaborator: Elizabeth Hitch, OCHE Associate Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs
- Curt Hill: SUU CAPS
- Steve Barney: SUU Psychology Faculty

**Strategy 2b:** Each USHE institution will (for Faculty/Staff): Work to implement a mental health education training for new faculty and staff, with ongoing follow-up training opportunities available for all faculty and staff.

### Institution Current Status

- CAPS staff participate in Academic Affairs' annual faculty orientation and welcome back meetings. CAPS staff provide presentations and discussions during break-out sessions prior to the start of fall semester. This year's topic is an introduction to mental and developmental hurdles faced by students at SUU.
- SUU's Care and Support Team (CAST) is a group of grass roots volunteers (faculty and staff) organized to present training for faculty and staff around mental health and other critical

student development issues. All faculty and staff are invited to participate in these trainings which are given several times each year. Topics include:

- Introduction to helping skills
  - Sexual assault and trauma
  - Anxiety
  - Career development
  - Creating healthy boundaries with students
  - Other trainings as needed
- QPR suicide prevention training is offered through a collaboration between CAST and Health & Wellness. SUU currently has about 12 faculty and staff members who can act as trainers. Efforts are made to provide QPR training to faculty, staff, and student groups in a manner convenient for these groups. Several hundred faculty and staff have been trained in the past 2 years.
  - Key individuals from both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs have attended the annual NASPA Mental Health Conference to present, consult, and learn about the latest efforts across the country in addressing growing student mental health concerns.
  - CAPS staff conduct trainings upon request when possible for both Academic and Student Affairs offices. This is important but difficult due to high demand for clinical/crisis services.
  - CAPS and CAST websites offer resources.
  - Training is voluntary: not all faculty and staff receive training.
  - Ongoing conversations are happening between Student Affairs, CAST, and Human Resources to create and sustainable plan for offering the above supports and training. Human Resources has committed to becoming a key component in providing support for the continued success of CAST and encouragement for all SUU employees to participate.

Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- Solidify plans for broad institutional support for faculty and staff training during the 2019-2020 academic year. Human Resources will become the home for CAST with strong collaboration between the Provost's office, Student Affairs, CAPS, and Health & Wellness.
- Current efforts are effective and needed. There is no plan to require all faculty and staff to receive this training.
- Few financial resources exist for these efforts. Monies must be requested annually and most efforts are the responsibility of individual departments and offices who participate.
- Continue to attend the annual NASPA Mental Health Conference.

Lead and Other Collaborators

- Jaci Bash & Johnny MacClean, SUU CAST
- Curt Hill, CAPS Director & Blaine Edwards, CAPS Counselor
- David McGuire, Director Human Resources
- Riley Reynolds, Coordinator Health & Wellness
- Office of the Provost

**Strategy 2c:** Each USHE institution will (for Students): Offer opportunities and encourage students to participate in mental health literacy training to help them identify, respond to, and refer peers to appropriate mental health resources.

#### Institution Current Status

- eCheckup-To-Go – alcohol and marijuana use
- Everfi – fall 2019
- Peer Mental Health Mentors
- CAPS outreach and prevention efforts
- SUU recently recreated its student Wellness Office. A major focus for the office will be to create and offer mental health education and prevention programs as well as alcohol and drug prevention. Much of this will be created this academic year.
- CAPS sponsored workshops and groups for specific marginalized populations on campus. These include LGBTQ+, Autism and other social concerns (offered in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center), sexual assault and abuse survivors, and students of color (offered in collaboration with the Center for Diversity & Inclusion).
- Self Help resources are available on the CAPS website.
- CAPS is in the process of creating a Peer Mental Health Mentoring Program. We are recruiting and training our first cohort of upper-class psychology students to receive training and supervision to offer student support groups and some 1 on 1 mentoring.

#### Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- Create a series of informational videos
- Administer/offer the Everfi program
- CAPS pays for the e-Checkup-To-Go offerings and offers them to the campus community. Make efforts to collaborate with key departments who may benefit most from the e-Checkup-To-Go educational offerings (Student Affairs, Athletics, Nursing, International Student Office, Housing, etc.).
- Collaborate with Health & Wellness to develop trainings.
- Retain the “comprehensive” counseling center model.
- Explore feasibility of an online support like TAO or Silvercloud and secure funding.
- Explore other ways to use media as a tool to educate and connect students.
- Continue to develop the Peer Mental Health Mentoring Program.

#### Lead and Other Collaborators

- Riley Reynolds, Coordinator Health & Wellness
- Merrill Jones, Outreach Coordinator CAPS, Curt Hill, CAPS Director

**Strategy 2d:** Each USHE institution will (for Students): Offer service learning and volunteer opportunities that provide exposure to mental health issues and treatment and may lead to career opportunities in mental health settings.

#### Institution Current Status

- CAPS in collaboration with the Health & Wellness Center recently created a Peer Mental Health Mentoring program. Five outstanding undergraduate psychology students are receiving

extensive training and supervision from CAPS staff. The Health & Wellness Center will also be involved in providing support, outreach opportunities, and physical space for the Peers.

- Strategy 2d is not a strength for a counseling center. Ideally, a Service Learning professional is active in this area on campus and is well connected with the academic resources/departments that drive such efforts.
- The Psychology department places psychology undergraduate students in a variety of applied mental health practicum placements as part of their advanced undergraduate training. The Family, Life, and Human Development department has similar programs.

Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- The Peer program is being implemented during the 2019-2020 school year and will be ongoing if successful.
- Academic departments will continue to provide service learning and internship opportunities.

Lead and Other Collaborators

- Andrea Donovan, SUU CAPS; Curt Hill, SUU CAPS; Riley Reynolds SUU Health & Wellness
- Steve Barney, Psychology Faculty

Required additional resources from external sources (State Board of Regents, State appropriation, etc.)

- The Peer Mental Health Mentoring Program is currently operating on a grant from the VP for Student Affairs office which should keep it viable for 2 years. After that sources for ongoing funding will need to be identified.

**Strategy 2e:** Each USHE institution will (for Students): Assure that institutional student health and wellness programs systematically address the biopsychosocial aspects of mental health and well-being.

Institution Current Status

- The student Health & Wellness Center is the primary office focusing on outreach and prevention. Below are their areas of focus.
  - Relationship violence and health
  - Substance abuse and responsible use (harm reduction)
  - Mental health literacy, stigma reduction, resiliency
  - Peer Mental Health Mentors (in collaboration with CAPS)
- Various offices within Student Affairs broadly address student mental health. These include but are not limited to the Disability Resource Center and University Housing. Additionally, the Title IX office, Center for Diversity & Inclusion, and CAST contribute a great deal of student mental health support and education.
- CAPS is closely involved with each of the above efforts and offers a variety of outreach programs when staff have the time to offer them.

Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- All areas mentioned above could be improved and will need to expand as the University grows.

- SUU Athletics likely needs to be brought into this conversation, as student athlete mental health needs may not be fully met.

#### Lead and Other Collaborators

- Riley Reynolds, Health & Wellness
- Curt Hill, CAPS
- Chris Ralphs, Housing
- Title IX and Center for Diversity & Inclusion

**Strategy 2f:** Each USHE institution will (for Students): Collaborate with existing or developing K-16 Alliances that are working to better prepare students for mental health issues across the continuum of K-16 education. Collaboration may include such things as: (1) increasing awareness and better coordination of the K-16 mental health continuum, (2) developing K-16 resiliency training, (3) working to transfer information on students under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 from K-12 to higher education institutions students are attending, with consideration of whether such transfer includes Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

#### Institution Current Status

- Current alliances or collaborations focused on mental health are limited or nonexistent. Under current staffing levels, SUU CAPS has not been able to engage in this important conversation. This effort, up to this point, has been led by the Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs.

#### Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- We are open to ideas.

#### Lead and Other Collaborators

- Jared Tippets, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Heather Ogden, Dean of Students

#### Required additional resources from external sources (State Board of Regents, State appropriation, etc.)

- We are open to partnerships with the K-12 system, but will need more resources to improve our ability to contribute to this conversation.

### **Recommendation #3: Increase Access to Mental Health Services**

In an effort to more effectively address the mental health needs of students in the USHE system, implement strategies to increase access to varying psychological treatments that are empirically supported.

**Strategy 3a:** Work collaboratively with community and regional providers to increase access to psychiatric care community-wide, especially in underserved areas of the state.

#### Institution Current Status

- SUU currently contracts with 1 psychiatrist for 4 hours of service a week. The psychiatrist works with students who struggle with the most severe chronic mental health conditions and is a needed support for our CAPS counselors. There is a 3 month wait to see the psychiatrist and we could easily fill 3 times the number of hours offered. However, the psychiatrist does not have more hours to offer, and we do not have the funds to pay for more hours.
- There are no other psychiatric specialists offering services in our county. In St. George there is a 5 to 6 month wait to be seen by psychiatric services providers willing/able to see our students.
- We refer students to Salt Lake City, Provo, and Las Vegas in hopes of finding a psychiatrist.
- SUU lacks a student health center so students who can benefit from psychoactive medications that could be handled by a general practitioner are referred to the community.

#### Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- Our hope is to be able to maintain our relationship with the psychiatrist we currently use and to continue to find funds for this service. This is not a straightforward issue because resources are needed for more counselors, especially as our student population increases.
- SUU can explore the use of Tele-Medicine psychiatric services, but will need to find way to fund this type of service.

#### Lead and Other Collaborators

- Curt Hill, CAPS
- Jared Tippets, VP Student Affairs

#### Required additional resources from external sources (State Board of Regents, State appropriation, etc.)

- Community resources and funding

**Strategy 3b:** Evaluate and implement strategies that address mental health professional shortages, especially in underserved areas, such as:

- Expanding graduate program capacity and program options to increase number and diversity of professionals produced.
- Collaborating with the Utah Medical Education Council (UMEC) and other stakeholders in programs, such as the WICHE-sponsored Mental Health Program Rural Psychology Internship Initiative, where the objective of better mental health services for USHE students is one of the objectives. Support the UMEC's role coordinating implementation of the WICHE Rural Psychology Internship Initiative in Utah to expand mental health services in rural areas.

#### Institution Current Status



- SUU’s psychology department has submitted a proposal to create a psychology doctoral program (PsyD), which will have a special emphasis for working with underserved rural populations. It is hoped more psychologists will be able and willing to remain in rural settings.
- SUU CAPS will play an essential role in the training and clinical placement of these doctoral candidates. This has the potential to help SUU students by providing more access to counseling and other psychological services, but is likely several years away and will require significant administrative planning and input to create.
- SUU CAPS created and maintains a doctoral psychology internship, which is accredited by the American Psychological Association. Three internship positions are offered each year. Intern cohorts provide direct services for SUU students as well as providing needed diversity for our campus community. With current staffing levels, CAPS is at its capacity in offering three internship positions.
- It should be mentioned that retaining qualified staff is difficult in today’s college mental health environment. Salaries are often low relatively speaking, and college counseling center work has become increasingly stressful, frequently leading to issues of burn-out and prolonged distress for the counselors. This reality needs to be part of the conversation.

Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- Creating or even expanding psychology internship programs may not be wise at this time. A large imbalance exists between the number of trainees seeking internship and the number of internship programs. Many more programs are seeking interns while fewer interns are being produced from graduate schools across the nation.
- If SUU is able to create a PsyD program, and assuming some of those students wanted to remain in the community for internship, CAPS could potentially offer more internship slots. However, CAPS would have to hire additional experienced senior level psychologists who can provide the required supervision.
- Additional office space will be needed to offer counseling and other psychological services. Plans exist to expand office space for current needs within CAPS, but additional planning and resources are needed to provide space and support for graduate trainees.

Lead and Other Collaborators

- Garrett Strosser, Psychology Department Chair
- Curt Hill, CAPS Director; Matt Reiser, CAPS Director of Training

Required additional resources from external sources (State Board of Regents, State appropriation, etc.)

- A green light to move forward with the PsyD program

**Strategy 3c:** For institution-based psychotherapy services: Examine strategies for expanding services to better serve students (e.g., increasing after-hours and weekend hours, utilizing peer mentors and support groups for mild psychological distress, and/or utilizing telehealth and web-based program applications).

Institution Current Status

- SUU’s counseling center is employing many state of the art practices and policies designed to offer quality needed services to as many students as possible.

- A robust and effective group counseling program
- Peer Mental Health Mentoring
- A variety of support groups offered at convenient locations across campus (students of color, LGBTQIA, non-traditional, veterans, basic social skills, etc.)
- Let's Talk - a student consultation walk-in service offered 6 hours a week at various locations across campus. It is highly utilized.
- CAPS staff frequently offer outreach services after hours and on weekends.
- SUU CAPS has created a "Scope of Practice" which constitutes a set of policies and procedures designed to provide effective evidence-based therapy services to students in the most need, with an emphasis to offer services for as many students as possible. CAPS offers triage, crisis, consulting, and psych educational services for students as they wait to be seen in individual counseling.
- SUU encourages all students to use the SafeUT app. and other suicide prevention hotlines.
- The current hours of operation of our counseling services does not appear to significantly impair student access. Demand remains strong and easily outstrips the number of therapists we have available. Our waitlist averages 8 to 11 weeks for the academic year once we get into October.

Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- SUU plans to increase offerings as staffing levels increase. Much of CAPS staff time and effort goes into crisis intervention and other services for students in acute life threatening situations, which makes program expansion challenging.
- Web based services are an area of study and potential expansion (perhaps Silvercloud?).
- SUU enrollments have grown by 45% of the past 4 years. This growth constitutes a significant increase in demand for counseling services. Therefore, a request to add more counselors will be made for this coming year.
- Peer Mental Health Mentors will start offering skills-based support during Spring semester.

Lead and Other Collaborators

- Curt Hill, CAPS Director; De Nean Petersen, CAPS Clinical Director
- Jared Tippets, VP Student Affairs

**Strategy 3d:** For institution-based psychotherapy services: Evaluate current group offerings and student participation in various types of groups, including formal therapy, psychoeducational, and support/peer support. Assess effectiveness of groups and implement any changes needed to improve effectiveness.

Institution Current Status

- A robust and effective group counseling program (310 group sessions last year) with a variety of targeted evidenced-based groups – DBT, general process, mindfulness, trauma recovery, men's issues, women's issues, identity development, shame resiliency, etc.
- Group is used as a primary treatment modality where appropriate.
- 25% of CAPS student clients participated in group.
- CAPS' groups are very effective based on client outcome questionnaires and self-reports.

Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- The Peer Mental Health Mentors will be able to offer peer support groups this Spring semester.

Lead and Other Collaborators

- Blaine Edwards, CAPS Group Coordinator
- Riley Reynolds & Andrea Donovan – Peer Mental Health Program

**Strategy 3e:** Collaborate with state and local agencies and coalitions that are working to create statewide and institution-based evidence-based stigma reduction campaigns.

Institution Current Status

- *Quick Caveat-* Stigma reduction campaigns are important, but we very likely send a mixed message (at best) when students overcome stigma to ask for services but are then unable to access services due to high demand and insufficient resources.
- As mentioned earlier, SUU has created a grassroots organization named CAST which is designed to train faculty and staff around mental health issues while also reducing barriers for students to talk with someone skilled at helping and referring.
- SUU has trained several faculty and staff members to be trainers for QPR – there is high demand for these trainings.
- CAPS works closely with campus partners to provide accurate information about mental health and counseling.
- SUU works with our local crisis support agency, Canyon Creek Services, to offer additional support for victims of violence.
- SUU actively promotes the use of the SafeUT app.

Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- SUU would like to work with an evidence-based program like the Jed Foundation to improve our stigma reduction education. This will be explored.
- SUU would also like to create a peer-to-peer stigma reduction campaign, perhaps something like Active Minds.
- In collaboration with SUU's Health and Wellness Center, CAPS plans to expand on-line health and wellness offerings for students to receive skill-based help and acquire accurate mental health information.
- We are aware of a \$2 million suicide prevention/stigma reduction campaign being organized by State leaders. We hope to be part of this.

Lead and Other Collaborators

- Curt Hill, Director CAPS; Merrill Jones, Outreach Coordinator CAPS
- CAST Leadership Team
- Riley Reynolds, Health & Wellness

**Strategy 3f:** Support and implement the higher education expansion of the SafeUT mobile app, including personalizing the SafeUT app for each institution and identifying a point of contact at each institution.

Institution Current Status

- SUU promotes and encourages our students to use this program.

Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- We are fully compliant

Lead and Other Collaborators

- Heather Ogden, Dean of Students
- Curt Hill, CAPS

**Strategy 3g:** If supported by institutional data of student mental health needs, work toward the acquisition of therapeutic providers relative to the student body size and unique characteristics of the institution consistent with minimum staffing ratios established by the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS).

Institution Current Status

- SUU aspires to the 1 counselor for every 1000 students benchmark based on our rural location, the socio-economic profile of our students, and limited community resources. At present, we are currently down 1 senior level clinician to meet this goal.
- A student fee increase enabled CAPS to hire three new providers over the past 4 years.

Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- We will request funding to hire an additional full time Staff Psychologist due to student demand, institutional growth, and the need for a psychologist if SUU is awarded the PsyD program.
- It is likely that a school like SUU (rural location, limited outside support and providers, lots of students who struggle financially) needs a counselor-to-student-ratio closer to 1 to 750 students.

Lead and Other Collaborators

- Curt Hill, CAPS

#### **Recommendation #4: Develop Institutional Five-Year Mental Health Implementation Plans**

In order to systematically evaluate whether USHE student mental health services and wellness improve over time, each institution will:

- **Strategy 4a:** Develop a five-year mental health implementation plan that is based on Regent-adopted recommendations and includes measureable institutional goals and assessments. The plan will be due summer 2019 with subsequent review by the Board of Regents.
- **Strategy 4b:** Prepare an annual report on progress on the institutional implementation plan that will be submitted to the institutional Board of Trustees and to the Board of Regents.
- **Strategy 4c:** When an institution hosts the Board of Regents, the institution will present on progress and efforts on mental health issues including mental health services utilization rates and wait times.

#### Board of Regents Meeting Dates and Locations 2019-2020

August 1-2, 2019	Southern Utah University
September 12-13, 2019	Utah State University
November 15, 2019	Utah Valley University
January 24, 2020	University of Utah
March 26-27, 2020	Dixie State University
May 15, 2020	Weber State University

#### Institution Current Status

- SUU has completed our draft of a 5-year plan.
- SUU will provide an annual report.
- Progress and efforts on mental health issues, including utilization rates and wait times is being tracked.

#### Institution Plan to Meet Recommendation (include required resources, measureable goals, action items, and timeline)

- A clear procedure for collecting and reporting these efforts will be developed.

#### Lead and Other Collaborators

- Curt Hill, CAPS
- Jared Tippetts, VP Student Affairs