# S.T.A.H.L. NEWS

STUDENTS TALKING ABOUT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Advocates for Wellness and Respect for Everyone — Health AWAREness

Brought to you by Health AWAREness at the Center for Health and Well-Being

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# Mental Health Conditions in College Students

**Did you know that mental illness affects 1 in 4 or nearly 60 million Americans a year? (NIMH)**

*A mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. It often results in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.*

## WHY THE NEGATIVE STIGMA?

Mental illness is seen as more taboo than chronic physical illness such as diabetes. This is because of stereotypes that are commonly associated with mental illness. Many people believe that individuals with a mental illness are violent, dangerous, or "crazy," and that is not the case.

In all reality, mental illness is just as prevalent and important as physical illness. Therefore, maintaining mental health is just as important as maintaining your physical health and should not be stigmatized.

Take a stand by becoming a member of **Active Minds**! The goal of this student organization is to increase awareness among IUP students about issues of mental health, symptoms of metal illness and to decrease stigma commonly associated with mental illness.

## ELIMINATING STIGMA

It is important that as we educate ourselves, we support individuals who may be suffering from mental illness and provide mental health resources for these individuals and their families. As we work together to achieve full inclusion of mental health awareness in our society, we can eliminate the negative stigma and in turn provide opportunity for individuals to seek necessary help that they may not have sought otherwise.

### The Bottom Line…

We all face situations that present us with the opportunity to stress out, become depressed or let our emotions get the best of us. Your mental health is crucial for academic success and, more importantly, your survival. There are several ways to preserve your mental health:

- Seek help when things become too much to handle. You can take a free, anonymous, mental health screening at:

  **http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/IUP**

  *This screening is provided so that you may find out—in a few minutes—whether or not professional consultation would be helpful.*
- Exercise — visit www.iup.edu/recreation for opportunities
- Get adequate sleep
- Eat healthy—contact the Nutrition Connection for tips!
- Find time to socialize

  *As human beings, we are relational and need contact with other humans to contribute to our happiness and stability. Things tend to be a lot more difficult to handle if you feel alone. It's never too late to join an organization and make new friends!*

### Mental health issues are prevalent on college campuses.

- 75% of lifetime cases of mental health conditions begin by age 24.
- More than 80% of college students felt overwhelmed by all they had to do in the past year.
- Mental health issues are a leading impediment to academic success.
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death on campuses.

(NAMI)

### Common Mental Health Conditions…

- Depression– Depression is a common but serious mental illness typically marked by sad or anxious feelings. Most college students occasionally feel sad or anxious, but these emotions usually pass quickly, within a couple of days. Untreated depression lasts for a long time, interferes with day-to-day activities, and is much more than just being a "little down" or "feeling blue."
- Anxiety Disorders– It is normal to feel stressed and anxious in college. However, students may experience more extreme forms of fear, worrying, and even panic that may be signs of an anxiety disorder. Signs that you may have an anxiety disorder include excessive (and often irrational) worry; tension and irritability; fear surrounding certain situations; physical symptoms (headaches, digestive problems, and muscle tension); difficulty concentrating and increased avoidant behaviors (i.e. drinking or drug use) or social withdrawal.
- Eating Disorders– Eating disorders are any range of abnormal or disturbed eating habits. Eating disorders affect people of all ages, but are especially prominent among college students. The most common college student eating disorders are anorexia, bulimia, and binge-eating disorder. Most patients do not meet all of the clinical criteria for their eating disorders. It is encouraged to see treatment if the individual has some of the symptoms or come close to meeting the criteria.
- Schizophrenia– Schizophrenia is a group of severe brain disorders in which people interpret reality abnormally. Schizophrenia may result in some combination of hallucinations, delusions, and disordered thinking and behavior.
- Bipolar Disorder– Bipolar Disorder is a chronic illness with recurring episodes of mania and depression that can last from one day to months. This mental illness causes unusual and dramatic shifts in mood, energy and the ability to think clearly.

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

**The Center for Health and Well-Being**

***The Counseling Center, Suites on Maple East, G31***
www.iup.edu/counselingcenter • 724-357-2621

Walk in hours Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. at 1:00pm-3:00pm
Walk in hours Wed. at 10:00am-11:00am and 2:30pm-3:30pm

***The Mindfulness Living Learning Community***
www.iup.edu/mindfulness

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