

College

Academic Stress and Mental Health

- Of more than 96,000 undergraduate students at 2-year, 4-year, and public and private colleges and universities all over the country, more than 20% had felt “things were hopeless” in the last 12 months and more than 16% had felt “things were hopeless” in the last 2 weeks.
Source: American College Health Association (ACHA). National College Health Assessment II – Undergraduate Students. (2012). Retrieved from: http://www.acha-ncha.org/docs/ACHA-NCHA-II_UNDERGRAD_ReferenceGroup_DataReport_Spring2012.pdf
- More than 10% of undergraduates felt “so depressed that it was difficult to function” in the last 2 weeks and more than 15% had felt that in the last 12 months.
Source: American College Health Association (ACHA). National College Health Assessment II – Undergraduate Students. (2012). Retrieved from: http://www.acha-ncha.org/docs/ACHA-NCHA-II_UNDERGRAD_ReferenceGroup_DataReport_Spring2012.pdf
- Almost 21% of undergraduates felt “overwhelming anxiety” in the last 2 weeks and more than 17% felt “overwhelming anger” in the last 12 months.
Source: American College Health Association (ACHA). National College Health Assessment II – Undergraduate Students. (2012). Retrieved from: http://www.acha-ncha.org/docs/ACHA-NCHA-II_UNDERGRAD_ReferenceGroup_DataReport_Spring2012.pdf
- More than 50% of undergraduates felt “more than average” or “tremendous stress” in the last 12 months.
Source: American College Health Association (ACHA). National College Health Assessment II – Undergraduate Students. (2012). Retrieved from: http://www.acha-ncha.org/docs/ACHA-NCHA-II_UNDERGRAD_ReferenceGroup_DataReport_Spring2012.pdf
- College students are often confused, concerned and unrealistic about academic performance and these expectations can detract from their emotional well-being. Academic success is not a reliable indicator of emotional well-being; some students may not have developed the maturity or personal resiliency skills to help cope with the demands of college life.
Source: Student Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force Report. (2008). Stanford University.
- Almost half of all students in college will become seriously depressed during their college career and may engage repeatedly in binge drinking.
Source: Student Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force Report. (2008). Stanford University.

- Stress has been associated with increased rates of depression, conduct disorder, antisocial personality disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and alcohol and substance abuse disorders.
Source: Student Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force Report. (2008). Stanford University.
- Highly-stressed teens (26%) are twice as likely as low-stressed teens (29%) to smoke, drink, get drunk, and use illegal drugs.
Source: Student Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force Report. (2008). Stanford University.
- Many Stanford students see themselves as suffering the “Duck Syndrome”, meaning they appear placid above the water while paddling like crazy beneath the surface. They experience this syndrome as a form of intentional competition with others where not only does everyone else look good (above the water) but the students think of themselves as looking or being bad.
Source: Student Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force Report. (2008). Stanford University.
- Students believe isolation significantly contributes to the absence of psychological well-being. Social connectedness is a much stronger predictor of the perceived quality of life in a community than the community’s income or educational level. Similarly, personal happiness is much more closely tied to the level of community social connectedness and trust than to income or educational levels.
Source: Student Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force Report. (2008). Stanford University.
- Students with hyper-involved parents had significantly lower grades than their peers.
Source: Student Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force Report. (2008). Stanford University.
- Of 10,116 college applicants and 4,034 parents of applicants responding, 70% reported “very high” or “high” levels of stress, up 14% from 2003. Among respondents overall, the biggest concern was the “level of debt...to pay for the degree”.
Source: Princeton Review. (2013-14). College Hopes and Worries Survey. Retrieved from: http://www.princetonreview.com/uploadedFiles/Sitemap/Home_Page/Rankings/Hopes_and_Worries/2014/CollegeHopesandWorriesSurveyReport2014.pdf
- Over-controlling parents undermine the competence and confidence of college students and can negatively affect the parent-student relationship. Students who reported having over-controlling parents reported significantly higher levels of depression and less satisfaction with life. Furthermore, the negative effects of helicopter parenting on college students’ well-being were largely explained by the perceived violation of students’ basic psychological needs for autonomy and competence.
Source: Schifffrin, H.H., Liss, M., Miles-McLean, H., Geary, K.A., Erchull, M.J., & Tashner, T. (2013). Helping or hovering? The effects of helicopter parenting on college students’ well-being. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 1-10.
- Problem-focused coping as a strategy to address academic stress, i.e. strategies aimed at altering a situation, play a more effective role in increasing student motivation and performance than strategies focused on managing or reducing distressful emotions. Thus

college instructors who encourage students to make a study plan, manage their time, and use their study guide, are more likely to facilitate greater motivation and performance.

Source: Struthers, C.W., Perry, R.P., & Menec, V.H. (2000). An examination of the relationship among academic stress, coping, motivation, and performance in college. *Research in higher education, 41*(5), 581-592.

- Of nearly 2,200 Stanford students surveyed, nearly 12%—more than one out of 10 students—said they had thought of suicide (1.6% had a plan and 0.5% had attempted to end their own lives).
Source: Student Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force Report. (2008). Stanford University.
- Suicide is the 3rd largest cause of death among people between the ages of 10 and 24 after accidents and homicide and unintentional injury.
Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2015). WISQARS Leading Causes of Death Reports, 1999-2006. [Online Database]. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/youth_suicide.html
- In a study of more than 3000 students at two northeastern universities, 17% reported that they purposely injured themselves at some point in their lives, and 70% of this group indicated that they had engaged in the practice two or more times.
Source: Whitlock, J., Eckenrode, J., & Silverman, D. (2006). Self-injurious behaviors in a college population. *Pediatrics, 117*(6), 1939-1948.
- Finances are the second-largest stressor for students after academics—more than a third of students described finances as “traumatic” or “very difficult” to handle.
Source: American College Health Association. (2011). *National College Health Assessment II: Reference Group Executive Summary Spring 2011*. Hanover, MD: American College Health Association.
- In 2011, 10.6% of college students at four-year institutions sought counseling in search of better mental health. It is estimated that an average of 37.4% of them have "severe psychological problems," although most can be treated successfully while remaining students.
Source: Gallagher, Robert P. (2011). *National Survey of Counseling Center Directors*. The International Association of Counseling Services, Inc. Retrieved from: www.iacsinc.org/2011%20NSCCD.pdf

Cheating

- Undergraduates report several reasons why they cheat, including: fear of failure, parents demanding good grades, wanting to keep up with others, wanting to get a good grade, and feeling that the teacher is unfair.
Source: Davis, S.F. & Ludvigson, H.W. (1995). Additional data on academic dishonesty and a proposal for remediation. *Teaching of Psychology, 22*(2), 119-121.

- In a study of physics students at M.I.T., it was found that roughly 20% of students copied one-third or more of their homework.
Source: Palazzo, D. J., Lee, Y-J., Warnakulasooriya, R., Pritchard, D.E. (2010). Patterns, correlates, and reduction of homework copying. *Physical Review Special Topics - Physics Education Research*, 6(1). Retrieved from: <http://prst-per.aps.org/abstract/PRSTPER/v6/i1/e010104>
- In a study of college alumni, more than 81% admitted to engaging in some form of cheating as undergraduates.
Source: Yardley, J., Rodriguez, M., Bates, S., & Nelson, J. (2009). True confessions?: Alumni's retrospective reports on undergraduate cheating behaviors. *Ethics & Behavior*, 19(1), 1-14.
- In 2009, 61% of colleges and universities employed anti-plagiarism software.
Source: Greene, K. (2009). Campus Computing 2009: The 20th national survey of computing and information technology in American higher education. Encino, CA: Campus Computing.
- In an experimental study of over 1200 students at a highly selective post-secondary institution, there was a significant reduction in the likelihood of plagiarism among those students who completed an online tutorial on understanding and avoiding plagiarism.
Source: Dee, T. S. & Jacob, B. A. (2012). Rational ignorance in education a field experiment in student plagiarism. *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(2), 397-434.

Drugs and Alcohol

- The percentage of college students who report smoking marijuana heavily (at least 20 days during the past month) rose from 1.9% in 1993 to 4% in 2005. The percentage of students who report using illegal drugs other than marijuana, such as cocaine and heroin, in the last month rose from 5.4% in 1993 to 8.2% in 2005.
Source: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University (2007). *Wasting the Best and Brightest: Substance Abuse at America's Colleges and Universities*. New York: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University.
- Young adults aged 18 to 22 enrolled full time in college were more likely than their peers not enrolled full time (i.e., part-time or not enrolled) to use alcohol in the past month, binge drink, and drink heavily. Among full-time college students in 2011, 60.8% were current drinkers, 39.1% were binge drinkers, and 13.6% were heavy drinkers. Among those not enrolled full time in college, these rates were 52.0%, 35.4%, and 10.5%, respectively. Patterns have remained consistent since 2002.
Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2012). *Results from the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-44, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 12-4713. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from: <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/nsduh/2k11results/nsduhresults2011.htm#2.9>
- A study of 100 of Duke and UNC students with prescriptions for ADHD medications revealed that 31% had misused these medications during college by taking large or more

frequent doses than prescribed or using someone else's medication. 26% had diverted medications to peers. Enhancing the ability to study outside of class was students' primary motive for misuse.

Source: Rabiner, D.L., Anastopoulos, A.D., Costello, E.J., Hoyle, R.H., McCabe, S.E., & Swartzwelder, H.S. (2009). The misuse and diversion of prescribed ADHD medications by college students. *Journal of Attention Disorders, 13*(2), 144-153.

- 37% of college students fear social stigma attached to substance abuse, which keeps them from seeking help. Only 6% of students who meet medical criteria for alcohol or drug abuse or dependence seek help.
Source: Califano, J.A., et al. (2007). *Wasting the best and the brightest: Substance abuse at America's colleges and universities*. New York, NY: The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.
- 49% (3.8 million) of full time college students binge drink, misuse prescription drugs and/or use illegal drugs. In 2007, 1.8 million full-time college students (22.9%) met the medical criteria for substance abuse and addiction.
Source: Califano, J.A., et al. (2007). *Wasting the best and the brightest: Substance abuse at America's colleges and universities*. New York, NY: The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.
- The percentage of students who reported having abused painkillers such as Percocet, Vicodin, and OxyContin during the past month rose from less than 1% in 1993 to 3.1% in 2005.
Source: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University (2007). *Wasting the Best and Brightest: Substance Abuse at America's Colleges and Universities*. New York: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University.
- 40% of college students reported engaging in binge drinking (having 5 or more drinks for male students and 4 drinks for female students at one "drinking occasion") in the past two weeks.
Source: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University (2007). *Wasting the Best and Brightest: Substance Abuse at America's Colleges and Universities*. New York: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University.
- A 2005 survey found that 83% of campus arrests involve alcohol.
Source: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University (2007). *Wasting the Best and Brightest: Substance Abuse at America's Colleges and Universities*. New York: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University.

Play Time, Downtime, Family Time

- While parental involvement might be the extra boost that students need to build their own confidence and abilities, over-parenting (helicopter parenting) appears to do the converse in creating a sense that one cannot accomplish things socially or in general on one's own.
Source: Bradley-Geist, J.C., Olson-Buchanan, J.B., (2014). Helicopter parents: an examination of the correlates of over-parenting of college students, *Education + Training*, 56(4), 314-328.
- Over-parenting (helicopter parenting) predicted maladaptive responses to workplace scenarios. Students who reported higher levels of over-parenting were more likely to endorse solutions that relied on others rather than taking responsibility oneself. These findings indicate that the reason over-parenting is associated with maladaptive workplace responses is because of low self-efficacy. Without a strong sense of self-efficacy, or the belief that one can accomplish tasks and goals, young adults are likely to be dependent on others, engage in poor coping strategies, and fail to take accountability in the workplace. Even if these individuals possess the technical abilities to accomplish their work, their lack of self-efficacy hinders soft skills like responsibility and conscientiousness that employers value.
Source: Bradley-Geist, J.C., Olson-Buchanan, J.B., (2014). Helicopter parents: an examination of the correlates of over-parenting of college students, *Education + Training*, 56(4), 314-328.

School Culture and Student Engagement

- Findings indicate that where graduates went to college hardly matters at all to their current well-being and their work lives in comparison to their experiences in college.
Source: The Gallup-Purdue Index Report. (2014). *Great jobs, great lives: A study of more than 30,000 college graduates across the U.S.*
- If graduates had an internship or job where they were able to apply what they were learning in the classroom, were actively involved in extracurricular activities and organizations, and worked on projects that took a semester or more to complete, their odds of being engaged at work doubled.
Source: The Gallup-Purdue Index Report. (2014). *Great jobs, great lives: A study of more than 30,000 college graduates across the U.S.*
- Higher well-being is related to graduates' experiences. Graduates who felt "supported" during college (that professors cared, professors made them excited about learning, and had a mentor) are nearly three times as likely to be thriving than those who didn't feel supported.
Source: The Gallup-Purdue Index Report. (2014). *Great jobs, great lives: A study of more than 30,000 college graduates across the U.S.*

- As many graduates from the Top 100-ranked schools in *U.S. News & World Report* are thriving in all elements of well-being as graduates from all other institutions.
Source: The Gallup-Purdue Index Report. (2014). *Great jobs, great lives: A study of more than 30,000 college graduates across the U.S.*
- If college graduates are engaged at work, the odds are nearly five times higher that they will be thriving in all five elements of well-being (purpose, social, financial, community, and physical). The odds of thriving in all areas of well-being more than double for college graduates when they feel their college prepared them well for life outside of it.
Source: The Gallup-Purdue Index Report. (2014). *Great jobs, great lives: A study of more than 30,000 college graduates across the U.S.*
- If an employed graduate had a professor who cared about them as a person, one who made them excited about learning, *and* had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their dreams, the graduate's odds of being engaged at work more than doubled. Only 14% of graduates have had all three.
Source: The Gallup-Purdue Index Report. (2014). *Great jobs, great lives: A study of more than 30,000 college graduates across the U.S.*
- A study involving 123,000 students at 33 colleges and universities that do not require SAT or ACT scores has found that there is "virtually no difference" in the academic performance (measured in grades or graduation rates) of those who do and don't submit scores. The study also found that high school grades do predict student success.
Source: Hiss, W.C. & Franks, V.W. (2014). Defining promise: Optional standardized testing policies in American college and university admissions. Retrieved from: <http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/nacac-research/Documents/DefiningPromise.pdf>
- A survey of 31,500 freshman undergraduate students at 114 different universities found that nearly 2 out of 5 students found it difficult to develop effective study skills and adjust to the academic demands of college. 51.9% of freshman undergraduates reported finding it somewhat or very difficult to manage their time effectively. 41.2% reported frequently feeling overwhelmed by all they had to do.
Source: Ruiz, S., Sharkness, J., Kelly, K., DeAngelo, L., & Pryor, J. (2010). *Findings from the 2009 administration of the your first college year (YFCY): National aggregates*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. Retrieved from: <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/yfcyPublications.php>
- 65.1% of freshman undergraduates frequently or occasionally felt lonely or homesick. And 50.1% frequently or occasionally felt isolated from campus life.
Source: Ruiz, S., Sharkness, J., Kelly, K., DeAngelo, L., & Pryor, J. (2010). *Findings from the 2009 administration of the your first college year (YFCY): National aggregates*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. Retrieved from: <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/yfcyPublications.php>
- Attributional retraining, designed to restructure students' causal explanations of poor performance by encouraging controllable attributions (not having put enough effort into

studying or not using effective test-taking strategies) in place of uncontrollable causes (attributing failure to bad teaching, low personal ability, test difficulty, or bad luck), that was administered to 457 first-year university students improved subsequent in-class test scores, final course grades, and first-year GPAs.

Source: Perry, R., Stupnisky, R., Hall, N., Chipperfield, J., and Weiner, B. (2010). Bad starts and better finishes: Attributional retraining and initial performance in competitive achievement settings. *J Soc & Clin Psych*: 29(6): 668-700. Retrieved from <http://guilfordjournals.com/doi/abs/10.1521/jscp.2010.29.6.668>

- According to the Department of Education, approximately 58% of first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2004 completed a bachelor's degree at that institution within 6 years. This is up by 3% from 1996.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The Condition of Education 2011* (NCES 2012-045). Retrieved from: <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40>