



# Understanding Social Emotional Development and Mental Health in Students



**iGen: Adolescence  
Lasting Longer &  
Social-Emotional  
Development**



**Prevalence of  
Mental Health  
Issues**



**Student Stressors  
&  
Barriers to Tx**

# **College Students 10-15 Years Ago VS Now**

# iGen: Adolescence Lasting Longer

- **Children born in the iGen generation, 1995 and later, are growing up slower than any other generation.**
  - “18-year-olds now act like 15-year-olds used to, and 13-year-olds like 10-year-olds (Twenge, 2017, p. 2-3).”
- **iGen teens are delaying many life milestones compared to their Boomer and Millennial counterparts (Twenge, 2017).**
  - They are much less likely to go out with their friends without their parents.
    - 18 year olds in 2015 are going on fewer outings than 14 year olds in 2009 did.
  - They are less likely to date, a significant milestone, than previous generations.
    - The rate of seniors going out on dates has dropped to nearly half of what it was for Boomers and Millennials.
    - Consequently they are having their first sexual experiences late too.
  - They are also delaying getting their driver's licenses.
    - Only 72 percent of seniors had their driver's licenses by spring of that year. This is compared to nearly 100% of Boomers of the same age.
  - They are less likely to work for pay than previous generations.
    - The rate of teens who do not work during the school year has increased to 44 percent in the 2010s compared to 22 percent of seniors in the 1970s.
  - They are delaying trying alcohol as well.
    - Teens in earlier generations had tried alcohol by the 8th but iGen teens have pushed this off until 10th grade or later.

# Social Skills Development in College Students

- **iGen:** (Twenge, 2017)
  - iGen'ers spend 7 hours less on in-person social time than Millennials. This is about an hour/day where they are not practicing social skills and navigating emotions.
- **Social Competence:** (Nazir & Rafique, 2019)
  - Social competence includes social skills, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution.
    - It is very important to the development of a positive and fulfilling social life.
    - It also enables a person to adjust and work effectively in a variety of situations.
  - Social competence is highly interrelated with empathy.
    - If empathy is decreasing, which research suggests, then social skills may not be far behind.

# Emotional Development of College Students

- **Social-Emotional Competencies:**
  - “A set of emotional, individual and interpersonal capacities that determine the ability of the individual to respond to the pressures of the environment that surrounds him (Huerta Cuervo et al., 2022, p.2).
    - IQ does not account for these soft skills, they are learned through emotionally rich experiences with others or by professional intervention.
    - **Only around 50 percent of students would say that they feel competent in their social-emotional skills.**
- **Emotional Intelligence:** (Khan et al., 2021)
  - Societal changes like the rise of individualism and social media have contributed to a decrease in empathy and an increase in depression.
  - Emotional Intelligence is composed of four domains: well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability.
    - **Well-being, self-control, and emotionality have all decreased over time.**
  - Empathy and autonomy are among the lowest scoring emotional competencies.
    - Empathy seems to be influenced by age. 18-20 year olds scored the lowest compared to those older than 21 and younger than 17.

# Impact of Social Media and the Internet

(Twenge, 2017)



## Rise in Loneliness

Social media has replaced some of the time previous generations would have spent on in-person interactions. This has resulted in 22% more 12th graders feeling lonely.



## Attention Span

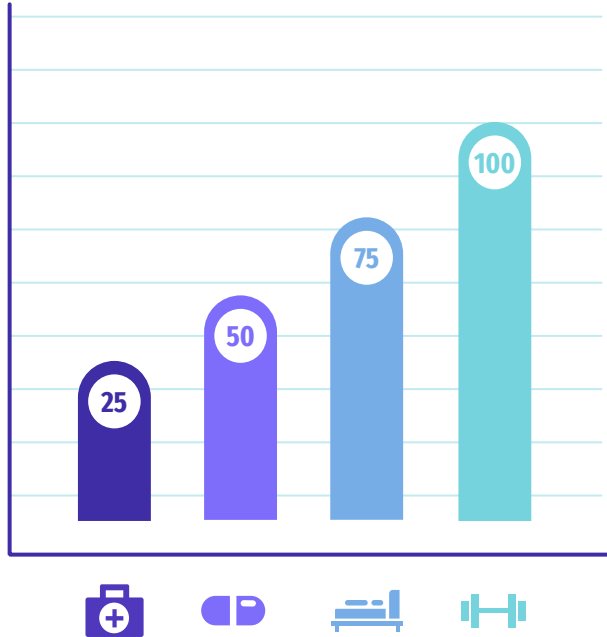
The age of social media has contributed to many adolescents' short attention spans. A study measuring computer activity found that **students switched tasks every 19 seconds.**



## Academic Consequences

Since the Internet has become commonplace, iGen'ers are reading books **nearly 3X less than previous generations.** The effects of this can be seen on SAT scores in writing and reading which have decreased about 13 points since the 2000s.

# Prevalence of Mental Health Issues



- Almost all mental health conditions have increased in diagnosis and treatment between 2009-2015 (Oswalt et al., 2020).
  - Anxiety: 9.3% in 2009 to 14.9% in 2015
  - Depression: 9.0% in 2009 to 12.2% in 2015
  - Panic Attacks: 4.5% to 7.3%
  - ADHD: 3.8% to 5.1%
  - Insomnia: 2.6% to 3.7%
- Of college students surveyed in the fall of 2021, 14.2% reported suicidal ideation. (Healthy Minds Network)
- 1 in 10 college students have an eating disorder and EDs are the most untreated MH disorders in college population (Healthy Minds Network)

# A Multicultural Lens on Mental Health Issues



- Across hundreds of campuses, **anxiety has increased 110 percent** while **depression has increased 135 percent**.
- American Indian and Alaskan Native students have experienced the biggest increases in depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.
  - Yet they are often left out of the conversation.
- White students experienced the most up-tick in self harm behavior & eating disorder symptoms.
- While in general more students are seeking mental health services, some groups like Arab Americans are even less likely to engage in help-seeking behaviors than before.
- During the pandemic, when mental health services were needed the most, students of color were accessing support less often.

(Colarossi, 2022)

# Stressors Students Face



## Mental Illness

By 25 years old nearly 75% of mental illnesses begin presenting symptoms (Oswalt et al., 2020).



## Interpersonal Issues 22.2%

This includes difficulty with peers, faculty, and roommates as well as lack of social support (Pitt et al., 2018).



## Stress 80%

College can be very stressful due to the new environment, relationships, and financial burdens placed on students (Pitt et al., 2018).



## Financial Stressors 33.3%

Many students work outside of their studies. Those who do find it hard to balance school and work (Pitt et al., 2018).



## Academic Stressors 94.4%

Tests, difficulty of the academic program, large amounts of coursework, and burnout are all significant stressors (Pitt et al., 2018).



## Health and Family

Health issues are stressors for about 44.4% of students. Family issues affect about 38.9% of students (Pitt et al., 2018).



# Barriers to Help-Seeking

(Dunley & Papadopoulos, 2019)

## Insurance

Outside counsel can be a serious financial burden on students. While most universities offer free or reduced treatment, they tend to have a waitlist which can be discouraging.

## Awareness

Many students do not seek help because they are simply unaware that they are experiencing a mental health issue. Symptoms can be difficult to separate from normal stress.

## Time

Not having the free time in their schedule is very commonly reported by students.

## Sociocultural Factors

Men are significantly less likely to seek mental health services due to societal pressure. Minority students report perceiving more barriers than white students. Overall, students are more likely to turn to their support network than professionals.

## Location and Hours (Priestley et al., 2022)

The physical location of mental health clinics can be a barrier. Especially hidden offices create confusion and anxiety while overly visible locations may spark feelings of shame and being judged. Having exclusively daytime hours is a barrier for some, especially those with responsibilities outside of university.





# SUPPORTING STUDENTS NOW



- **“Student mental health issues can’t be resolved with one great fundraising or messaging campaign. This will be an ongoing challenge for universities—especially as generations of students who weathered high school during the pandemic reach college age and nontraditional students continue to juggle family and work in an uncertain economy.”**
- [Mental Health: Supporting Students Now | CASE](#)

# What Can Faculty Do? (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2022)



## Behaviors to Look For

- A student is sad or withdrawing from the class or their peers for more than two weeks.
- Mentions of intended harm to self or others
- Sudden or intense fearfulness (fast breathing)
- Getting involved in increasing fights
- Seemingly out of control behavior
- Worries/Fears prevent the student from completing everyday tasks
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still in class
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Severe mood swings or sudden changes in behavior/personality



## Classroom Actions

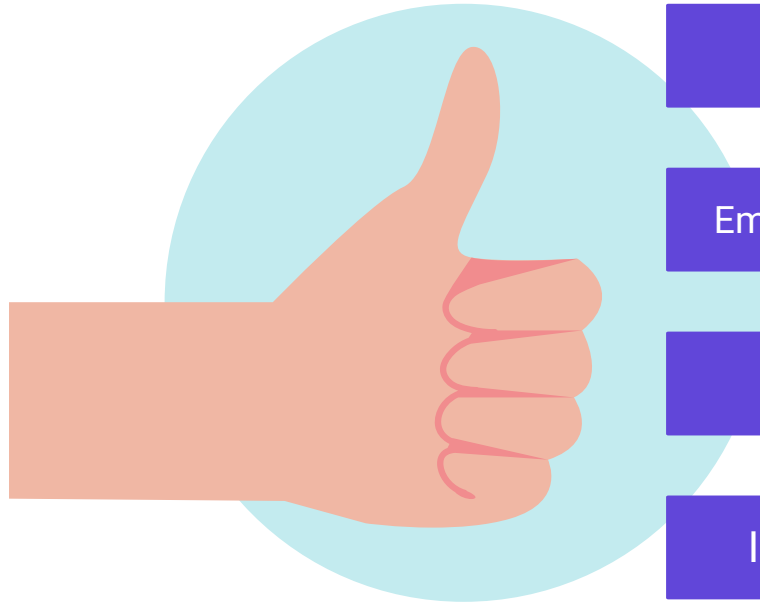
- Know where to access mental health services (on campus and national hotlines)
- Build resilience and positive social and emotional strengths.
- Create a safe space in the classroom.
- Encourage students to help others.
- Encourage students to maintain good physical health.



## More Information

- More resources:
  - <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/>
  - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/>
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/>
  - <https://www.samhsa.gov/>

# PLANNING YOUR COURSE



Focus on student assets (cultural assets)

Emphasize human dimension of learning (connectedness)

Explicitly prioritize student well-being

Include expressive experiences into your course

# Cultural Assets

## Course Diversity Statement

Your individual and collective experiences in this course are important to me. Through my teaching and interactions I hope that you will witness a great respect for diversity and dedication to being inclusive. Additionally, I expect that you will demonstrate respect for people whose perspectives, experiences, and ideas are different from your own. My intent is that students from all diverse backgrounds be well served by this course and **the diversity that students bring to this class will be embraced and viewed as a strength and benefit for all of us**. My hope is that we can engage in respectful conversations that honor individual identities and increase our understanding of one another and our future clients.

I strive to present materials and activities that are representative and respectful of diversity: ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, disability, socioeconomic status, age, and culture. Your suggestions and constructive feedback are always encouraged and appreciated. I am open to hearing ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other student groups. I (as are many people) am continually learning and growing in my understanding of diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in my class (by anyone) that does not sit well with you, please talk to me about it. I encourage you to reach out to me if class periods, due dates, or other scheduled events fall on your religious holidays so that we can discuss alternative options.

# Connectedness

## About Your Professor

My undergraduate degree is from the University of Evansville, which is a small school like UIndy. I love small universities because I like to know my students well and have relationships where students feel they know me and can talk to me. I attended Southern Illinois University Edwardsville for my art therapy degree. I have been a practicing art therapist and mental health counselor since 2008. Medical art therapy is what I am most passionate about. In 2010, I was able to fulfill my dream of starting an art therapy program at Riley Hospital for Children. I continue a connection to this work through my role as a grief and bereavement art therapist at Riley Bereavement Services. Additionally, I work in a group private practice in Indianapolis. I believe that my clinical work continually informs my teaching and allows me to provide real world examples for students.

# Connectedness

## Connecting with your Professor

I highly recommend that students take advantage of my student hours. I love meeting with students outside of the classroom so that I can get to know them and build strong relationships with my future colleagues. Although you will graduate and move on from this program, I hope to maintain relationships with my students beyond their time in the program. I want to be a part of your professional network and witness your contributions to the field of art therapy as you navigate your career path.

# Explicitly supporting student well-being

Search Topics

- Overview
- Bookmarks
- Course Schedule 3
- Table of Contents 51
- Student Resources 5**
- Long-Term Assignments 9
- Week 1 4  
Begins August 28
- Week 2 3  
Begins September 2
- Week 3 4  
Begins September 9
- Week 4 3  
Begins September 16
- Week 5 2  
Begins September 24
- Week 6 2

## Student Resources ▼

[Print](#) [Settings](#)

Add dates and restrictions...

This module includes a number of student resources. These resources include items that are on and off of campus. Understand that some may require payment to engage with.

[Upload / Create](#) ▼

[Existing Activities](#) ▼

[Bulk Edit](#)

### UIndy and Local Resources for Students ▼

Word Document

This resource list includes physical health, mental health, counseling, crisis, and food insecurity resources.

### UIndy Professional Edge ▼

Link

### UIndy Writing Center ▼

Link

### UIndy Student Support Website ▼

Link

This website provides information to a number of resources available to students to aid them in campus and daily life.

### UIndy Disability Services ▼

Link

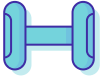
# EXPLICIT SUPPORT OF STUDENT WELL-BEING



10 minute meetings  
Weekly check in  
Painted rocks  
Music-arrival/during



YouTube.com: Daily Calm  
Stress Less cards  
Scratch art  
2 minute journal  
NAMI presentation



Stretch or walk every  
45-60 minutes  
Be Well-share



Pitch in, healthy snacks, role  
model drinking water, etc.



Deadline times  
Discussion about sleep

# Incorporate Expressive Experiences

“Though I will never claim to be a therapist for my students, their experiences exhibit how expressive arts can function within higher education so that students can discover ways of knowing within themselves if they have a facilitator. Expressive arts enable construction of knowledge, exploratory learner-centered activities, reflection, and process-oriented pedagogy in composition courses. **But they also have therapeutic effects that these participants expressed repeatedly in their data.** My students understood that expressive arts helped them in areas other than writing skills. They engaged in creative thinking that allowed them to personally connect to the material. **They could relieve stress and de-center from other areas of their lives.** They could not only identify emotions they were feeling, but could also process them in beneficial ways for their wellbeing.” (p.145)

Hash, P. (2020). ARTiculations: Expressive Arts-Based Curriculum In The Composition Classroom. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Appalachian State University, Boone, NC.

# EXPRESSIVE EXPERIENCES

- \*Create art/poem that reflects your journey of..... literacy, research, health (adapt for your content)
- \*Sculpt a symbol of something you're passionate about in this major
- \*Create an artistic response to an article or reading with which you had a personal connection
- \*Create art that reflects your experiences that led you to choose your major
- \*Create a word art image of your response to data
- \*Connection Stones, Brain Breaks, Midline Motion, materials readily available, mini mandalas, scratch art, playdoh
- \*Let's generate a few ideas together....

# GREAT RESOURCES

[Cultivating Connection in a Course Setting | Faculty Focus](#)

[Texas Well-Being Guidebook \(utexas.edu\)](#)

[Fostering Student Connectedness: Building Relationships in the Classroom \(facultyfocus.com\)](#)

[Building Relationships with Students — Almy Education](#)

[Mind Wandering | Faculty Focus](#)

[A Pilot Persistence Project | Faculty Focus](#)



# TAKEAWAYS AND PRINTABLES



[Student Information Sheet](#)



[Pedagogy of Healing Information](#)



[Self-Care Wheel](#)



[Step Forward If...](#)

# What Students Say Would Help

- \*Connect us with peers in class, across classes and with more experienced students
- \*Give us time in class to interview classmates or make it an assignment
- \*Give us tips on how to be successful in your class/college in general
- \*Ask about my day/life; show any kind of interest in me
- \*Find out if we work, have outside responsibilities, etc.



# CASE EXAMPLES-What have you experienced?



# REFERENCES

- Benson, O. M., & Whitson, M. L. (2022). The protective role of sense of community and access to resources on college student stress and COVID-19-related daily life disruptions. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 50(6), 2746–2764. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22817>
- Colarossi, J. (2022, April 21). Mental Health of College Students is Getting Worse. The Brink. <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2022/mental-health-of-college-students-is-getting-worse/>
- Dunley, P., & Papadopoulos, A. (2019). Why Is It So Hard to Get Help? Barriers to Help-Seeking in Postsecondary Students Struggling with Mental Health Issues: a Scoping Review. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 17(3), 699–715. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-018-0029-z>
- Huerta Cuervo, R., Téllez, L. S., Luna Acevedo, V. H., Ramírez Solís, M. E., Vela Ibarra, C., & Ávila García, G. (2022). The Socio-Emotional Competencies of High School and College Students in the National Polytechnic Institute (Mexico). *Social Sciences*, 11(7), 278. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11070278>
- Khan, M., Minbashian, A., & MacCann, C. (2021). College students in the western world are becoming less emotionally intelligent: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of trait emotional intelligence. *Journal of Personality*, 89(6), 1176–1190. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12643>
- Nazir, M., & Rafique, R. (2019). Empathy, Styles of Humor and Social Competence in University Students. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 17(1), 47-54. <http://ulib.iupui.edu/cgi-bin/proxy.pl?url=http://search.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/empathy-styles-humor-social-competence-university/docview/2355335626/se-2>
- Oswalt, S. B., Lederer, A. M., Chestnut-Steich, K., Day, C., Halbritter, A., & Ortiz, D. (2020). Trends in college students' mental health diagnoses and utilization of services, 2009–2015. *Journal of American College Health*, 68(1), 41–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2018.1515748>
- Pitt, A., Oprescu, F., Tapia, G., & Gray, M. (2018). An exploratory study of students' weekly stress levels and sources of stress during the semester. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 19(1), 61–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417731194>
- Priestley, M., Broglia, E., Hughes, G., & Spanner, L. (2022). Student Perspectives on improving mental health support Services at university. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 22(1), capr.12391. <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12391>
- Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGEN: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy-- and completely unprepared for adulthood and (what this means for the rest of us)*. Atria Books.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2022, April 6). **Talk About Mental Health: For Educators**. MentalHealth.gov. <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/educators>