

Students prioritize mental health but can't find resources

By Halley Sutton, Assistant Editor

Students don't know where to turn for resources on mental health, according to a study by the Born This Way Foundation, which was founded by Lady Gaga in 2012. The survey, entitled "Kind Communities — A Bridge to Youth Mental Wellness," received responses from 3,015 participants aged 15 to 24, as well as more than 1,000 parents, in an online survey. More than half of the students surveyed said they believed mental health was important, but a much smaller percentage of students surveyed reported seeking help for mental health concerns.

College students report highest stress levels

"Despite prioritizing their mental health, young people are unaware whether they have access to many of the resources that would support their mental health or believe they do not have access to them," according to the report. Other findings from the report include:

- For high school students, 36 percent of students reported that they do not have access to services or resources that would support their mental health.

- Rural students and students from low-income families report even less access to mental health resources, with 40 percent of rural students and 46 percent of students from low-income families reporting little or no access to mental health resources.

- Of the three classifications studied (high school students, college students, and employed young people), college students fared the worst in terms of both reported happiness and stress levels. The percentage of college students who reported feeling happy often or most of the past month was 55 percent, versus 63 percent of high

school students and 57 percent of employed young people. College students also reported the most stress, with 68 percent of college students saying they would report themselves as stressed, versus 49 percent of high school students and 62 percent of employed young people.

- All populations surveyed reported that those institutions viewed as "kind" were key to supporting mental health. For colleges and universities, "kind" institutions were those that offered free mental health counseling for students; provided resources that offer stress release for students, such as yoga or meditation classes; and had an LGBTQIA center available for students to access on campus. Of the students surveyed, 34 percent of college or university students said their institution had all of these attributes, but 15 percent of students surveyed reported that their institution had none.

- On the parent side, parents surveyed overestimated how often their children would turn to them in the midst of a mental health crisis. For example, 75 percent of parents reported believing that their child would turn to them if they or someone they knew was hurting themselves. But only 40 percent of students surveyed said they would turn to their parents for help in this scenario.

- Parents also underestimated the amount of reported stress their children feel, with the largest discrepancy occurring for parents of college students. About 25 percent of students surveyed reported feeling anxious all or most of the time during the past month, while only 10 percent of parents reported their child being anxious or nervous during that same period.

Read the full survey at <http://bit.ly/2uFEw0m>. ■

BEYOND ACCOMMODATION

Refer students with mental health disabilities to podcast

Consider referring students with mental health disabilities to the College Student Success Podcast. Derek Malenczak, a professor at Rutgers University, created the podcast. Research shows that podcasts are effective learning tools because users have control over the listening process and because listeners retain information better when engaging in other activities such as driving or walking dogs, Malenczak said.

Access the podcast at <http://www.collegestudentsuccesspodcast.com>. ■