
Eleven Most Common Mental Health Issues

Y j cv'ku'Fgrt gukqpA

It is not unusual for students to feel somewhat sad and depressed when adjusting to life changes and demands. However, for some students, adjustment difficulties may trigger a clinical depression. Each person has a certain susceptibility to depression, just like each person has a certain susceptibility to diseases or heart disease (e.g., a person with a family history of depression is more susceptible). Many kinds of stresses can bring on clinical depression, including relationship breakups, experiences of failures or loss, or the stress of adjusting to a new environment. Clinical depression has been called the “common cold” of mental health, since about 20 percent of people are clinically depressed at some time in their lives.

Y j cv'ttg'ij g'lf'o r wqo u'qhf grt gukqpA

Loss of pleasure in virtually all activities.

Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” feelings.

Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment.

Feelings of fatigue or lack of energy.

Frequent tearfulness.

Difficulty with concentration or memory.

A change in sleep pattern, with either too much sleep or too little. Some depressed people wake up often in the night and do not feel rested the next day.

An increase or decrease in appetite, with a corresponding change in weight.

ph e r lea ~~Markedly diminished~~ interest in sex.

Feelings of worthlessness and self-blame.

Exaggerated feelings of guilt.

Hopelessness and/or pessimism about the future.

Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts.

J qy 'iq'j gr 't'lawf gpv'y j q'ku'f grt guqf <

Friends and family may provide all the support that is needed in mild cases of depression. Someone who is willing to listen and ask concerned questions can make all the difference.

When you are approaching a student you are concerned about, it is helpful to state what you have observed, e.g., “I’ve noticed that you seem down and have been keeping to yourself lately. I’m concerned about you.”

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Vt gcw gpv'ht f grt gukqp <

Often several sessions with a therapist can assist in relieving symptoms of depression. Some moderate and most severe depressions respond to antidepressant medications. A physician or a psychiatrist prescribes these after a thorough evaluation. Counseling Services can refer a student to the Health Center or a psychiatrist, or the student can seek help from their family physician for medication evaluation. Taking medication does not preclude counseling. Often counseling, in combination with medication, provides the greatest benefit.

J qy 'iq'lf gpv'ht 't'lawf gpv'y j q'b c{ 'dg'lwlelf crκ

Individuals who become severely depressed can be suicidal. Here are some of the risk factors for suicide (in addition to the symptoms for depression noted above):

- Have thoughts of suicide, plans, and/or means.
- Recent significant loss.
- Failure to live up to their own or other's expectations.
- Increased isolation/social withdrawal.
- Giving away possessions.
- Significant change in personality.
- Previous suicide attempts.
- Off-handed comments about not being around or about death.
- See death as the only way to end their suffering.
- Have symptoms of depression (see previous section on depression).

Y j cv'iq'f q'ht{qw'ij kpnlc 'lawf gpv'b ki j v'dg'lwlelf crκ

It is OK to ask about suicidal thoughts directly, e.g., "Sometimes when they're depressed, people think about suicide. Have you been having these kinds of thoughts?" You do NOT increase the risk of suicide by asking about it. People having suicidal thoughts are often relieved to be asked.

Cite the risk factors you have observed.

Never agree to keep serious suicidal thoughts in confidence. It is important to contact your supervisor-on-duty immediately. He or she will assist you in contacting Career Services and Campus Safety, if appropriate.

Contact a counselor at Counseling Services to consult if you are worried about a particular student and want some assistance and clarification.

If the person admits they are suicidal do not leave them alone.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Resources</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Donnelly Center, (616) 632-2905</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Campus Safety Offices, (616) 632- 2462</p>
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Adapted from materials from Counseling Services, Tulane University: the Counseling Center, University of California at Santa Cruz; Counseling & Human Development, Dartmouth College. Counseling and Career Development, Grand Valley State University, National Institute of Mental Health.

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Y j cv'ku'c'f'ku'wr v'kg'lawf gp vA

A disruptive student is an individual who inappropriately causes disruption to the normal flow and business of a floor, residence hall, classroom, or apartment. The individual may do so for a variety of reasons: excessive loneliness, a desire for attention, inappropriate social skills, severe homesickness, recent trauma.

Y j cv'btg'lqo g'r qu'kdig'gz.co r'gu'qh'f'ku'wr v'kg'dgj c'xlqtA

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“I’ve noticed you have not been hanging out with...and are keeping more to yourself, is there something going on?”

“I’ve noticed you have not been going to class and I’m concerned.”

Listen to what the student has to say—Avoiding judgment.

Encourage the student to utilize their support system (friends, family, etc.)

Suggest talking to a counselor, for example:

“Wow, it sounds like you have a lot going on. Have you ever thought about talking to a counselor about this?”

If a referral is needed, indicate that you will be completing a referral form and ask them to make an appointment at Career and Counseling Services.

Be prepared to address some of their concerns and fears related to counseling

Follow up with the student about what action they took—this shows you really care and have an interest in their well-being.

Klqyj gt 'lawf gpw'lt g'c hgevgf <

Assist other students to understand the dynamics of the inappropriate behavior.

Encourage them to support positive behaviors from the individual and to allow the

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Y j cv'ku'lgz wcrlc uac wna

Any form of unwanted contact or touch of a sexual nature including but not limited to rape (vaginal or anal), oral sex, or any other involuntary sexual act. Rape and sexual assault can be committed by anyone- a stranger, a date, an acquaintance, or even a relative.

Ego o qp'tgur qpugu'iq'tgegpv'lgz wcrlc uac wv'l'c dwug<

Survivor's self-esteem often diminishes after an assault. Frequently they feel shamed, humiliated, guilty, angry, and powerless.

Survivor's attitude toward their body may be negatively affected.

They may find it difficult to trust and to be intimate with others.

They may not want sexual intimacy for some time.

They may experience flashbacks of the incident.

They may experience fear of being alone and of a future attack.

They may experience nightmares or other sleep disturbances.

They may not be able to concentrate and focus. This can affect academic and/or job performance.

Excessive washing due to feelings of uncleanliness.

Y j cv'ecp' {qw'f q'iq'c uakna

Make sure the person is safe.

Allow the person to make their own decisions. Even if the decisions are not ones that you personally agree with. The individual needs to be able to regain their personal power.

They may be disoriented so present their options to them but allow them to have the final say.

Help the person to get the medical attention needed (The earlier a person seeks medical attention, the greater the chances are that the perpetrator can be convicted).

Offer to be with them or call someone they want to stay with them.

Report the assault to the Area Coordinator on duty. If you determine that a counselor should be present, contact Counseling Services staff immediately. Keep in mind, however, that the ultimate decision of who is notified is up to the person who experienced the assault.

Offer the option of calling the police to report the sexual assault. Reporting the assault does not mean the individual must prosecute, but it will ensure the availability of that option in the future should the survivor so decide.

Offer the option of calling the YWCA 24-Hour Crisis Hotline (776-7273) in Grand Rapids. This will allow an objective, supportive person to assist him or her in dealing with immediate issues of trauma.

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Y j cv'ku'Ut guuA'

Stress is the ‘wear and tear’ our bodies experience as we adjust to our continually changing environment. It has physical and emotional effects on us and can create positive or negative feelings. As a positive influence, stress can help compel us to action and can result in a new awareness and perspective. As a negative influence, it can result in feelings of distrust, rejection, anger, and depression. This in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, upset stomach, rashes, insomnia, high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. In adjusting to life’s different circumstances, stress will help or hinder us depending on how we react to it.

J qy 'lq'hpqy 'y j gp 'e 'lawf gpv'ku'lxgt r{ 'lat guugf 0

- Difficulty sleeping.
- Lack of appetite.
- Constant worrying.
- Unrealistically high expectations of self.
- Feelings of guilt when not studying or working.
- Inability to have fun or enjoy normal activities.
- Highly critical of others.
- Abuse of caffeine, alcohol, or drugs.
- Exaggeration of circumstances (“making a mountain out of a molehill”).
- Physical complaints.
- Excessive, irrational fear and dread.

J qy '{qw'ecp'j gr 'e 'lawf gpv'y j q'ku'lxgt r{ 'lat guugf 0'

- Express your concern in a friendly, non-critical way to the individual. Mention some of the signs that you have noticed, and suggest that maybe the student is putting too much pressure on him or herself.
- Show empathy and support for the student, regardless of his or her accomplishments or lack there of. Encourage him or her to express emotions – laughter as well as anger or sorrow.
- Encourage the student to engage in non-competitive activities. Physical exercise is excellent for someone who is stressed, unless it becomes competitive.
- Suggest relaxation activities including meditation, guided imagery, listening to relaxing music, and deep muscle relaxation. (Meditation, guided imagery, and deep muscle relaxation can be learned through a counselor at Counseling Services).
- Discourage self-medicating including caffeine, alcohol, and even food.
- Suggest the student focus on balance in social, physical, mental, and spiritual needs. Often stress is the result of excessive focus on one of these areas to the exclusion of others.
- Do not discredit the students concerns as foolish, immature, etc. Their concerns are real to them

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Y j gp 'iq't ghgt 'c 'lat guugf 'lawf gp v

If student's stress level or anxiety is such that it is interfering seriously with his or her ability to function successfully, you should refer him or her to Counseling Services. The counseling staff can provide a number of helpful means for reducing stress and can assess for more serious problems such as depression or suicide potential.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Resources</u></p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Donnelly Center, (616) 632-2905</p>
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Adapted from materials from the Counseling Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Counseling Center, University of Oregon. Counseling and Career Development, Grand Valley State University.

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Provide the individual with any of the suggestions made below (“Suggestions for someone who is feeling lonely”).

Uwi i gawqpu'hqat 'lqo gqpg'y j q'ku'ggihpi 'hpggf'epf 'wpj crr{'tu'c'tgawn<

Remind yourself that the loneliness will not last forever.

In the course of your daily schedule, look for ways to get involved with people. For example, you can: eat with others, sit with new people in class, find a study or exercise partner.

Put yourself in new situations where you will meet people. Engage in activities in which you have genuine interest. In so doing you will be more likely to meet the kind of people you are interested in meeting, people with whom you have something in common.

Make use of campus resources. Find out about organizations and activities on campus. Examples: clubs, part-time jobs, religious activities, and volunteer work.

Work at developing your social skills. Practice getting to know others and letting them know you.

Don't judge new people on the basis of past relationships. Instead, try to see each person you meet from a new perspective.

Intimate friendships usually develop gradually as people learn to share their inner feelings. Avoid rushing into intimate friendships by sharing too quickly or expecting that others will. Let the process develop naturally.

Value all of your friendships and their unique characteristics rather than believing that only a romantic relationship will relieve your loneliness.

Don't neglect other needs just because your companionship or friendship needs are not being met. Make sure you follow habits of good nutrition, regular exercise, and adequate sleep. Don't let academics and other interests slide.

Use your alone time to get to know yourself. Think of it as an opportunity to develop independence and to learn to take care of your own emotional needs. You can grow in important ways during time alone.

Whenever possible, use what you have enjoyed in the past to help you decide how to enjoy your alone time now.

Keep things in your environment (such as books, music) that you can use to enjoy in your alone time.

Don't wait for your feelings to get you going – get going and good feelings may eventually catch up with you.

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it up to the person experiencing loss by saying something like, “Let me know if there’s anything I can do for you.”

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Y j cv'écwugul'p crrtqrtk'wg'èpi gt 'qt 'èi i t gulkpA

Bottled up angry feelings.

The inability to mentally cope with a situation resulting in excessive frustration. The feelings may or may not be evident to others.

A perceived loss of control over factors affecting oneself.

Not accepting unchangeable aspects of reality.

Rejection.

Loss.

Feeling threatened.

Lack of sleep or other needs that are being neglected or unmet.

Y j cv'ètg'ij g'èqo o qp'wfo rwqo uA''J qy 'fq'f'qw'tgeqi ph'g'p crrtqrtk'wg'èpi gt 'qt 'j quakwA

Short temper. Getting angry over small issues.

Agitated feelings.

Excessive irritability.

Overt expressions of hostility.

Verbal or physical threats.

Physically abusive behavior towards another when angry.

Excessive control over others.

“Pushy” behavior.

Y j cv'ètg'wqo g'wvi i gulkp'u'ht 'èp'lp'f'k'f'w'c'ny'j q'j cu't'q'wdig'èq'p'q'nk'pi 'èpi gtA

Recognize anger as a problem.

Identify the cause.

Explore emotions of hurt and fear underlying the anger.

Talk over problems and issues with others instead of keeping them bottled up.

Work on eliminating blaming and insults in communication.

Focus on the goal of expressing feelings in a non-hostile way.

Develop empathy towards others.

Assume that others have best intentions.

Accept reality and forgive.

Choose happiness instead of anger. This choice may not come easily or right away, but remember that what you do with feelings of anger is up to you.

Choose a variety of ways to calm down: relaxation exercises, use of humor, physical activity.

Y j cv'ècp'f'qw'f'q'w'è'w'uk'w'w'qo g'q'p'g'y'j q'l'g'u'lp' crrtqrtk'wg'èpi t{.} quakg. 'qt 'ij tgc'w'p'pi A

If there is any indication of danger, leave the situation immediately and contact Campus Safety.

Acknowledge the intensity of the situation; “I can see you’re really upset.”

Explain clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable.

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Stay in an open area- preferably with accessibility to others.
Don't threaten, dare, taunt, or touch.

Kil'lawf gpv'kut'gr qt vgf 'cu'dglpi 'j quakg'epf'kpcrrtqrtk vgr'epi t{<

Do not attempt to use logic to calm him or her down.

Give your reasons for talking with the student in an open and direct manner.

Give your observations of the student's demeanor and examples of inappropriate behavior.

Allow the student to respond.

Make sure your responses show you understand the student's dilemma and that you care about him or her. "I think I can understand how difficult things are for you." "It sounds like you're having a hard time right now."

Try to guide the student to more fully express and clarify his or her feelings and thoughts. "Have there been any changes in your life?" "Try to put your feelings into words."

Toward the end of the discussion, provide information about Counseling Services. At this point you might offer to go along with him or her for a first appointment.

Close the discussion by letting him or her know you are willing to talk again.

If the student's hostile behavior continues, discuss it with your supervisor and consider letting the student know of potential consequences.

5'Ego o qp'O {vj u'qhCpi gt<

It's healthy to ventilate anger. Not consistently ventilating anger in a healthy and appropriate manner can lead to negative health such as an increase for heart attacks and strokes.

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The next step is to talk with a professional who is experienced in working with individuals who have eating problems.

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Yj cv'ku'tcwo cA

After a traumatic incident occurs, such as a car accident, a death, or sudden loss of any kind, anyone who was affected by the event may have a wide range of normal responses. These signs and symptoms can come and go after a trauma. A person may just begin to feel he/she has handled a traumatic situation but then experience a flashback or another symptom.

Yj cv'btg'ij g'eqo o qp'wfo rwo uA

The following are reactions which may be experienced following a traumatic situation and over the next month(s):

- Change in sleep patterns
- Pounding heart
- Change in appetite
- Headaches
- Easily startled
- Fatigue
- Hyperactivity
- Shallow, rapid breathing
- Stomach upset

* Any of these symptoms may indicate the need of a medical evaluation. When in doubt, contact a physician.

- Helplessness
- Guilt
- Anger
- Shock or numbness
- Feeling unsafe
- Afraid to be alone
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Irritability
- Grief
- Panic

- Emptiness
- Loss of meaning
- Cynicism
- Apathy

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Confusion
Difficulty concentrating
Intrusive thoughts
On guard/constantly alert
Flashbacks
Nightmares
Forgetfulness

Social withdrawal
Increased use of alcohol or medications
Crying
Marital/ relationship conflicts
Intensified pacing
Failure to engage in previously enjoyable activities
Problems with work/school (i.e., dropping attendance, poor performance)

These reactions are normal parts of the healing process. The experience is often painful and there is not much one can do to avoid the responses to trauma. However, there are things that can be done to reduce the symptoms.

Y j cv'ēcp 'ij g'kpfkxf wcnf qA

Talk to people you know
Exercise
Resume all normal activities
Tell yourself “these are normal reactions to stress”
Avoid alcohol, drugs, caffeine
Give yourself permission to feel rotten
Don't make big life changes
Eat healthy foods
Get professional help if symptoms are intolerable*

*Call 632-2905 and ask to speak to a Counselor

Y j cv'ēcp '{qw'f q'iq'ēuukw'iqo gqpg'y kj 't cwo cA

Listen: don't give advice or try to solve the problem
Don't take his/her actions personally
Remember the person will be irritable
Encourage them to be involved in normal activities
Don't say “you're lucky it wasn't worse”
Say you are sorry that such an event occurred
They may need to describe what happened many times. It is the brain's way of processing the event. Just listen, listen, listen.

Adapted from materials from Counseling and Career Development, Grand Valley State University

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Yj cv'ttg'čev'qhlk'vqigt cpegA

Any behaviors (verbal, physical, written) that have the intent and/or impact of insulting, belittling, or harming a specific group or member of a group based on their race, gender, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

U{o r'vqo u<

Groups or organizations that hold a common philosophy that is based on discrimination.

Individuals who have strong, inflexible opinions regarding the superiority of one group over another based on discrimination.

Insecure individuals who derive self-esteem from rigid thinking based on superiority over others.

Individuals who have strong allegiances to political or religious groups that include discriminatory beliefs.

Individuals who ridicule, use hate speech, or threaten physical harm to others based on their race, gender, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Uwi i g'v'k'p'u<

Be familiar with college policy on discriminatory harassment and complaint procedures.

Publicize college discriminatory harassment policy and have copies of the policy available to residents.

Hold workshMMHMM