



“College and University Campus Safety”

Dr. Barry M. Gregory LMHC NCC
National Addictions Training Institute (NATI)

www.natiweb.com

1-561-733-5256



Mission of Presentation

- There are evidence-based campus practices to identify students who pose a risk
- Existing FERPA and HIPPA laws do allow for notification and sharing of information
- State needs to fund training workshops on best practices

“The College of the Overwhelmed: The Mental Health Crisis”

- About 10 percent of students have seriously considered committing suicide.
- Forty-five percent of students say they've been so depressed it was difficult to function.
- More than 30 percent of freshmen report feeling overwhelmed a great deal of the time.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students

(Nancy Shute, U.S. News, 2007; Richard Kadison; (Rawe & Kingsbury, Time, 2007)

Student Rights Versus Campus Safety

- “We are talking about hundreds of thousands of students...we can’t incarcerate all of them against their will”
- “ A disturbed student has a right to privacy, the same as you or I do...”
- Case law now holds campuses accountable for negligence

(NC Times 2007:UCSD Director of Counseling)

Aftermath of the Virginia Tech Tragedy

- Virginia Tech Shooter declared mentally ill by State of Virginia (psychiatric evaluation) on 12-13-2005
- Declared to be in need of hospitalization
- Determined to be a danger to self and others
- Virginia Tech PD ordered by judge to take him to psychiatric facility for outpatient treatment
- No follow-up, notification, or campus discipline!

(New York Times, May 15th, 2007)

Aftermath of the Virginia Tech Tragedy

- Did he receive needed treatment?
- Was court notified of progress?
- Was suicidal and/or homicidal ideation and intent assessed and documented in clinical notes?

(New York Times, May 15th, 2007)

Aftermath of the Virginia Tech Tragedy

- Was family and campus notified about danger to self and others?
- Did he slip through the university counseling and campus discipline systems?
- What will a jury of 12 decide regarding VT actions and inactions?

(New York Times, May 15th, 2007)

Individual and Environmental Risk Factors

- High-risk drinking/drug abuse and violence
- Increase in campus mental health disorders
- Decreased parental supervision
- Increased student freedom

Individual and Environmental Risk Factors

- Increased media exposure to violence
- Lack of campus protective factors
- Increase in risky and rebellious attitudes
- “The Permissive Culture”

Risk Factors for Harm to Self or Others:

- Severe depression
- Schizophrenia
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Family history of suicide attempts
- History of previous suicide attempts
- Access to lethal means such as a weapon or toxic medications

Risk Factors for Harm to Self or Others:

- Prolonged illness
- Sense of hopelessness
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Giving away personal possessions
- Expressing plans for a suicide attempt

(Brandon Medical Regional Health Authority)

Using Campus Discipline to Evaluate Students at Risk

- Violence or threat of violence to self or others
- Physical, sexual assault, domestic violence
- Possession or use of firearms
- Disorderly conduct
- Verbal or written threats, intimidation, harassment
- Possession, use, sale of controlled substances
- Misuse of alcoholic beverages
- Stalking

(FAU: Dean of Student Affairs)

Counseling Evaluations Help Identify Students at Risk

- On or off campus mental health evaluation
- Informed consent
- Limits of confidentiality
- Release of Information
- Medication

Early Identification and Referral Systems

- Report and recommendations to Dean
- Medical withdrawal
- Parental notification
- Probation, suspension, expulsion
- Ongoing monitoring of progress
- Case collaborative consultation

Disclosing Protected Health Information Without Individual Authorization

12 National Priority Purposes

- Victims of abuse, neglect or domestic violence
- Law enforcement purposes
- Public health activities
- Serious threat to health and safety

(United States Department of Health & Human Services: Office for Civil Rights)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

- Disclose records without consent to appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- To comply with judge or lawfully issued subpoena
- Federal/Florida parental notification for alcohol and other drug violations

(U.S. Department of Education)

“Florida University Counseling Centers Feel Strain”

- Need more counselors at Florida’s public universities
- Legislature needs to remove caps on student health fees that help support health and mental health services
- Increase transparency in higher education

(Emerson, Tampa Tribune, 2007)

University of North Carolina Task Force on Campus Safety

- Twenty-one students who committed a violent crime had a criminal record; 13 lied on admission applications
- Case-by-case criminal background checks
- Key questions on admissions applications about integrity and past behavior
- Campus Safety Committees (Blosser, 2004; Blosser, 2007)

Conclusions / Recommendations

- Identify risk and protective factors using collaborative team approach
- Use campus discipline practices to identify students at risk
- Use evidence-based assessment and treatment practices
- Define HIPPA and FERPA policies that allow notification without authorization

Conclusions / Recommendations

- Challenge beliefs that students who are a threat to themselves or others are entitled to complete privacy
- Provide training to campus leaders on evidence based strategies in identifying students at risk and sharing information

Conclusions / Recommendations

- Educate campus about informed consent and the limits of confidentiality
- Include informed consent in applications
- Use parental notification to increase parental involvement when appropriate
- Develop policies and document reasonable actions to avoid negligence lawsuits

Conclusions / Recommendations

- Increase community awareness about the negative consequences of a “The Permissive Culture”
- Help students identify protective factors that engage them in the learning process