



Student Mental and Behavioral Health Task Force November 2023

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Background:

Student mental and behavioral health is a critical component of a student's academic and personal journey. Over half (53%) of students stated their mental health and well-being as fair, poor, or very poor, with over 40% stating it has gotten worse over the last twelve months. Between 2013 – 2021, there has been a 50% increase in the number of college students exhibiting one or more mental health issues. Nationally, well-being of college students has suffered due to concerns about affordability of housing and basic food needs. The impact of the lack of mental health services can lead to poor academic achievement, stress, anxiety, depression, poor retention rates, unhealthy relationships, and lack of productivity. (Sources: Gallup, "The State of Higher Education 2022 Report"; Hanover Research). At a recent meeting with the UNT System Student Regent, HSC Cabinet, and SGA Presidents, they recognized the need for HSC to review our current services for students related to mental and behavioral health needs.

Charge of the Task Force:

Under the directive of the Provost and Executive Vice President of Health Systems, our task force was charged with providing input, ideas and potential solutions to addressing our student's needs. Some areas of focus for review include:

- Cost of living for students (i.e. Ph.D. stipends that currently don't cover all costs)
- Student Emergency Fund
- Counselor accessibility/availability, especially for crisis situations
- Current telehealth mental health services
- Core needs for mental health support

The first phase of the task force will be to:

- Gather data and assessments surrounding the current state of mental and behavioral health of HSC students (bring to 1st meeting week of October 16)
- Provide potential solutions and ideas (week of October 23)
- Draft feedback to share out with the sponsors, Dr. Charles Taylor and Jessica Rangel, by November 1
- Share feedback at the November 7 Cabinet meeting in conjunction with the Division of Student Affairs and HSC Health's presentation related to student mental health.

The second phase of charges for the working group could then be fashioned after feedback from the Cabinet at the November 7 meeting.

Introduction:

The HSC Whole Health framework provides a lens to examine and address the holistic needs of our students to support their persistence, graduation and positive-post degree outcomes. In reviewing current data and assessments surrounding the current state of student mental and behavioral health of HSC students and our current support services, the task force identified the critical need to elevate three primary components of the Whole Health Model to support student success: Mental Health, Financial Health, and Self-Care. To expand our understanding, we assessed the data and current state for our students in these three areas. Then, we reported the primary prevention strategies and efforts implemented across HSC campus. We also incorporated research/best practices for tackling these components and core needs and opportunities. Finally, we included potential solutions to address improving the mental and financial health as well as self-care for our students and related support services.

MENTAL HEALTH DEFINED:

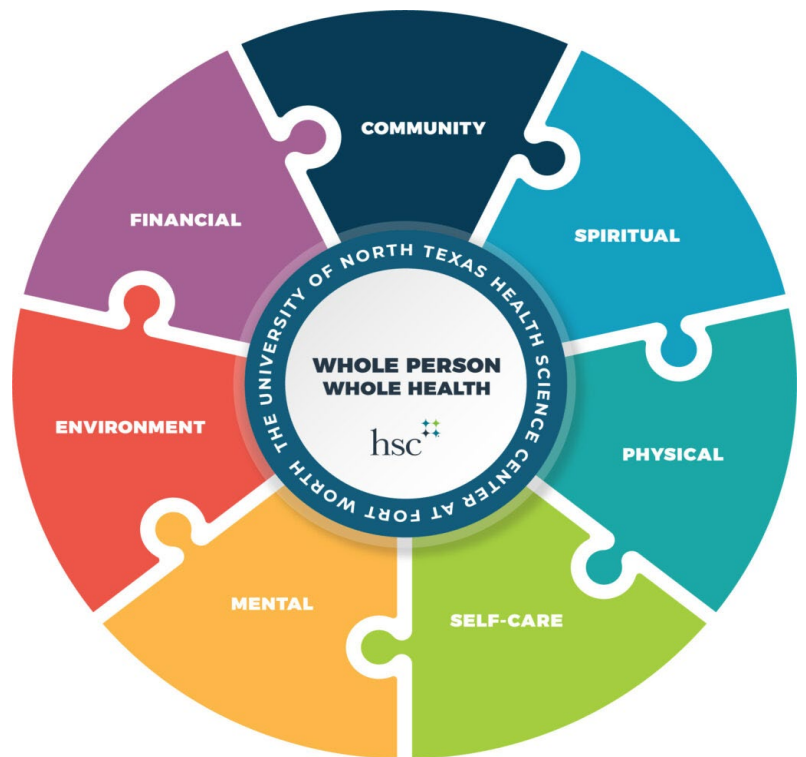
Connecting people with the programs and resources they need to maintain a state of well-being.

FINANCIAL HEALTH DEFINED:

Helping people navigate the complex financial landscape through referrals and advocacy.

SELF-CARE DEFINED:

Empowering people to identify their own needs.



Through the integration of the Whole Health approach to supporting our students' well-being and success, HSC demonstrates a commitment to **Our Value of We Care**: Champion a people-first approach to building relationships and community.

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Mental Health:

Definition:

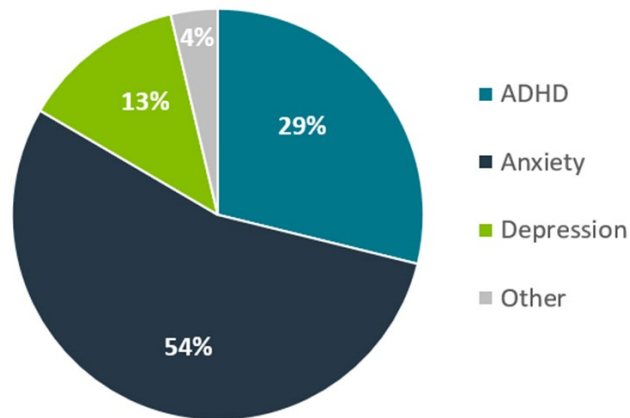
Connecting people with the programs and resources they need to maintain a state of well-being.

Current State (Data & Assessment):

- The Office of Care and Civility administers the National College Health Assessment to HSC students every two years to understand the health behaviors and health needs of HSC students. The information below comes from the survey conducted in the Fall of 2022 with a response rate of 17.9%.
 - **36% of HSC students report being diagnosed with at least one mental health condition.** Most prevalent diagnoses include:
 - Anxiety (25.1%)
 - Depression (19.2%)
 - ADD/ADHD (10.7%)
 - PTSD and other trauma/stressor-related conditions (3.7%)
 - **Non-specific Psychological Distress (Kessler 6):**
 - 35% - No or low psychological distress (down from 70% in 2020)
 - 51% - Moderate psychological distress (up from 17% in 2020)
 - 14% - Serious psychological distress (up from 13% in 2020)
 - **Loneliness (ULS3):** 41.5% of HSC students test positive for loneliness (up from 39.8% in 2020)
 - **Resilience (CD-RISC2)** (higher score indicates higher resilience):
 - Mean: 6.32 (up from 6.25 in 2020), Standard Deviation: 1.44 (up from 1.41 in 2020)
- Student health clinic data / Utilization and capacity for services
 - **Student Health FY23 Encounters (patient volume):**
 - Primary Care Provider: 4,044
 - Psychiatry: 352
 - New June 2023: Counseling: 67 (120 Encounters July through September)
 - **Utilization of Student Health Clinic Services** (last 3-month average, excludes student required screen/vaccines):
 - Primary Care: 50% (1.2 FTE Clinicians)
 - Psychiatry: 67% (.3 FTE)
 - Counseling: 67% (.4 FTE)

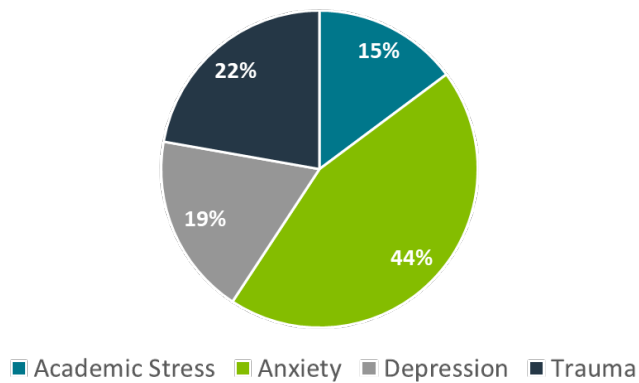
- Capacity exists within the Student Health Clinic for Mental Health services provided by a primary care or mental health provider
 - Referral for ADHD testing available in the Health Pavilion via the Neuropsychology Clinic
 - All services are offered for both in-person or virtual care
 - Student demand for services follow seasonal service demands
- **Student Health Mental Health DX:**

Mental Health Diagnoses Among Students
September 2022 - September 2023



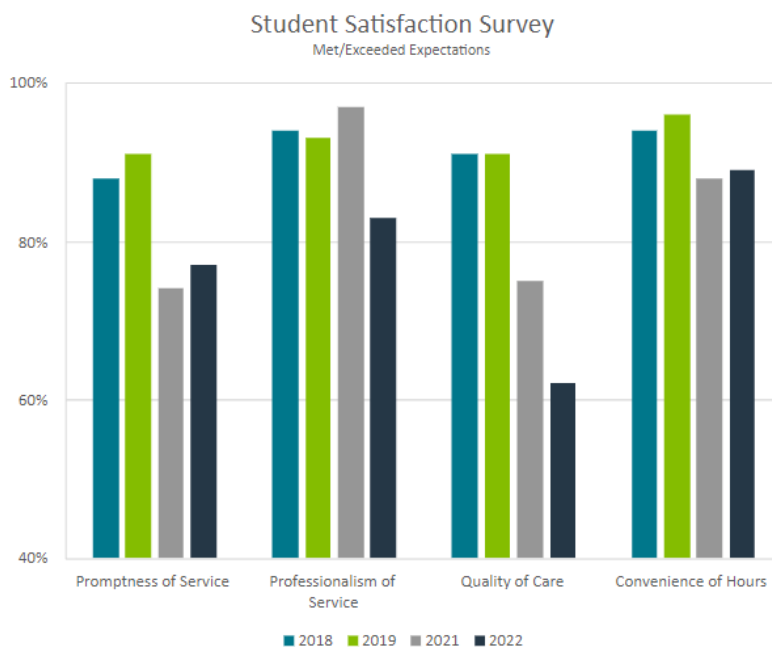
- **Student Health Counseling Services (June 2023 – September 2023):**

MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IDENTIFIED



- **Student Assistance Program**

- In FY 2023, 220 unique students leveraged the online Student Assistance Program, TELUS Health, which provides 24/7 free, confidential access to counseling to students via a telehealth platform. The most prevalent presenting issues were anxiety (35%), stress (25%), and depression (6%). While TELUS Health provides counseling and resources, students’ satisfaction with the service has declined. In the 2022 Student Satisfaction Survey, only 62% of students believed the quality of care provided by TELUS Health met or exceeded their expectations.



- The Student Health Clinic manages an appointment calendar of scheduled visits rather than operating with a walk-in service model. In the event of a student mental health emergency, the Care Team works with our Student Assistance Program provider, community mental health agencies, HSC PD, and the Student Health Clinic to ensure a student has access to appropriate and timely resources such as a therapist or psychiatric evaluation.

Primary Prevention Efforts and Strategies:

- The current Quality Enhancement Plan for HSC is Be|Well, a program integrated in all colleges and schools at HSC to promote an environment supportive of health and wellbeing for HSC students and particularly tuned for student needs in their varied educational paths through HSC. The program is comprised of three Student Learning Outcomes:
 1. Students will identify concepts associated with wellbeing, emotional intelligence, and resilience.
 2. Students will create a stress management growth plan as part of the emotional intelligence pathway program.
 3. Students will develop capacities for resilience to support their success in school and future professions.

- The Office of Care and Civility provides wellness-related programming for students. Events range from targeted initiatives such as suicide prevention trainings to study breaks with meditation and mindfulness resources.
- Beginning in September of 2023, the Office of Care and Civility opened “The Mindful Corner,” a dedicated space for stress reduction and relaxation located in the Founders Activity Center. The space offers users the ability to adjust lighting and sound and express their creativity through a whiteboard wall. Additionally, users can find coloring pages, fidget toys, and soft seating to offer them an environment as well as tools to elevate their wellbeing. The Mindful Corner is open and available to students during Fitness Center hours.

Research/Best Practices:

- Hanover Research presented the following key findings in a report on Best Practices: Mental Health Services (October 2022):
 - **Research:**
 - Stress is the leading issue affecting students nationally.
 - African American and Hispanic students are more likely to seek on campus support services, while women are more likely to seek off campus support services.
 - Several cultural groups have high levels of stigma attached to mental health care. Due to historical narratives and experiences, Black and Asian persons are more likely to think negatively of mental health care and less likely than other groups to seek support.
 - Among case studies, many institutions lack sufficient trained staff to meet campus need.
 - Most higher education students are unaware of the mental health resources available at their institution.
 - The COVID 19 pandemic significantly altered how higher education institutions deliver mental health services.
 - **Best Practices:**
 - In a survey of 477 counseling center directors, 85% provide individual counseling and 72.9% offer group counseling.
 - Peer counseling is an increasingly in demand mental health service. However, in order for peer counseling to be similarly effective to professional counseling, institutions must provide robust, uniform training to student counselors.
 - Telemental health was used by over 95 percent of counseling and mental health centers in the 2020-2021 academic year.
 - Phone applications and external counseling services are used by many higher education counseling and mental health centers.

- In a survey of 329 counseling center directors, 47% use a version of stepped care. Per the Association of University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD), stepped care “refers to a service delivery model that starts with the least intensive intervention that is likely to meet the needs of the client.” Levels within a stepped care model include: self-help resources, skills-building groups, individual therapy, peer support, therapy groups, and psychiatric services.
- Institutions are diversifying staff and increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity to appeal to a wide range of students.

Financial Health:

Definition:

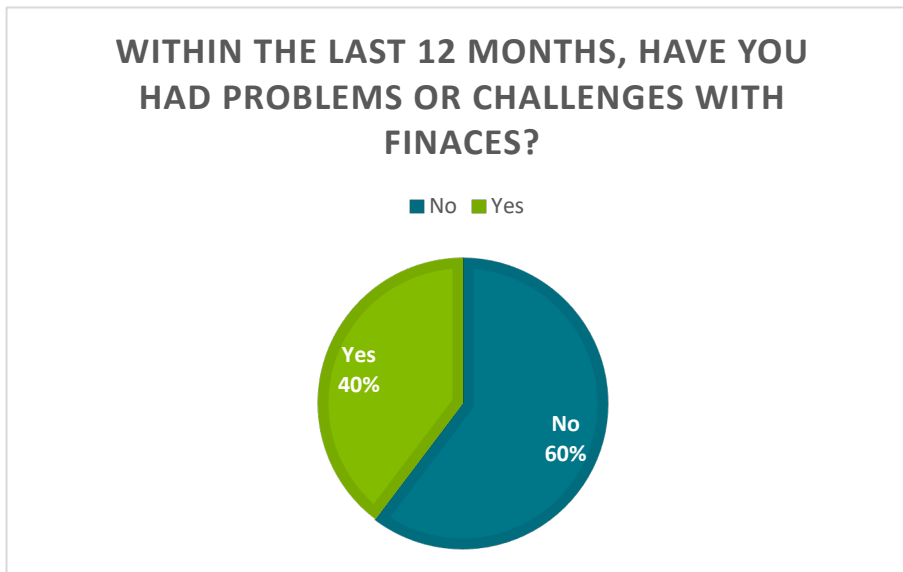
Helping people navigate the complex financial landscape through referrals and advocacy.

Current State (Data & Assessment):

- HSC National College Health Assessment Fall 2022 Data on Housing:

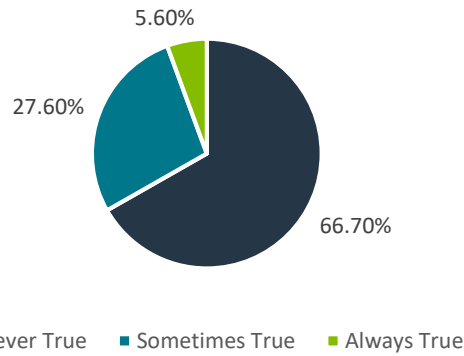
■ Housing	
Campus or university housing:	0.0 %
Fraternity or sorority residence:	0.0 %
Parent/guardian/other family:	19.2 %
Off-campus:	79.9 %
Temporary or "couch surfing":	0.5 %
Don't have a place to live:	0.0 %
Other:	0.5 %

- HSC National College Health Assessment Fall 2022 Data on Finances:

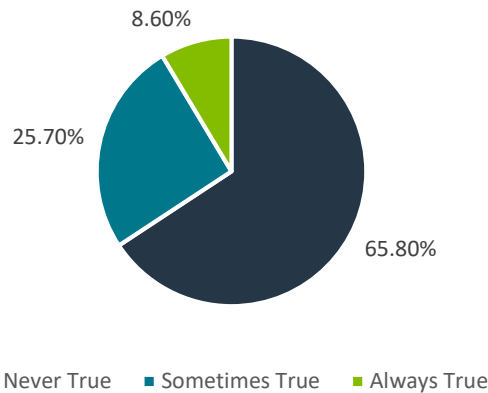


- **HSC National College Health Assessment Fall 2022 Data on Food Security:**

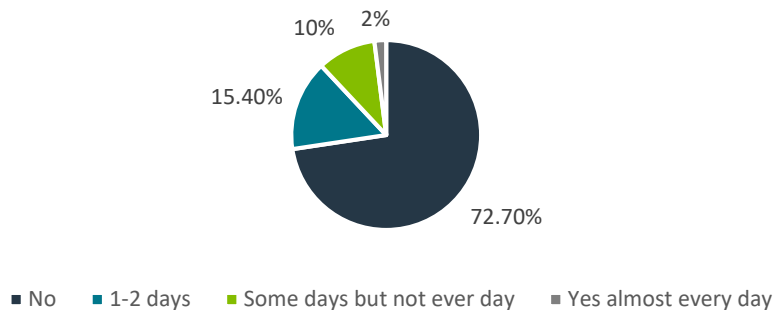
IN THE LAST 30 DAYS, THE FOOD THAT I BOUGHT JUST DIDN'T LAST, AND I DIDN'T HAVE MONEY TO GET MORE.



IN THE LAST 30 DAYS, I COULDN'T AFFORD TO EAT BALANCED MEALS.



IN THE LAST 30 DAYS, DID YOU EVER CUT THE SIZE OF YOUR MEALS OR SKIP MEALS BECAUSE THERE WASN'T ENOUGH MONEY FOR FOOD?



- **HSC National College Health Assessment Food Insecurity Comparison: 2020 vs 2022:**

	2020	2022
<i>High or marginal food security</i>	77.9%	68%
<i>Low food security</i>	14.6%	21.5%
<i>Very low food security</i>	7.5%	10.5%
<i>Any food insecurity (low or very low food security)</i>	22%	32%

- **Student Satisfaction Survey 2022 Data on Student Food Pantry:**

Have you utilized the Student Food Pantry?	% Respondents	N
Yes	9.35%	94
No	90.65%	911
Total	100.00%	1005

Sort	Convenience of hours	% Respondents	N
1	Meets or Exceeds Expectations	90.36%	75
2	Below Expectations	9.64%	8
		100.00%	83

Sort	Quantity of items available	% Respondents	N
1	Meets or Exceeds Expectations	86.36%	76
2	Below Expectations	13.64%	12
		100.00%	88

- **Student Assistance Resource Center Data on Food Pantry:**

Food Pantry:

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Total Visits	323	493	133	542	820
Total Pounds of Food	1928.8	1716.14	1639.17	2377.9	3018.58
<i>SSC - Visits</i>	323	223	133	357	570
<i>SSC - Pounds of Food</i>	1928.8	1250.08	1639.17	2022.37	2629.60
<i>Library - Visits</i>	0	270	0	185	250
<i>Library - Pounds of Food</i>	0	466.06	0	355.53	388.98

- **FY 2023 Highlight:** The HSC Food Pantry had a total of 820 visits and served an estimated total of 3,018 pounds of food.

- **Student Assistance Resource Center Data on Clothing Closet:**

	FY 2023
Total Visits	42
Total Items Taken	163

- **FY 2023 Highlight:** The HSC Clothing Closet had a total of 42 visits and provided over 160 items of clothing to students.

- **Student Assistance Resource Center Data on Student Emergency Fund:**

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Number of Requests	137	108	127	74
Number of Requests Funded	80	44	20	14
Average Award Amount	\$1,003.06	\$839.77	\$877.50	\$1,129.50
Total Dollar Amount Awarded	\$80,245.00	\$36,950.00	\$17,550.00	\$15,813.00

- **FY 2023 Highlight:** The Student Emergency Fund awarded a total of 14 students for a total dollar amount of \$15,813.

- **2023-2024 Cost of Attendance –PhD SBS and SPH students:**

SBS PhD		SUMMER 2 Months	FALL 5 Months	SPRING 5 Months	TOTAL 12 Months
Tuition	Resident	\$612	\$1,224	\$1,224	\$3,060
	Non-Resident	\$3,102	\$6,036	\$6,036	\$15,174
Fees	Resident	\$376	\$704	\$704	\$1,784
	Non-Resident	\$376	\$704	\$704	\$1,784
Books, Course Material, Supplies		\$700	\$1,375	\$1,375	\$3,450
Living Expenses (Housing & Food)		\$4,180	\$10,450	\$10,450	\$25,080
Transportation/Travel		\$684	\$1,846	\$1,846	\$4,376
Personal/Miscellaneous Expenses		\$744	\$1,860	\$1,860	\$4,464
Health Insurance		\$726	\$1,362	\$1,362	\$3,450
Loan Fees	Resident	\$72	\$72	\$72	\$216
	Non-Resident	\$72	\$72	\$72	\$216
Cost of Attendance	Resident	\$8,094	\$18,893	\$18,893	\$45,880
	Non-Resident	\$10,584	\$23,705	\$23,705	\$57,994

The COA is based on anticipated enrollment of 6 credit hours for summer, 12 credit hours for fall, and 12 credit hours for spring.

*Master's (excluding Online), Med-Sci (excluding Med-Sci Online), and PhD programs will include a one-time \$2,000 budget to cover the technology fee for first time students.

SPH PhD		SUMMER 2 Months	FALL 5 Months	SPRING 5 Months	TOTAL 12 Months
Tuition	Resident	\$612	\$1,224	\$1,224	\$3,060
	Non-Resident	\$3,108	\$6,048	\$6,048	\$15,204
Fees	Resident	\$329	\$709	\$709	\$1,747
	Non-Resident	\$329	\$709	\$709	\$1,747
Books, Course Material, Supplies		\$400	\$625	\$625	\$1,650
Living Expenses (Housing & Food)		\$4,180	\$10,450	\$10,450	\$25,080
Transportation/Travel		\$684	\$1,846	\$1,846	\$4,376
Personal/Miscellaneous Expenses		\$744	\$1,860	\$1,860	\$4,464
Health Insurance		\$726	\$1,362	\$1,362	\$3,450
Loan Fees	Resident	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$393
	Non-Resident	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$393
Cost of Attendance	Resident	\$7,806	\$18,207	\$18,207	\$44,220
	Non-Resident	\$10,302	\$23,031	\$23,031	\$56,364
The COA is based on anticipated enrollment of 6 credit hours for summer, 12 credit hours for fall, and 12 credit hours for spring.					

- **PhD stipends – SBS and SPH students**

- SBS: The stipend is \$30,000. Tuition and fees are paid separately, and the average tuition and fees payment for PhD students in their first 18 months is \$2900-3100/semester, depending on the discipline. Health insurance is not currently covered; however, SBS will begin paying for health insurance in Fall 2024.
- SPH: The stipend is \$32,000 and SPH pays for tuition, fees, and health insurance.

Primary Prevention Efforts and Strategies:

Food Pantry: *The HSC Food Pantry was established on campus in an effort to assist HSC students impacted by food insecurity. The HSC Food Pantry does not require application or approval and is available to any student in need. Locations: Student Service Center, room 180 (open Monday through Friday) | Library, room 450 (accessible any time the Library is open). Additionally, the Student Assistance Resource Center has established a relationship with Tarrant Area Food Bank to provide support to the HSC Food Pantry.*

Clothing Closet: *The HSC student clothes closet provides professional attire for students who are in need of professional wear. The student clothes closet is stocked with a wide variety of professional wear for all students. Location: Student Service Center, room 232. The Student Assistance Resource Center also holds mobile Clothing Closet events throughout the year.*

Student Emergency Fund: *The Student Emergency Fund provides emergency financial assistance to enrolled students who are experiencing temporary emergency need due to unforeseen or uncontrollable circumstances. Students may apply for emergency funding through an online application. The Student Emergency Fund has standard operating procedures that are reviewed and approved in accordance with Financial Aid regulations.*

Housing Resources: *The Student Assistance Resource Center (SARC) has provided a DFW Housing Resource guide for students. SARC will conduct community outreach efforts to provide housing options for students and establish relationships to connect students with housing resources.*

Budgeting/Money Management Resources: *The Financial Aid Office provides links to budgeting tools and money management resources on their website. Additionally, the Financial Aid Office offers financial literacy and money management workshops throughout the year.*

Research/Best Practices:

- The Education Advisory Board (EAB) presented the following key findings in a report on Addressing College Students' Basic Needs: Food and Housing Insecurity on Campus (2018):
 - Best Practices:
 - **Maximizing Connectedness to Existing Resources.**
 - **Centralize Information.** Students can be overwhelmed when trying to find resources to address their food and housing needs.
 - **Provide Guided Application Support.** Confusing or daunting application processes can also prevent students from connecting with available resources.
 - **Create Structured Channels for Surplus Resources.** Colleges and universities often have surplus resources that could be useful for students struggling with basic needs insecurity.
 - **Cultivating a Campus-Wide Referral Network.**
 - **Identify Key Frontline Partners.** By bringing in members of the campus community, campus leaders can reach more students who need help—not just the ones who step forward to central resources or case management staff.
 - **Provide Just-in-Time Information.** Institutions should build a culture of awareness, support, and care around students' basic needs.
 - **Facilitate Easy Referrals.** Once individuals across campus identify a student is struggling to meet his or her basic needs, the next step is to make it easy for them to refer the student to the appropriate resources.
 - **Exploring Sustainable Funding and Staffing Models.**
 - **Pursue Collaborative Partnerships with Development.** Finding sustainable and adequate funding presents a significant barrier to starting new programs and initiatives to support basic needs insecure students.
 - **Identify the Right Staffing Model.** As institutions support increasing numbers of students experiencing basic needs insecurity, EAB recommends exploring more sustainable staffing structures.

Self-Care:

Definition:

Empowering people to identify their own needs.

Current State (Data & Assessment):

- The Office of Care and Civility administers the National College Health Assessment to HSC students every two years to understand the health behaviors and health needs of HSC students. The information below comes from the survey conducted in the Fall of 2022 with a response rate of 17.9%.
 - **Exercise:**
 - 43% of students do not meet the guidelines for recommended amount of aerobic exercise
 - 40% of students report using the Fitness Center in the past year (n=636).
 - Over 90% of students' expectations are met or exceeded in the activities and programs, fitness classes, and hours of operation of the Fitness Center, and around 80% of students feel the exercise equipment and exercise facilities meet or exceed their expectations.
 - **Nutrition and BMI:**
 - 35.5% of HSC students have either low food security (21.3%) or very low food security (10.5%) based on the USDA Six-Item Short Form Survey which is part of the NCHA Instrument.
 - 9% of HSC students (n=1,005) report using the HSC Food Pantry, according to the Student Satisfaction Survey results for 2022.
 - Currently 52.5% of HSC students are in the health weight range for BMI (18.5-24.9)
 - 41.8% of students are overweight, and 15.2% of HSC students meet the criteria for obesity (BMI of 30+)
 - **Sleep:**
 - 48.5% of HSC students report less than 7 hours of sleep on average. This is an increase from 43.4% of students in 2020, and more HSC students fall into this category than graduate and professional students nationwide (42.8%).

Primary Prevention Efforts and Strategies:

- At the HSC Student Health Clinic, all students are screened for anxiety and depression using standard screening tools (GAD-7 and PHQ-9) when establishing care, during routine physicals, annually at routine visits, or as needed.

- Through the Be|Well Program, students create a Stress Management Growth Plan that focuses on identifying the source of stress and creating a meaningful action plan to engage the root cause of that stress. Students are also equipped with working knowledge of emotional intelligence skills that can help them navigate future challenges.
- The Division of Student Affairs hosts many student support services to assist students in identifying and managing personal and academic concerns related to disability, careers, financial aid, and student involvement. Additionally, The Office of Care and Civility and the Student Assistance Resource Center manage the Care Team. The Care Teams provides 1-1 non-clinical case management services to help students navigate their individual needs emphasizing HSC and community-based resources.

Research/Best Practices:

Self-care is not selfish, but necessary for academic success and personal well-being. Prioritizing self-care promotes resiliency throughout a student’s academic journey and helps to establish healthy routines that can prevent burnout post-graduation.

Self-care is essential for students in rigorous undergraduate and graduate school programs as it helps to maintain their physical and mental well-being. Best practices for self-care interventions should consider the following areas for education and intervention:

1. **Regular Exercise:** Physical activity is crucial for reducing stress and maintaining good health. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. This can include activities like walking, jogging, yoga, or any sport you enjoy. Areas of focus should include cardio, stretching, strength training, and core exercises.
2. **Healthy Eating:** Proper nutrition is essential for the brain and body to function optimally. Consuming a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains is ideal. Avoid excessive caffeine and junk food. Time and cost are the two most common barriers to healthy eating for younger college students.
3. **Adequate Sleep:** Ensure you get enough sleep. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. Sleep is crucial for memory consolidation and overall cognitive function. Lack of routine, burn-out, procrastination are key reasons that end up impacting sleep.
4. **Stress Management:** Develop stress management techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, mindfulness, or progressive muscle relaxation. These practices can help reduce anxiety and improve your focus.
5. **Set Realistic Goals:** Avoid overloading with cognitive load for students with coursework or extracurricular activities. Set realistic, achievable goals to reduce stress and prevent burnout.
6. **Social Support:** Maintain connections with family and friends. Socializing and sharing your experiences with peers can provide emotional support. Additionally, depression and anxiety symptoms are reduced, as socialization can be cathartic.
7. **Know when to seek Professional Help:** When struggling with mental health, students should know how and where to go to seek support from a counselor, therapist, or mental health professional.
8. **Time Off:** Take regular breaks from studying. Even short breaks can help recharge the body and brain. Setting aside one day a week for leisure and relaxation.

9. **Hobbies and Interests:** Engage in hobbies and activities that bring joy. Having interests outside of academic work is another way to reduce stress.
10. **Stay Organized:** Routines and organization, including workspaces and materials, can reduce stress and increase productivity.
11. **Self-Compassion:** Knowing how to be kind to yourself. Fail often and fail early is a motto that reinforces the importance of life experiences and the lessons that can be learned with every opportunity. Self-compassion is essential for maintaining mental well-being.
12. **Mindful Technology Use:** Be mindful of technology usage. Limit the time spent on social media and digital devices, as they can be sources of stress and distraction.
13. **Self-Reflect:** Regularly assess your self-care routine and adjust as needed. What works for one person may not work for another, so it is important to tailor self-care to individual needs.
14. **Create a Support Network:** Build a network of fellow graduate students who can offer support, share experiences, and provide motivation.

Conclusions:

Mental Health

Identified Core Needs and Opportunities:

- HSC Health Student Health will continue to look for opportunities to expand clinical mental health services offered (challenges: Behavioral Health providers, from psychiatrist to licensed counselors, are in high demand everywhere across the nation and at a premium rate of pay).
- As the QEP for HSC, Be|Well provides fantastic structure and curricular integration of wellbeing concepts in all academic programs. There is an opportunity to extend this program beyond its time as QEP to continue to visibly and meaningfully embed wellbeing and resilience into the fabric of student life at HSC.
- Given Student Satisfaction Survey data around the current telehealth provider, TELUS Health, there is a significant need to explore alternative options and transition providers.

Financial Health

Identified Core Needs and Opportunities:

Housing:

- Rent has steadily increased in DFW, placing a greater burden on students. Additionally, housing near campus is extremely limited. This creates both fewer and more expensive housing options for HSC students.

Food Pantry:

- As food pantry usage increases, it is critical and necessary to ensure that the food pantry remains stocked. Continuing to leverage partnerships with TAFB, in addition to partnering with Institutional Advancement, can help to maximize contributions of community partners.
- There is not a current way to communicate in real time with users of the food pantry. Identifying communication methods can assist in notifying students when certain items are stocked, etc.

Student Emergency Fund:

- The two greatest considerations for the Student Emergency fund is that it is 100% dependent on donations and the intersection with financial aid regulations. Current financial aid regulations are:
 - Any award (i.e., loans, grants, scholarship, SEF) disbursed to a student goes toward their Cost of Attendance (COA).
 - A SEF award can be awarded to a student as long as they have not reached their COA.
 - If a student has reached their COA, then in order to offer a SEF award a Special Circumstance form approval is required to increase their COA due to the special circumstance.
 - Financial Aid only considers extraordinary and unexpected expenses and will not consider things like car payments, copays, and routine medical or automobile expenses.

- A SEF award is processed as financial assistance in the form of a scholarship in the students' financial aid record.
- **It is important to note that Financial Aid is anticipating changes beginning the 24-25 academic year that may result in SEF awards no longer impacting a student's COA. Financial Aid is still waiting to receive final regulations from the Department of Education.*
- Opportunities exist to continue partnering with Institutional Advancement on fundraising efforts and to continue to re-evaluate SOPs to ensure sustainability and the regulatory nature of the fund.

Self-Care

Core Needs and Opportunities:

1. Cultivate a Supportive Environment: Emphasize a “We Care” culture that supports self-care.
2. Support and accountability: Provide ongoing support and accountability by changing in with our students regularly. What we talk about is what is seen as important to our students. Do we start lectures off by asking about self-care?
3. Model Self-care: How do we lead by example? We consistently survey the students about self-care, but we do not assess ourselves. Those who model it well should share their experiences and successes (and failures) with implementation.
4. Empower Choice: Autonomy leads to engagement. Encouraging autonomy and choice in self-care practices is key. Everyone is different, so allow individuals to choose and explore which self-care activities resonate with them.
5. Education: What is self-care and why is it important? Explain the physical and mental health benefits of self-care practices.

Solutions:

Mental Health

Potential Solutions and Ideas:

- HSC Student Health continue to support and develop clinical mental health services to meet the student/patient need.
- Promote yearly physical exam to students which includes mental health screening, general counseling and information regarding resources.
- Increase in-person counseling services to students on campus.
- Change the provider of the Student Assistance Program.
- Extend support for Be|Well past the 5-year Quality Enhancement Plan cycle slated to conclude in 2025. This includes financial support for initiatives such as Be|Well week each semester and financial support for every HSC student to take the EQi 2.0 assessment to understand their emotional intelligence and the ways that it intersects with their wellbeing.
- Work with deans of academic colleges and schools to recognize the university service of Wellbeing Champions and Emotional Intelligence Champions that are embedded within each college.
- Sponsor two HSC Staff to become certified [Mental Health First Aid](#) Instructors and provide financial support for large-scale campus-wide training sessions with an emphasis on equipping faculty and staff to respond to students' mental health needs appropriately.
- Review and refine communication about resources and options available to students if there is a mental health crisis.

Financial Health

Potential Solutions and Ideas:

Housing:

- Continue to develop partnerships with community agencies in DFW to identify housing resources.
- Partner with Clinical Education areas across campus to identify a list of affordable housing options for remote site/clinical students.

Food Pantry:

- Explore communication options to create tailored messaging for the food pantry through tools like the HSC app.
- Continue to work with TAFB to ensure diversified food options are available.

Student Emergency Fund:

- Continue to review Student Emergency Fund Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for alignment with best practices and process improvement.
- Communicate with student leaders to answer questions and create clarity as it relates to the Student Emergency fund.

Money Management:

- Explore creation of a Money Management Center, similar to [UNT's Money Management Center](#).

Ph.D. Stipends

- Research Ph.D. student funding models at peer institutions to explore opportunities/strategies for increasing stipends.

Self-Care**Potential Solutions and Ideas:**

- Increase marketing and awareness of the HSC Food Pantry Program, as usage (9% of students) is well below the number of students with some food insecurity (35.5%).
- Publish a self-care assessment tool that allows students to identify potential areas of focus and the associated HSC resources.
- Highlight the self-care component within The “We Care” culture including how we assess our own self-care how to ask about other’s self-care.
- Leverage faculty and advisors within colleges to improve education about self-care techniques as well as impact when self-care is neglected.
- Continued assessments (much like the surveys already conducted) to monitor self-care barriers and effectiveness.