

Comprehensive Approaches for Addressing Student Mental Health: Needs & Opportunities for First-Gen Students

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For College, Community, and Justice

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Presentation for:
Ohio Program for Campus Safety & Mental Health



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The Hope Center



- **Action research center** transforming higher education into a more effective, equitable, and impactful sector
- Approach:
 - Applied scientific research
 - Educational & training partnerships with colleges & universities
 - Policy advising
 - Strategic communications

We believe that students are **humans first** and that their basic needs are central conditions for learning.

AGENDA

- Student Mental Health: State of Affairs
- Focus on First-Gen
- What Works? Turning to the Evidence-Base
- Resources & Supports

Student Mental Health: State of Affairs

What does the world need to know about being a college student?

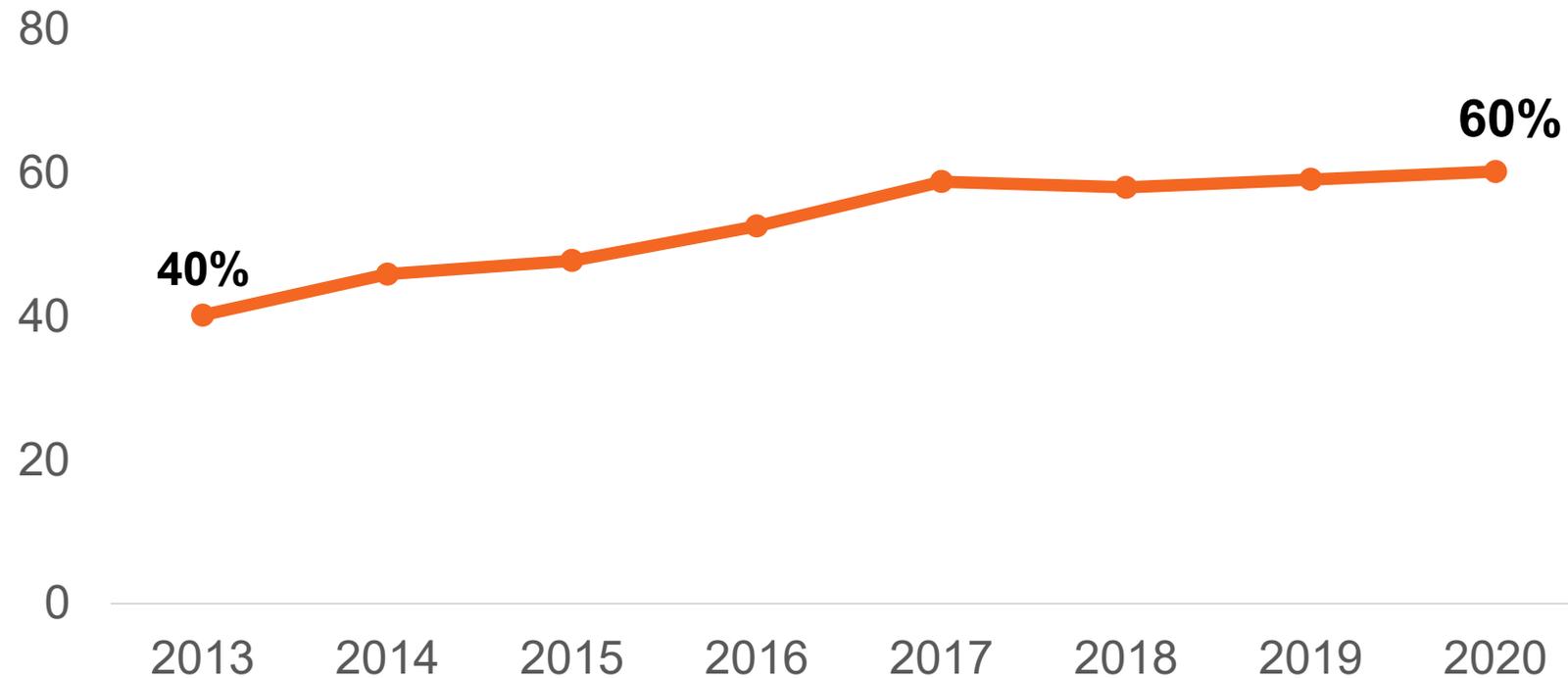
“We’re trying our best to better ourselves; we could use all the help and support we can get. The stress is so real and has a legitimate impact on our mental health.”

- 2023 Hope Survey Participant

Rising Prevalence



Students with >1 Mental Health Problem (%)



● Healthy Minds Data

(Lipson et al., 2022)

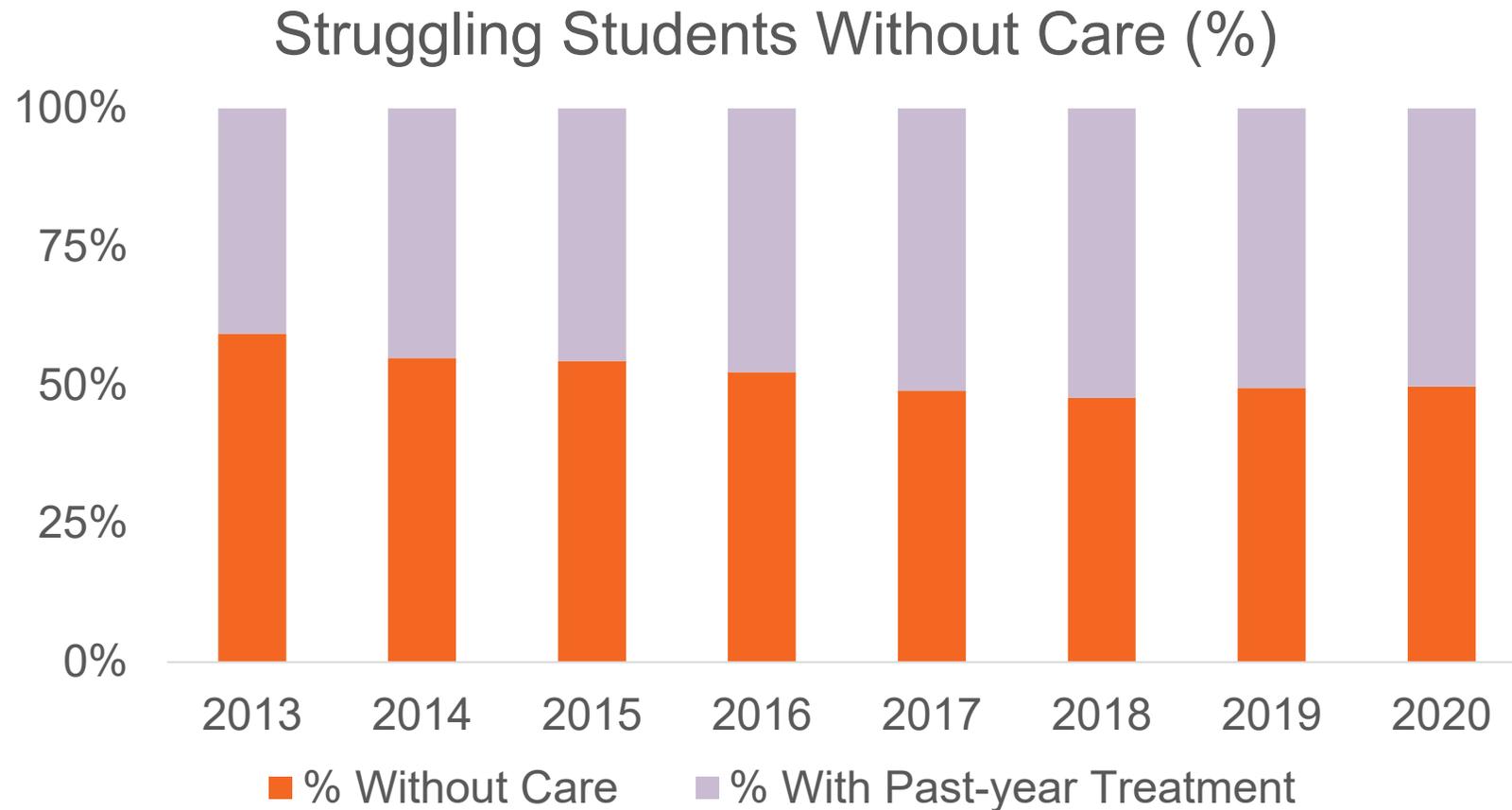
Impacts of a Global Pandemic

- Unprecedented stressors, disruption, and social isolation
 - 13% lost loved one to COVID-19*
 - 1/3 experienced job loss*
 - Black/White disparities in basic needs security increased*
- Increases in severe depression, academic impairment, and levels of distress
- Increased barriers to care

*Hope 2020 Student Survey



Unmet Need



(Lipson et al., 2022)

Inequities Persist

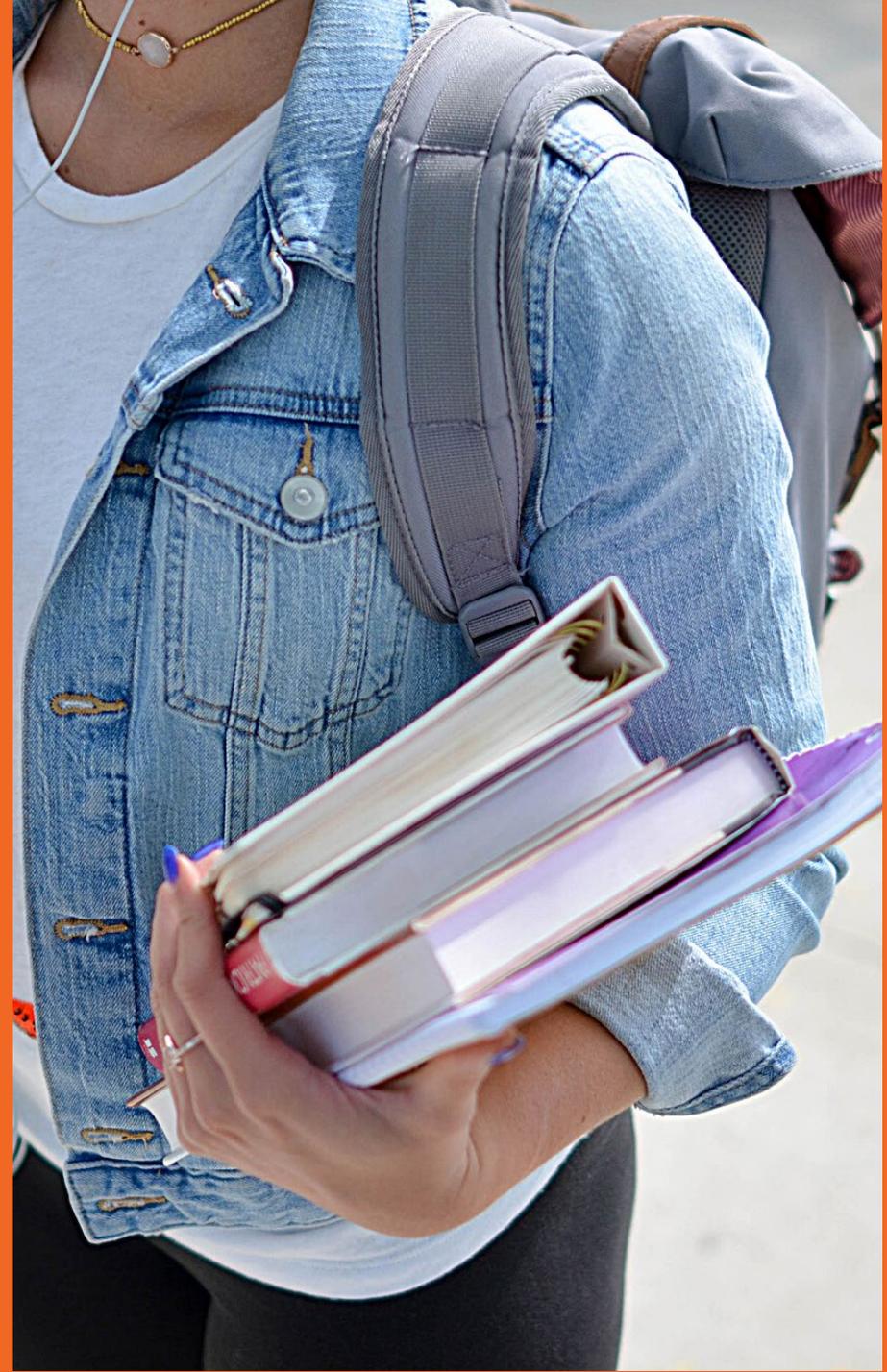


- American Indian/Alaskan Native, Arab/Arab American, Asian/Pacific Island/Desi American, Black/African American, Latino/a/@, & multiracial students are less likely to receive care than White students
- Students attending community colleges are less likely to receive services than students at 4-years
- Sexual & gender minority students experience a greater burden of symptoms than heterosexual cisgender students

First-Generation Students

“It is almost impossible...without support and resources such as mental health, financial, transportation, etc..”

- 2023 Hope Survey Participant



First-Generation Students



- Definition varies
- 24% of undergrads: parents with no postsecondary ed
- 56% of undergrads: parents without a bachelor's degree
- Population growing rapidly in the coming years

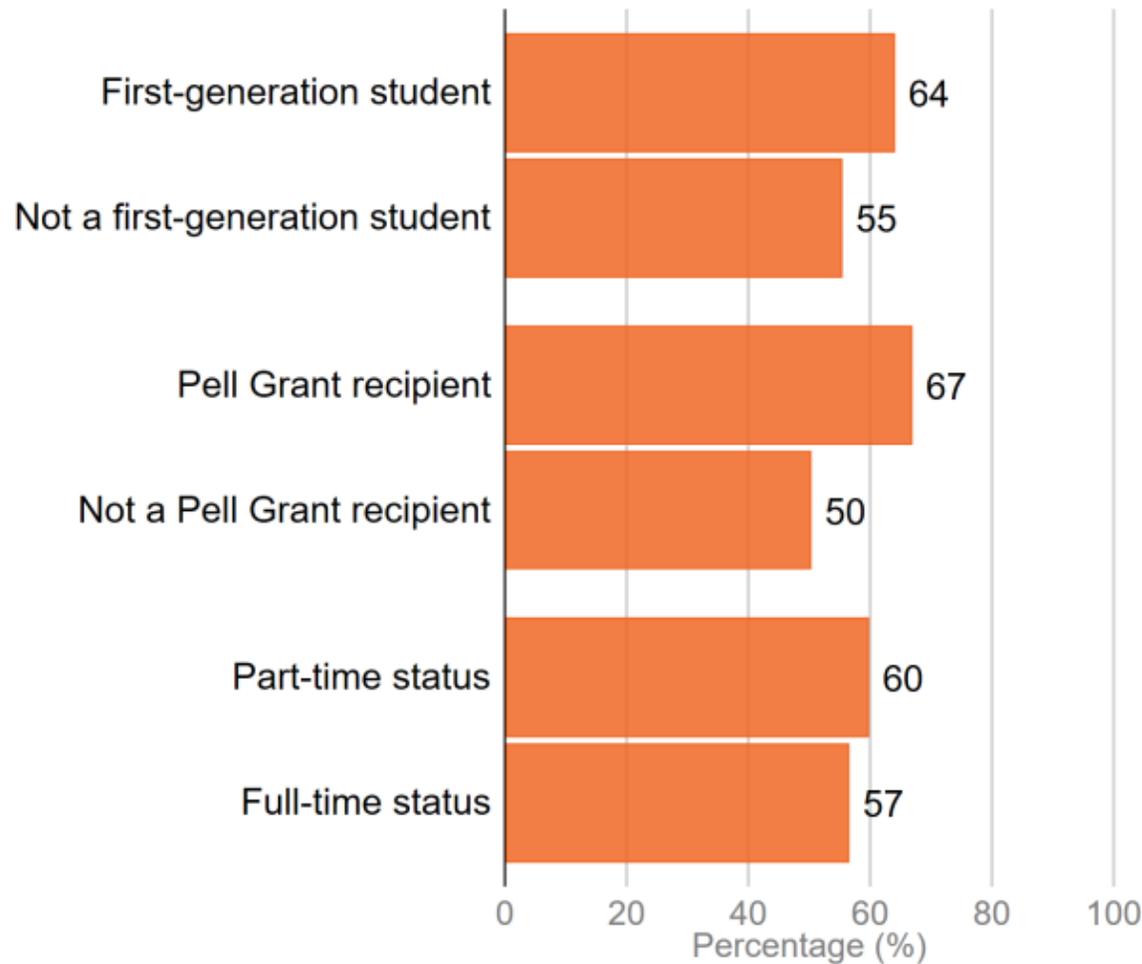
NASPA Center for First-Generation Student Success

Student Characteristics



- First-gen students (compared to continuing-generation students) are more likely to:
 - Have fewer financial resources
 - Be BIPOC
 - Have dependents
 - Work full or part-time while in school
 - Be older

Disparities in Basic Needs Insecurity



SOURCE | 2020 #RealCollege Survey

NOTES | First-generation status is determined by whether a student's parents' highest level of education completed is a high school diploma or GED. For more details on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, refer to the [web appendices](#).

Confront Obstacles to Success

- Experience higher attrition

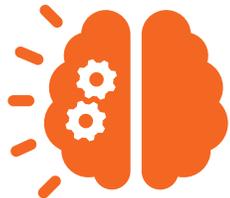
Dropout rates:

Parents didn't attend college	Parents attended some college	Parent(s) with a BA
33%	26%	14%

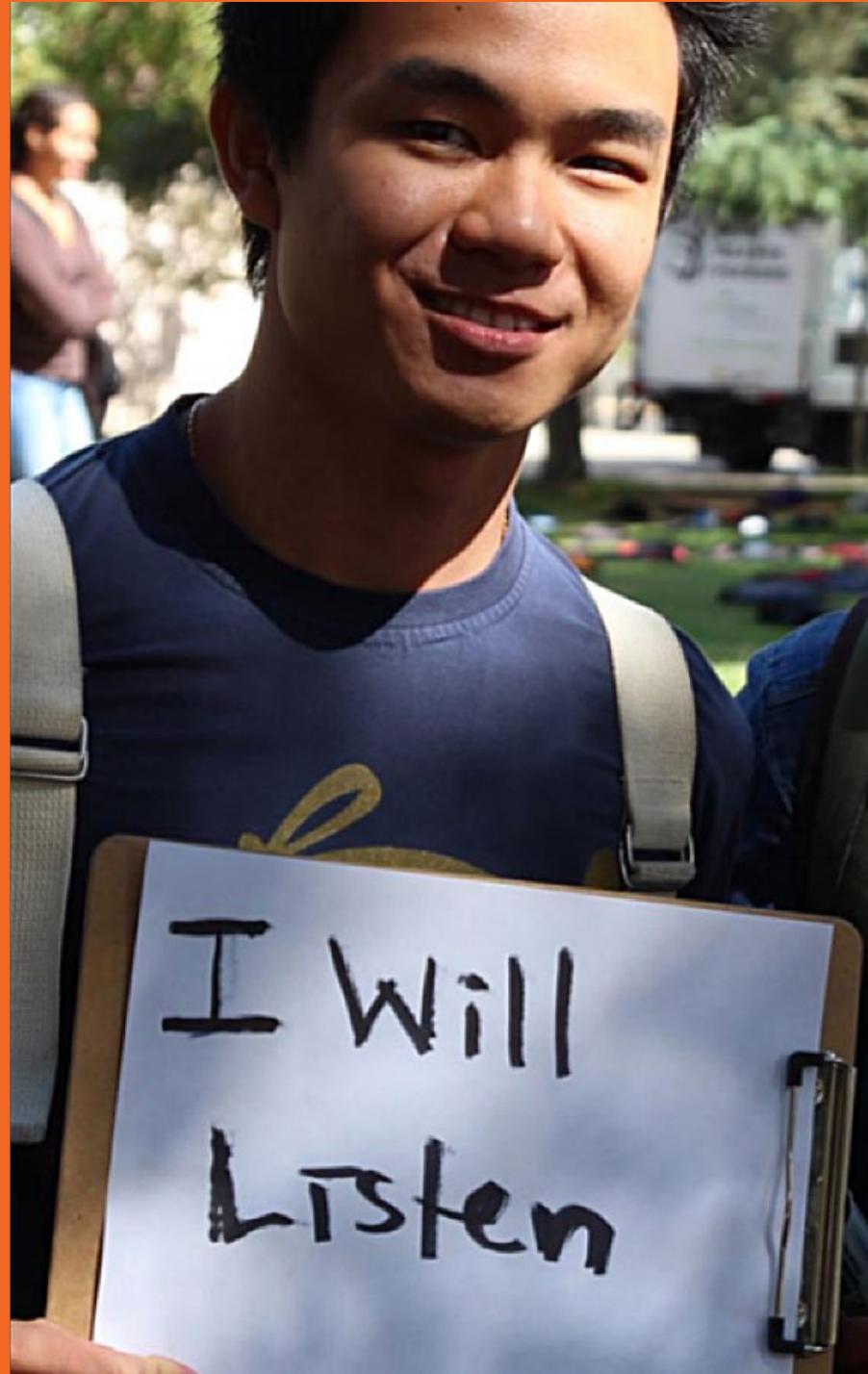
- Borrow money for college more often & more often default on their loans
- Earn less 10 years post college than peers with college educated parents

First-Gen Mental Health

- First-Generation Students report:
 - Greater levels of depression and stress
 - Lower use of mental health services
 - Lower levels of belonging



Need & Time for Systemic Solutions

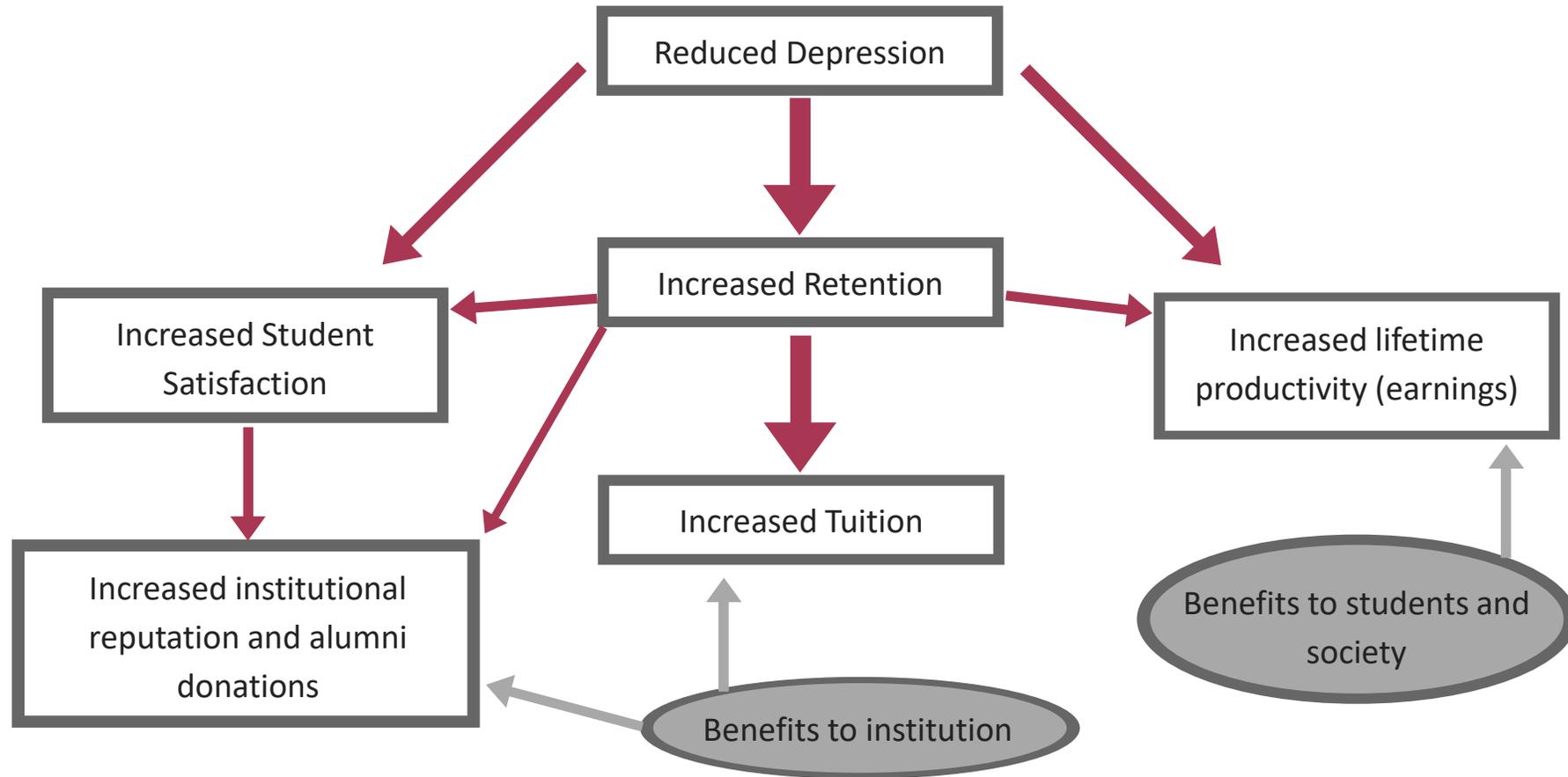


Impact of Intervening

being depressed in college is associated with
2X
greater risk of departing without graduating

- Untreated mental health disorders are associated with lower GPA, enrollment discontinuity, and drop-out
- Prevention, detection, & treatment has the potential to save lives & improve academic outcomes, career trajectories, lifetime earnings, health, & more

Economic Case



Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Hunt (2009)

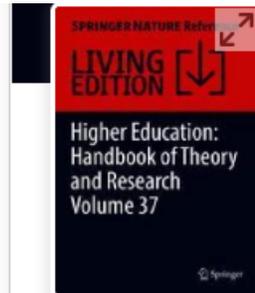
Need for Systemic Solutions

- Demand for mental health services far outpacing availability
- Counseling alone is insufficient & unsustainable
- What's needed?
 - Population-level, public health approaches
 - Prevention
 - Address root causes



What Works?

Turning to the evidence-base:



Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research pp 1–107 | Cite as

Mental Health in College Populations: A
Multidisciplinary Review of What Works, Evidence
Gaps, and Paths Forward

[Sara Abelson](#) , [Sarah Ketchen Lipson](#) & [Daniel Eisenberg](#)

Strategies Proven Effective

- Skill-training with supervised practice
 - Mindfulness
 - Cognitive-Behavioral & Relaxation
 - Ineffective: Meditation
- Screening
- Means Restriction

Strategies Proven Ineffective

- Psychoeducation
- Gatekeeper Training



Promising Approaches



- Peer Health Education & Peer Support
- Belonging Interventions
- Learning Environment Interventions

Innovative, Warrant Research



- Prevent discrimination & support sense of identity
- Interventions focused on families
- Policy interventions
 - Substance use
 - sexual assault
 - leaves of absence,
 - financial aid
 - diversity, equity, and inclusion

Resources & Supports



Reports & Briefs



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PARENTING WHILE IN COLLEGE: Racial Disparities in Basic Needs Insecurity During the Pandemic

Gregory Kienzl, Pei Hu, Ali Caccavella, and Sara Goldrick-Rab
February 2022

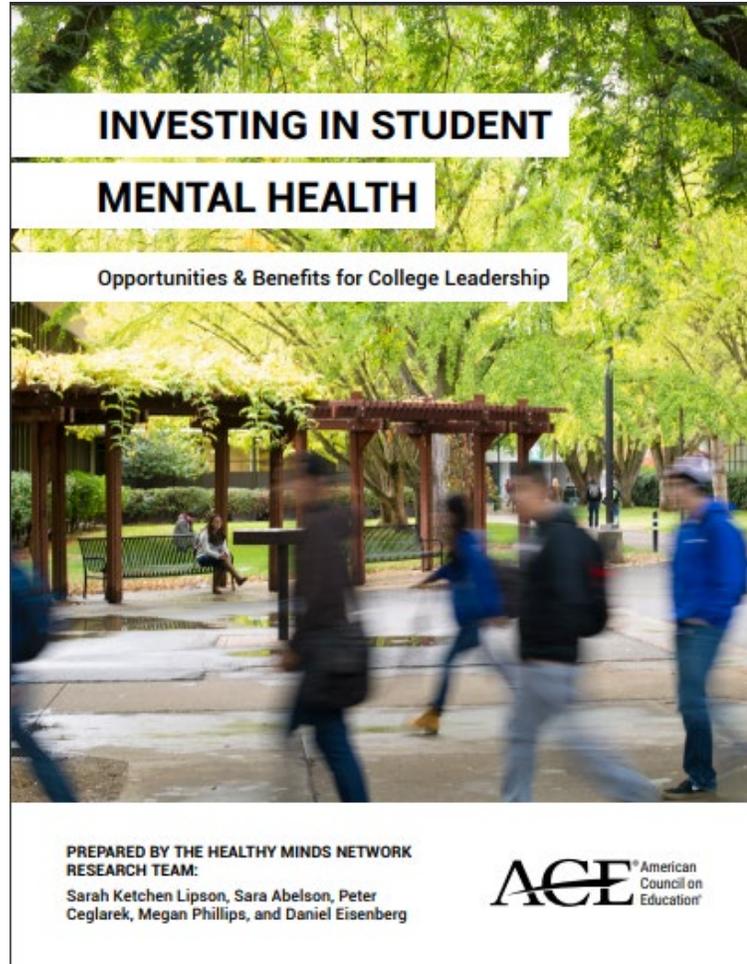
Identifying the Need

Roughly one-in-five college students provide primary care to at least one child while pursuing a higher education credential.¹ Parenting students show very strong commitments to education and excel at higher rates than other students when placed on a level playing field.² The economic and social returns on their education are particularly strong, accruing across generations.³

Yet parenting students remain an often-overlooked group and continue to receive inadequate support. They experience basic needs insecurity at alarming rates, reducing their odds of completing valuable degrees.⁴ Shortages on food and safe housing disproportionately affect single parents of young children, Asian, Black and Latinx parenting students, and Black fathers working toward their degrees.

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Reports & Briefs



Visit:
**American Council on
Education Mental
Health Resources**

Reports & Briefs



VIRTUAL EVENT

Insights From First-Gen Students

ON DEMAND: How do first-generation students define themselves? A panel of students and recent graduates joins The Chronicle to share their stories and offer ideas of how colleges can best serve their needs.

[Watch on demand](#)



VIRTUAL EVENT

The Lessons From Making First-Gen a Priority

ON DEMAND: Colleges have made first-generation students a priority, but what does it really mean to focus on their needs? And what lessons learned can be applied to other students on campus? The Chronicle gathers virtually with student-services and academic-services leaders to share their insights.



EXPLAINER

Who Is a First-Generation Student?

The definition of first-generation varies both on campuses and off. This explainer looks at the characteristics, challenges, and concerns of first-gen students and how colleges can best support them.

[Download now](#)

Chronicle of Higher Ed Student Success Resource Center

An Invitation: Join Us!



Hope Impact Partnerships

Hope.temple.edu

Support **recovery efforts** and **advance equity in college attainment** by providing **education and training services** to help staff and faculty advance student basic needs efforts anchoring in data and research.



Student basic
needs survey



Data
dashboard



Training &
advocacy

Advocacy & Policy Change

The background of the central graphic is a photograph of the Reichstag building in Berlin, Germany, with a red tint. The text is overlaid on this image.

COALITION LETTER TO CONGRESS ADVOCATING FOR SUPPORT FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

April 2022

Visit: hope.temple.edu



Q&A

“The college experience changes from generation to generation. The way you experienced college will not be the same way that your kids or grandkids experience college. **Listen to, support, & empathize** with the college students in your life.”

-2023 Hope Survey Participant

What are the most innovative ways your college is supporting the mental health of first-gen students?

What are your biggest barriers/challenges to supporting first-gen student mental health?

How are you connecting the dots and breaking down silos between your first-gen support initiatives (e.g., TRIO services), your student basic needs efforts, and your mental health services?

Reach out:

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