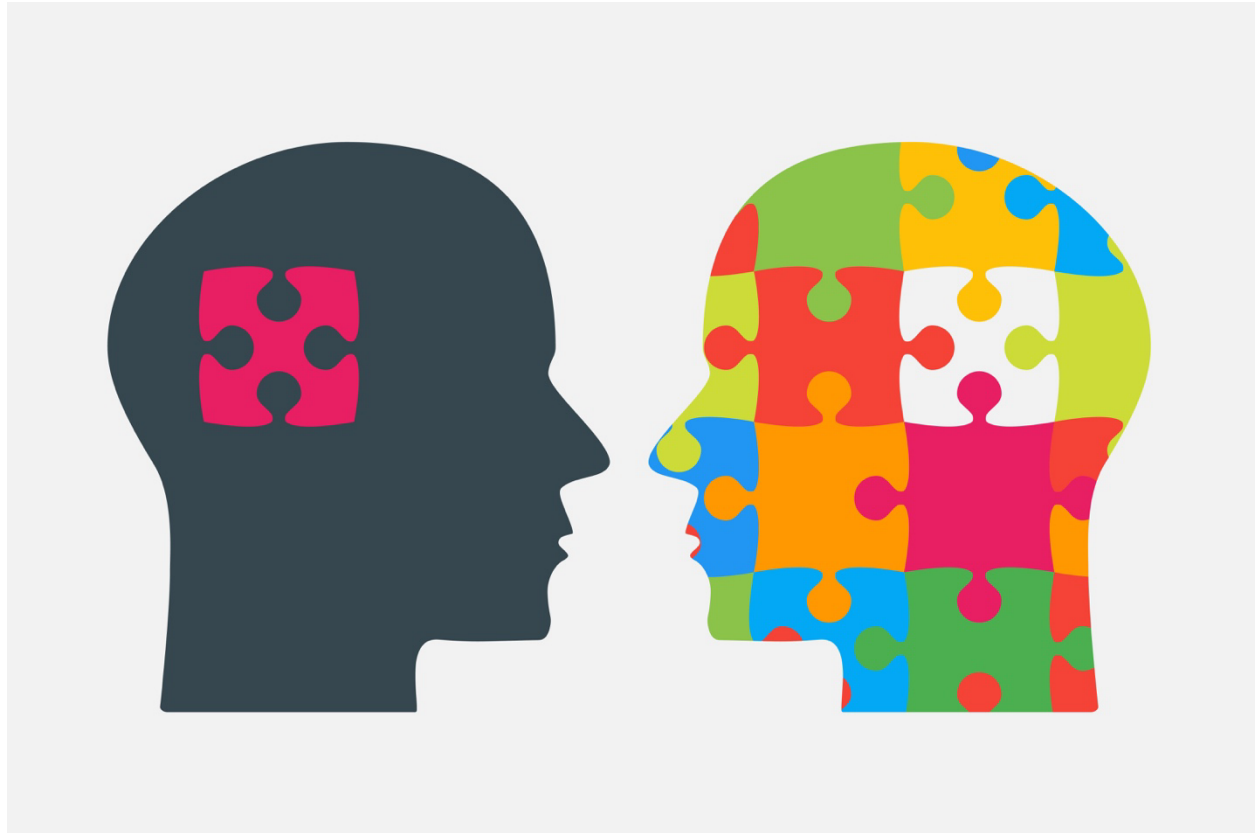


**UPDATED 2024!**

## **A Parent's Guide to College Student Mental Health (Ithaca Edition)**

*Prepared by The Sophie Fund*



Sending children off to college is an exciting experience for many parents. Naturally, our focus is on the wonderful opportunities they will have, as we look with pride upon their promising passage into adulthood. But these stressful times require parents to also fully grasp the serious mental health challenges their students *may* face, and be equipped to provide support.

What do parents need to know?

Though some may hide or downplay it, college creates a load of stressors for many young people including those whose identities are partly formed around past outstanding achievement. There's the stress of managing independence without the support of families and friends back home; the stress of fitting in with new peer groups and romantic relationships; the stress of meeting personal and family expectations amid tougher and more competitive academics; the stress of landing summer internships, applying to grad school, and finding career opportunities after graduation.

Rates of depression and anxiety are high among college students. In fact, many students carry suicidal thoughts. Sexual assault is prevalent among college students. Hazing violence as an initiation rite at fraternities and some student organizations is a serious problem.

All of these factors pose even greater risks for students who arrive on campus with a mental health or substance use disorder. College psychological counseling centers are typically overwhelmed by demands for appointments, and navigating community mental health services and insurance coverage can exacerbate stress.

In short, many parents cannot imagine that the happy and excited kid that they dropped off at the campus dorm could develop a serious mental health problem while at college. Yet, failure to understand the realities of college student life today, and help with challenges that may arise, can lead to serious consequences.

"Mental health problems can affect many areas of students' lives, reducing their quality of life, academic achievement, physical health, and satisfaction with the college experience, and negatively impacting relationships with friends and family members," says the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center \(SPRC\)](#). "These issues can also have long-term consequences for students, affecting their future employment, earning potential, and overall health."

Some specific data to know:

- 75 percent of mental illness cases begin by age 24, according to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#).
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people aged 15-24 years (second among 10-14 age group), according to the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).
- Almost half of college students surveyed reported academic problems or challenges in the past 12 months, and 86.1 percent of those students reported academics causing moderate to high levels of distress, according to the [Spring 2024 National College Health Assessment](#); 8.7 percent considered suicide three or more times in the last 12 months, and 2.2 percent had attempted suicide.
- 34.4 percent of surveyed college students seeking counseling in the 2022-23 academic year had experienced "serious suicidal ideation," (up from 23.8 percent in the 2010-11 academic year who "seriously considered attempting suicide"), according to the [Center for Collegiate Mental Health 2023 Annual Report](#); 10.6 percent of the students seeking counseling had actually made a suicide attempt.
- 22.4 percent of female seniors (or higher) participating in the [Association of American Universities 2019 Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct](#) reported being raped ("completed penetration using physical force or the victim was unable to consent or stop what was happening") since enrolling in college.
- 55 percent of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing, according to ["Hazing in View: College Students at Risk."](#) Since 2000, 105 college students have died from hazing-related incidents, according to author [Hank Nuwer](#).

- In the past month, 22.5 percent of college students used illicit drugs, and 33 percent engaged in binge alcohol drinking, according to a [2019 study](#) by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

When parents *do* fully grasp the scope of the challenges, they are more attuned to how their student is handling the major life transition from home to college. Parents especially need to understand the risk factors and warning signs for a mental health crisis, and how to support their student if they should exhibit cause for concern. Help can range from staying connected with moral support and positive encouragement to evaluating and navigating mental health treatment options at the college counseling center, in the community, or back home during a health leave of absence.

McLean Hospital, a psychiatric teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, provides these basic [tips for parents](#):

- *Prepare Your Child for the Unexpected*
- *The Importance of Staying in Touch and Validation*
- *Encourage Healthy Habits*
- *Make Room for Mistakes*
- *Have a Plan Focused on Student Mental Health*
- *Learn About College Mental Health Services*
- *If a Student Is Struggling, Get Help Immediately*

Here is a curated list of resources for supporting your college student's mental health:

### **Mental Health**

[Risk Factors, Protective Factors, and Warning Signs](#), American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

[Mental Health Conditions](#), National Alliance on Mental Illness

### **Parents**

[Parent and Family Guide: Supporting Your College Student Through Mental Health Challenges](#), Forefront Suicide Prevention

[Set to Go: For Families](#), The JED Foundation

[Set to Go: College Transition](#), The JED Foundation

[A Parent's Guide to College Student Mental Health](#), McLean Hospital

[Mental Health in College](#), National Alliance on Mental Illness

[Life on Campus](#), Mental Health America

[College Depression: What Parents Need to Know](#), Mayo Clinic

## **Cornell University and Ithaca College**

Cornell University: [Mental Health at Cornell](#)

Cornell University: [How to Support Your Student \(Cornell Health\)](#)

Cornell University: [First Year Families](#)

Cornell University: [Resources to Support Your Student](#)

Cornell University: [Family Guide 2020-2021](#)

Ithaca College: [Guiding a First-Year College Student](#)

## **College Mental Health Plans, Reports, and Surveys**

[Commitment to Care: Dartmouth's Strategic Plan for Student Mental Health and Well-Being October 2023](#), Dartmouth University

[Mental Health Review Final Report April 2020](#), Cornell University

[“Recommendations for Improved Student Mental Health at Cornell University,”](#) The Sophie Fund

[Report of the Task Force on Managing Student Mental Health July 2020](#), Harvard University

[The Healthy Minds Study 2022-23](#), The Healthy Minds Network

[Depression, Anxiety, Loneliness Are Peaking in College Students](#), The Brink, Boston University

[Center for Collegiate Mental Health 2023 Annual Report](#)

[The Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors Annual Survey 2021-22](#)

[National College Health Assessment Spring 2023-24](#), American College Health Association

[Supporting Students: A Model Policy for Colleges and Universities](#), Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

[Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Students on College Campuses](#), Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

[Mental Health on College Campuses: Investments, Accommodations Needed to Address Student Needs](#), National Council on Disability

[Prevention and Treatment of Anxiety, Depression, and Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors Among College Students](#), SAMHSA

### **Suicide**

[Suicide among College and University Students in the United States](#), Suicide Prevention Resource Center

[Consequences of Student Mental Health Issues](#), Suicide Prevention Resource Center

### **Sexual Assault**

[Association of American Universities 2019 Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct](#), Association of American Universities

[Campus Sexual Violence](#), Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

### **Hazing**

[Hazing in View: College Students at Risk](#), National Study of Student Hazing 2008

### **Substance Use**

[College Drinking](#), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

[Substance Abuse In College Students: Statistics & Addiction Treatment](#), American Addiction Centers

### **Recent Media Articles**

[“Universities Acknowledge a Mental Health Crisis. Why Is Action So Complicated?,”](#) *The Harvard Crimson*, April 20, 2024

[“Survey: ‘Everything’ Stresses Students Out. How Can Colleges Help?,”](#) *Inside Higher Ed*, August 8, 2024

[“Survey: Half of College Students With Mental Health Issues Haven’t Accessed Care,”](#) *Inside Higher Ed*, May 26, 2023

[“The Mental Health Crisis on College Campuses,”](#) *NEAToday*, March 29, 2024

## **ITHACA CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Mental Health Support and Crisis Services** [[DOWNLOAD](#)]

### **Emergency**

[Ithaca Police Department](#) (607) 272 9973

[Cornell University Emergency Assistance](#) (607) 255 1111

[Ithaca College Emergency Assistance](#) (607) 274 3333

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) Call or Text 988

[Crisis Text Line 24/7](#) Text “Home” to 741-741

[Veterans Crisis Line](#) Dial 988 then press 1 or send a text message to 838255

[The Trevor Project](#) (866) 488 7386 or text START to 678678

**College Mental Health Support and Crisis Services**

[Cornell University Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) (607) 255 5155

[Ithaca College Center for Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) (607) 274 3177

[Tompkins Cortland Community College Mental Health Services](#) (607) 844 6577

**Rape and Sexual Assault**

[Advocacy Center of Tompkins County](#) (607) 277 5000

[Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) (800) 656 4673



*Scan to Download Guide*