Mental Health on College Campuses and Workplaces: Are we in a period of crisis or a time of transformation?

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The Periodic Table
The Human Element
“All in all, you’re just another Brick in the Wall!”…(Pink Floyd, 1979)
"No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man."

- Heraclitus.
Today’s Objectives

Clarify that there is a psychological crisis on American campuses and how that can be seen with a growth oriented lens

Learn about how to “detect, connect and direct” student in need

Create and discuss possible implication from a generational transformation approach.

Growth as an organization and individuals

This is not an annual training requirement. It is meant to provoke thought. So keep an open mind and a curious ear. We will take question/discussion breaks during the presentation and a final one at the end.
Today’s Road Map

- Student Mental Health has deteriorated across the nation.
- This crisis is a sign that modern college campuses (and by extension early career scientists) are undergoing a transformation and what you can do about it.
- Discuss what I mean by “Detect, Connect, and Direct” those in need.
A tale of two kingdoms: “Once upon a time…”
Scenario: Your student, Jim, doesn’t turn in assignments or completes projects on time. Initially, he presented as motivated, articulate in group meetings, and very conscientious. He has potential, but seems to be “blowing it all off.” He’s become moody, unfocused, disheveled and you think you smell alcohol on his breath. You decide to meet with him.

How do you and your institution deal with the Jim’s of the world?

(you can replace student with early career professional).
Student mental health has deteriorated across the nation. (APA, 2022)
Adolescents are experiencing more concerning mental health problems, all across the nation. And it may get worse. (CDC, 2022)
This crisis may be a sign that modern college campuses, and our children, are undergoing a generational transformation. (Bacho, 2022)
Generational Differences vs Generational Transition
Gen-Z represents more than 20% of the U.S. Population...
Total US Population by Age and Generation*, millions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Approximate Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen-Z</td>
<td>~69 million</td>
<td>(22% of Population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>~75 million</td>
<td>(23% of Population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen-X</td>
<td>~66 million</td>
<td>(21% of Population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>~75 million</td>
<td>(24% of Population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Gen</td>
<td>~29 million</td>
<td>(9% of Population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatest Gen</td>
<td>~4 million</td>
<td>(1% of Population)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Bureau, Pew Research Center, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research.
Emerging adulthood
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Greatest</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Gen Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age range</td>
<td>80-100</td>
<td>60-80</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Global Pop.</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Style</td>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Email/SMS</td>
<td>Instant Message</td>
<td>Emojis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Technology</td>
<td>Automobile</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>PCs</td>
<td>Smartphones</td>
<td>AR/VR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Living Situation</td>
<td>Retirement Homes (Rancher)</td>
<td>Detached House McMansions</td>
<td>Sharing an apartment</td>
<td>Parent's House</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepest Fears</td>
<td>The World in 2020</td>
<td>No longer the “center of attention”</td>
<td>What about our generation? (Boomer echo)</td>
<td>Paying off student debt</td>
<td>Low batteries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Greatest Generation”</td>
<td>“Boomers”</td>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>Gen Y (Millenials)</td>
<td>Gen Z (NETGEN)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age Today</strong></td>
<td>83-103</td>
<td>63-83</td>
<td>43-63</td>
<td>23-43</td>
<td>3-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of US Pop.</strong></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting &amp; Childhood</strong></td>
<td>Strong nuclear family, parenting associated with discipline</td>
<td>Single income, larger classrooms, competitive job market</td>
<td>Dual Income, increasing growing single parent homes, “latch-key” (self-sufficiency)</td>
<td>Helicopter Parenting, Participation Trophies, Video-game systems</td>
<td>Both parents working, raised by grandparents or other caretakers, Social Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formative Life Experiences</strong></td>
<td>Depression World War, Nuclear Family, Gender specific roles</td>
<td>Cold War, Vietnam, Moon landing, Woodstock, communal living</td>
<td>Fall of Berlin Wall, Introduction of PCs, and video games, rising divorce rates</td>
<td>9/11 and Global War on Terror, Reality TV, Google</td>
<td>COVID Social Distancing policy, Teleworking parents, Wiki-Leaks, Global Warming/Environmental focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career Attitudes and Leadership style preferences</strong></td>
<td>Job for Life. Work is a privilege</td>
<td>Live to Work! Competitive workplace, “Face time” with boss to promote,</td>
<td>Loyalty to profession not employer, “knowledge worker,” Work to Live, “free agents”</td>
<td>First Digital Careers/work. Work my way not your way. Desires Meaningful Work Participatory workplace. Relationship oriented</td>
<td>Teleworkers/ Mobile workers, Internet seen as authority, technologically reliant, multi-taskers. Quick promotion, fast turn-around, and the rise of “Quiet Quitting”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“Times, they are a changin’…” (Bob Dylan, 1963)

“Be professional, then get personal. No, do the personal work, then you will get professional work.” Dr. Cuevas, Vice Provost, University of Tennessee.

OLD: The old process was “do professional-grade, reliable, and timely work” on a consistent basis, then you get to know me more on a personal level, if at all.

New: The new process is, “get to know me as a person, first, then I will provide you good, reliable, and timely work” more consistently.
“They didn’t understand the assignment.”
Stephen Bacho (8th Grade)

“Our teachers are saying it is important to know about mental health problems and that they care. But, we are all crowded into a gymnasium, made to watch a power-point and then sent back to class. It seems like they are checking a box and can say that they talked about it. No one took it seriously and everyone was on their phones. Adults don’t seem to know how to talk to us about this stuff.”
Rethinking Stress

Adversity as Transformation
Success Requires Some Stress

- Performance: Strong → Optimal Performance → Point of Concern → Rust out → Weak
- Stress Level: Calm → Eustress → Distress → Burnout

Point of Concern
Rust out
Detect when things start to go “wrong”
## Stress Continuum Model - Be Aware of Your Student’s Current Zone and Alert to Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Idle</th>
<th>Ready</th>
<th>Reacting</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>Ill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Lethargic</td>
<td>- Lethargic</td>
<td>- Good to go</td>
<td>- Distressed or impaired</td>
<td>- More severe or persistent distress</td>
<td>- Experiencing orange zone symptoms for more than 60 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unfocused, not thinking clearly</td>
<td>- Unfocused, not thinking clearly</td>
<td>- Well-trained</td>
<td>- Decrease in function or performance</td>
<td>- Serious suicidal or homicidal thoughts</td>
<td>- Stress injuries that don’t heal without help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unmotivated, apathetic</td>
<td>- Unmotivated, apathetic</td>
<td>- Fit and focused</td>
<td>- Mild &amp; temporarily anxious, irritable or sad</td>
<td>- Experiencing panic attacks or rage</td>
<td>- Symptoms persist, get worse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bored</td>
<td>- Bored</td>
<td>- Cohesive units</td>
<td>- Physical or behavioral changes</td>
<td>- Disruption of moral values</td>
<td>- Feeling depressed or anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Slow, unproductive</td>
<td>- Slow, unproductive</td>
<td>- Ready families</td>
<td>- Trouble sleeping</td>
<td>- May leave lasting memories, reactions, and impressions</td>
<td>- Feeling suicidal and/or homicidal with a plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Time goes slowly</td>
<td>- Time goes slowly</td>
<td>- Personal &amp; social life is good</td>
<td>- Difficulty concentrating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not contributing to the unit</td>
<td>- Not contributing to the unit</td>
<td>- Optimal performance</td>
<td>- Increase in alcohol related incidents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USNA Mental Health Dashboard

- Alcohol Related Incidents (ARIs)
- Conduct offenses
- Honor offenses
- Academic probation or physical readiness problems UNSAT (PE/Academic)
- Midshipman Development Center (MDC) utilization and mental health survey data
Connect with them to protect them.
Connect: to protect

Desire for suicide

Thwarted belongingness
I am alone

Perceived burdensomeness
I am a burden

Capability for suicide

Lethal (or near-lethal) suicide attempts
The "Love Potion"
“What if they resist?”
FRICTION VS FUEL
The Four Frictions (Nordgren, 2021)

- **Inertia**: The powerful desire to stick with what we know, despite the limitations.
- **Effort**: The energy (real and perceived) needed to make change happen.
- **Emotion**: The unintended negative emotions created by the very change we seek.
- **Reactance**: The impulse to resist being changed.
Quiet Quitting (Sinek, 2023)

- Millennials and Gen Z
- “Entitled, hard to manage and lazy”
- Want to be purposeful and impactful
- Missing pieces
  - Parenting (Failed strategies)
  - Tech
  - Impatience
  - Environment
Quiet Quitting (Sinek, 2023)

- Chasing the Dopamine Rush and avoiding the Cortisol flood

RESPECT

MOUNTAIN
If this “adulting” get rough, here’s the keys to the Dopamine cabinet. Take all you need!”
What game are they playing? The tension of two opposing paradigms (Sinek, 2022)

The finite games

The infinite game
Bridges Transition Model

William Bridges Transition Model

Ending
- Denial
- Anxiety
- Shock
- Fear
- Anger
- Frustration
- Confusion
- Stress
- Approach - Avoidance

Reconciliation

Transition
- Normal Productivity

Reorientation
- Creativity

New Beginnings
- Enthusiasm
- Energy
- Hope
- Impatience
- Acceptance
- Skepticism

Recommitment
4 Pillars of Emotional Intelligence:

- Self-Awareness
- Managing Emotions
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Management
Direct them to the appropriate resources
USNA’s Warrior Toughness

Toughness and Warrior Mindset
Navy’s: Thrive 360

Mental prosperity within your grasp.

- Improve workplace well-being
- Gain the tools and support you need to overcome the emotional challenges that have been holding you back.
- Access the Thrive360 app from any device and experience hundreds of carefully curated therapeutic videos, in high-definition or virtual reality...all in the palm of your hand.

Because you can’t schedule your crisis

People thrive in unique ways.

- Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Breathing
- Mindfulness
- Movement
Reciprocity

“As a parent and a leader, I promise to treat your kid’s professional and personal development; like I hope you are treating my kids professional and personal development.”
In summary...

• As you return back to your students, know that their interactions in this new world of learning and work transformation can be emotionally challenging. There is a mental health crisis going on. You are on the front lines. Know what it looks like for your institution.

• Meaningful human relationships can help your students establish a sense of control when faced with emotional turbulence. Reach out to those in need. Be a first responder.

• Remember the adversity can be transformational, stress is not necessarily all bad, connect to protect, balance fuel with friction and remember the four pillars of emotional intelligence and how they can help us cope. Engage your students, and if you can’t fully meet their needs, direct them to those who can.
Detect, Connect, Direct
Scenario: A student, Jim, doesn’t turn in assignments or completes projects on time. Initially, he presented as motivated, articulate in class, and very conscientious. He has potential, but seems to be “blowing it all off.” He’s become moody, unfocused, disheveled and you think you smell alcohol on his breath.

You decide to meet with him. How do you and your institution deal with the Jim’s of the world?
ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL