



Lessons from Black Colleges on Mental Health and Wellbeing

Practical Approaches for Historically Black Colleges and Universities to Support Student Belonging and Mental Health

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Introduction

Mental health issues are common among college students,¹ and have been recently exacerbated by societal factors, such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, social injustices, and the changing political climate. Students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are no exception to this trend. Traditional barriers to seeking mental health support include lack of time, preference to deal with issues on their own or with support from family/friends, and lack of knowledge about where to go for help,¹ yet almost 80% of HBCU students participating in the 2020 Student Pulse survey turn to their educational institutions to provide more information on their health and safety.² Lack of trust, previous poor communication with mental health professionals, racial tension, and minority stress have commonly been cited as barriers to seeking professional mental health support by Black students,³ which comprise 76% of the total HBCU student population.⁴ Therefore, it is unsurprising that Black students experience high levels of psychological distress, and in some cases have worse mental health outcomes than White students, including higher suicidal ideation rates⁵ and greater number of suicide attempts.⁶

Fortunately, HBCUs are well-positioned to address the unique mental health needs of their student populations, while on campus and in the future. With 101 HBCUs⁷ making up 1.65% of the colleges and universities in the country,⁸ HBCUs represent a small percentage of all US higher education institutions, yet they have a large impact in communities of color, educating 9% of all Black students⁹ and graduating nearly 20% of all Black students¹⁰ (including 25% of students educated in STEM fields¹¹). Black students who choose to attend HBCUs over predominantly white institutions (PWIs) are more likely to feel a strong sense of racial pride and a positive self-image.¹² Academically, Black students who attend HBCUs have better academic performance, greater social involvement, and higher occupational aspirations compared to their peers who attend PWIs,¹² and feel that their university prepared them well for life after college.¹³ Black HBCU graduates report higher levels of thriving in purpose well-being (8 percentage points), social well-being (6 percentage points), physical well-being (5 percentage points), and community well-being (4 percentage points) as compared to their peers graduating from non-HBCUs.¹³ It is well-documented that HBCUs meet the academic and career needs for students of color.^{12,13} With this success, there is opportunity for tailored programs and resources to address the unique mental health needs of HBCU students.

Despite the many positive effects on student academic, career and wellbeing outcomes, HBCUs encounter barriers in providing mental health resources and services. Lack of funding, limited accessibility of services due to stigma and historical factors,^{3,12,13} and the severity of mental health concerns^{14,15} remain challenges. Active Minds and UNCF established a partnership to advance learning about the mental health needs, services, and resources available on HBCU campuses. In 2021, UNCF in partnership with the Steve Fund, launched a mental health survey to a representative sample of students attending and employees working at 42 HBCUs nationwide. Using the findings from this survey, Active Minds and UNCF collaborated to develop an interview guide to understand the experiences and roles of faculty, staff, and administrators in supporting student mental health on HBCU campuses.

Active Minds and UNCF established a partnership to advance learning about the mental health needs, services, and resources available on HBCU campuses. This report aims to:

Create tailored strategies to fit the unique needs of HBCU institutions;

Reduce the disparities between HBCUs and PWIs as a result of systemic racism;

Celebrate the unique strengths of HBCUs by showcasing comprehensive, proactive approaches toward mental health promotion.

This report provides actionable strategies HBCU institutions can use to address their campus mental health needs. By implementing these strategies, all members of campus communities can contribute to the creation of caring and productive learning environments that help students thrive.

Methodology

In Spring 2022, HBCU faculty and staff interviewees were recruited through UNCF's monthly newsletter listserv and email outreach via the Active Minds Chapter Network. To gain insight into student mental health resources and services, a total of 15 interviews were conducted with mental health professionals, academic advisors, and administrators from 10 different HBCUs. Throughout the data collection process interview audio files were transcribed and reviewed for accuracy by the Active Minds' team. Three independent coders initially hand-coded the interview transcripts. Individual codes within the code families were garnered through inductive investigation of the data. Members of the Active Minds' team were responsible for determining which codes presented in a code family. The Active Minds' team then met and discussed individual codes until consensus was reached. This process was repeated to reduce the number of individual codes such that themes might present more readily. To ensure inter-rater reliability at least two members had to completely agree on the code for each quotation. Coding of the study transcripts was performed using Dedoose (Dedoose, Los Angeles, CA) where axial coding was then performed to identify overarching themes and sub-themes.

Findings were reviewed by members of the Active Minds and UNCF teams for consensus and to create the recommendations provided in this document.

Strategies that work.

The following strategies have been successfully implemented on a variety of HBCU campuses: public and private, large and small, 4-year and 2-year schools.

1 *Create systems level campus strategies*

HBCUs can make sustainable, lasting changes to their campus culture through thoughtful and deliberate policy, programmatic, environmental, and systems changes focused on unique, identified community priorities. Supported by administration, these strategies can be implemented at the university level and/or by faculty/staff in their classrooms or departments.

2 *Build and leverage partnerships*

HBCUs operate as anchors in their communities and can leverage campus and local partners such as faith-based organizations, community providers, and neighboring higher education institutions to help execute campus initiatives and provide mental health services. State and federal partnerships can help secure additional funding for clinical staff and educational programming.

3 Increase access to mental health supports

Because HBCUs often serve many diverse groups of students, providing flexible options for services can help increase access and reach for different populations. Additionally, strengthening screening and hiring more mental health professionals, especially clinicians of color, increases access to mental health supports.

4 Effectively promote campus mental health resources

Working with administrators, faculty, and students, HBCUs can promote mental health resources using multiple channels. By incorporating messages into online resources, both in-person and online students will have access to information about mental health services and programming.

5 Center student voices

HBCUs are community-centered and collaborative, and students are the largest stakeholder groups. By empowering students to champion change on their campuses, HBCUs can work to change the mental health culture, promote healthy behaviors, and reduce stigma among students.

6 Create a culture of caring between students and faculty/staff

Fostering faculty/staff and student relationships is a unique strength of HBCUs. HBCU faculty/staff can prioritize establishing trust and rapport with students. This is essential in creating deeper connections which provides pathways for students to reach out for help.

7 Educate campus community members

Education is key in creating a community that values and promotes mental health by preventing mental health issues from occurring, intervening in early stages of distress, and championing existing services. HBCUs can target educational interventions to groups that are more likely to experience stigma or specific mental health concerns.

8 Assess campus needs

HBCUs are diverse, serving a disproportionate number of first-generation students, non-traditional students, and low-income students. HBCUs can use assessment tools and strategies such as surveys, town halls, and external evaluators to better understand the unique students, faculty, and staff they serve and assess their campus community members' strengths and concerns to meet their needs.

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Create Systems-Level Campus Strategies

Mental health impacts students in all aspects of their lives, and all aspects of life impact their mental health. As such, HBCUs have implemented top-down and bottom-up strategies to improve student mental health. To address warning signs, some HBCUs have adopted early alert systems that notify advisors when students haven't attended class or logged onto their campus system. Further supports include referral forms on the counseling center website and processes for email referrals, clear crisis protocols, and wraparound services.

Furthermore, HBCUs are considering how their communities are affected by factors such as food insecurity, financial concerns, and demanding family responsibilities, which, in turn, end up affecting the mental health of students. Many HBCUs are creating solutions for these challenges through dedicated community engagement. For example, Paul Quinn College converted its football field into an organic farm to serve the college and greater community.

Campuses have also provided additional spaces and times to promote self-care and mental wellbeing. Southern University and Lincoln University have relaxation rooms exemplifying how campuses have provided students with a space to unwind. Morgan State University has two wellness days throughout the year in addition to their scheduled breaks where there are no classes or assignments due. Lincoln University mental health professionals coordinate with professors to give extra credit to students attending mental health presentations.

TAKEAWAYS

Create positive mental health campus and classroom policies.

Implement a referral process with case management and wrap around care.

Embed clinical and non-clinical mental health promoting resources throughout campus.



CASE STUDY

Morgan State University

Morgan State University, a public four-year institution in Baltimore, MD with a population of approximately 7,634 students,¹⁶ established a system where anyone can submit a referral for a variety of concerns (e.g., academic issues, housing matters, financial concerns, social interactions). Depending on the situation, appropriate follow-up resources are provided. For crises, Morgan State has a system that alerts a multidisciplinary, cross-departmental Behavior, Emergency Assessment, and Response (BEAR) team. The BEAR team manages referrals, assesses threats, determines and mitigates risks, and provides appropriate resources/follow up. The team has a detailed protocol to support students and employees depending on the severity of the situation. Throughout the intervention, the team provides agency to the student or employee of concern in decision making. Morgan State is working to clarify post-hospital discharge policies for hospitalized students by providing case management and wraparound care. Students that re-engage on campus after a mental health crisis are assigned case managers who meet with them regularly.

"As a resource, our Counseling Center provides Orange Folders to our Academic Departments. The Orange Folders provide all the tips on what to do in the event of [an emergency]. We make sure all faculty members have access to these folders in the fall. It's [for] employees, [especially] frontline employees that may be engaged with students. [Often] it's the admin assistants that are on the frontline engaging our students, and so we provide them with information and some training."

-Dr. Kevin Banks, Morgan State University

2 / Build and Leverage Partnerships

HBCUs have found ways to leverage partnerships of all levels to support mental health on their campuses from securing funding for mental health programs and services to creating awareness of resources and reducing stigma. For example, UNCF partnered with the Steve Fund to launch a [mental health initiative](#) supporting HBCUs and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs). Established by ECMC Foundation and SeaChange Capital Partners, the [Transformational Partnerships Fund](#) in 2022 provided funding for HBCUs to explore partnerships aimed at improving mental health on their campuses.

Some HBCU communities, especially those located in small towns, are closely connected to members of their larger communities. Naturally, some HBCUs partner with local providers to supplement or spearhead counseling services for their students. Because spirituality is a big part of many black communities and churches are highly used resources, placing mental health professionals in churches can be beneficial. In addition, community partners can be key to the success

of system level changes that benefit both the institution and the greater community, as noted in the above section.

At the national and state level, some HBCUs collaborate with other universities to brainstorm ideas, share mental health strategies, and compare programs/services. Collaborations with national non-profits and non-governmental organizations can help highlight the strategies that HBCUs are successfully implementing and advocate for additional resources. When it comes to funding, partnerships with national government agencies and organizations can be beneficial. For example, Florida A&M University is a recipient of a federal [TRIO grant](#) from the US Department of Education. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) also offers student programs and grants supporting HBCUs, including [HBCU C.A.R.E.S.](#) and the [African American Behavioral Health Center of Excellence](#).

TAKEAWAYS

Collaborate with campus organizations to organize events and promote resources.

Work across campus departments to address intersectional issues (i.e., food/housing insecurity, transportation, financial concerns).

Provide mental health services and programs in trusted local community organizations, such as churches and campus organizations.

Establish state/federal partnerships to secure resources and funding for mental health services and programs.



CASE STUDY

Paul Quinn College

For small campuses with limited resources to hire on-campus mental health professionals, local partnerships can be mutually beneficial. Paul Quinn College, a private four-year institution in Dallas, TX with a population of approximately 468 students,¹⁶ formed a partnership with the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School where psychiatry students come to campus weekly to provide services to students. These medical students can complete their residency within their community, and Paul Quinn students have access to mental health services.

"The collaboration between Paul Quinn College and University of Texas Southwestern to provide quality mental health services is a pivotal source of support for the student body. The assessments available for all incoming students aid in developing behavioral and emotional programming for the academic year. Subsequently, through the programming managed between both institutions, students have access to counseling, psychiatric services, and psychoeducational programming."

-Dr. Stacia' Alexander, Paul Quinn College

3 /

Increase Access to Mental Health Supports

HBCUs have implemented creative strategies to meet the increasing demand for counseling services and reduce barriers to help-seeking behavior. HBCUs use proactive approaches to screen students at different stages and connect them to appropriate supports. For example, Paul Quinn College prioritizes early screening of incoming students during a summer bridge program. Morgan State University takes a trauma informed care model where health center staff screen for mental health concerns during routine health appointments and refer students to counseling as needed. Lastly, Denmark Technical College uses a texting campaign to determine issues, including mental health concerns students may be dealing with, and proactively provide resources as needed.

TAKEAWAYS

Collaborate with health centers to integrate mental health screenings into all clinical and wellness services.

Screen incoming students during orientations or first year programming.

Provide different options for mental health counseling (e.g., expanded hours, crisis services, telehealth, in-person) through collaboration with local providers and telehealth organizations.

Prioritize the hiring and retention of mental health professionals, especially counselors of color.



CASE STUDY

Lincoln University

Lincoln University, a public four-year institution in Oxford, PA with a population of approximately 2,077 students,¹⁶ recognized the need for virtual services. Teletherapy has become more popular during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has proven beneficial in increasing access to services on college campuses. While in-person counseling may be preferred for residential students, providing a telehealth option increases access for commuter students and online/abroad students. Since providers are not limited to specific geographic areas, teletherapy provides greater flexibility in scheduling appointments. Additionally, it can provide a more diverse, representative pool of mental health professionals with similar backgrounds and perspectives for students to choose from, including professionals of color.

"When students went home due to the COVID-19 crisis in March 2020, the university continued to be operational, transitioning to virtual activity. Like many institutions, most therapists providing counseling were only licensed in the state in which the institution was located. Counseling Centers were challenged with how to provide therapy for students who resided in other states and investigated telehealth options who provided a technological platform to enable students to be linked to therapists in states where they resided, especially with nearly 50% of our students residing out of state. It was important to work with an organization sensitive to providing access to culturally competent therapists to meet the needs of our students. Services were provided for one year."

-Rachel Manson, Lincoln University



4 /

Effectively Promote Campus Mental Health Resources

It's important for community members to know what resources are available and where they can reach them. Improving access to on-campus resources requires raising awareness of those resources. University administrators, faculty, and staff can serve as role models when it comes to creating a safe environment, free of stigma, using a variety of media to communicate their messages and experiences. For example, Paul Quinn College President, Dr. Michael Sorrell, has publicly disclosed his mental health story to the community to normalize help-seeking behavior and reduce stigma. At some HBCUs, mental health professionals coordinate with professors to promote their services. For example, faculty can put information about mental health resources in their class syllabi.

Students can also be instrumental in advertising mental health programs, events, and services by sharing their stories and experiences on university social media and webpages. Hosting events informing students on the benefits that come with their school's

insurance can increase awareness and use of these services, specifically benefits that apply in the community such as local therapy providers.

In collaboration with university marketing and communication teams, campuses can create content highlighting the needs of their student population, share mental health updates, and promote resources on websites that are easy to navigate, human centered, informative, and accessible. More information about Active Minds' recommendations can be found in the [Social Media and Website Recommendations to Support Mental Health on College and University Campuses](#).



TAKEAWAYS

Promote campus resources and positive mental health messaging through easily accessible websites and social media.

Mobilize student ambassadors to share messages on campus and online.

Ensure positive, frequent messaging and communication regarding student mental health from the highest level of college/university leadership to the campus community.



CASE STUDY

Coppin State University

Recognizing that mental health resources, concerns, and historical events change the climate on campus, the institution's website and all online supplemental materials should reflect those changes and be updated each semester or term. Coppin State University, a public four-year institution in Baltimore, MD with a population of approximately 2,006 students (R. McCullough, MBA, Coppin State University, email communication, January 2023), recognized the value of updating their website to provide more resources to their students. Most importantly, they provide an email, phone number, location, and office hours at the top of their page where students can easily find that information. The main page links to additional resources including a referral form, a screening tool, and more detailed information about individual counseling, group counseling, and off-campus referrals.

"Our campus outreach creates micro interventions on our webpage, digital signage, email and video productions—all designed to meet and support students where they are. The webpage offers digital tools that direct students toward free, confidential mental health care, while addressing the stigma that limits help-seeking. Additionally, our website provides a confidential customized mental health screening that highlights on and off campus student support resources, information on responding to the national opioid crisis, and a referral form for reporting concerning behaviors to our Behavioral Assessment Team."

-Christopher Thomas, Coppin State University

5 /

Center Student Voices

College students and future generations are becoming more vocal about mental health and are less likely to perpetuate stigma. HBCUs are empowering their students to educate their peers and [advocate for mental health policy changes](#) on their campuses. At Rust College, university staff heeded their students' call when they decided to help create an [Active Minds chapter](#) on campus. Other campuses recognize the value of providing support to groups that host mental health related events. For example, fraternities and sororities at Lincoln University have therapeutic art nights, and it would have been valuable for mental health professionals to attend these events to provide students with extra support.

TAKEAWAYS

Support student organizations that are hosting mental health-related or community building initiatives.

Utilize peer educators and mentors to model healthy behaviors, serve as resources, and refer to mental health services.

Institutionalize a process for receiving feedback and input from students on an ongoing basis.

"HBCUs can listen to students by holding panels and open floor gala meetings. The panels allow faculty/staff to speak on their journeys and careers and students to ask questions. Open floor gala meetings are similar. Students can pitch their ideas and voice their concerns, needs, and wants to the school. Both would allow for students and faculty/staff to hear and communicate with each other to find solutions."

-Current HBCU Student

Jackson State University

Peer mentoring programs have benefits including increasing sense of belonging on campus, retention, and skill development, especially for first-year students.¹⁷ Jackson State University, a public four-year university in Jackson, MS with a population of approximately 6,921 students,¹⁶ pairs first-year students with upperclassmen mentors. Those student mentors serve as important resources for transitional students.

"One thing that we are going to do this year is when the freshmen come in is to let them know about mental health. We try to match our students with mentors. A lot of times students don't want to just come to somebody they don't know, so mentors can build that relationship with students and have that one on one. If they have issues about anything, they could communicate with [their mentor]. I think that's the first step to making sure that it's a smooth transition from high school to college."

-Dr. Pamala Heard, Jackson State University

Additionally, Jackson State University has provided students access to administration through monthly meetings and town halls. These opportunities allow students to ask questions and learn more about their campus' mental health priorities.

"The Student Government Association (SGA) meets [monthly] with the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. They also have meetings with the president. And there have been several town halls throughout this academic year (2021-2022). There have always been some questions surrounding mental health, whether the panel was asking the audience about mental health or the audience was asking about how the campus is prioritizing mental health."

-Shanice White, Jackson State University

6 /

Create a Culture of Caring Between Students and Faculty/Staff

Because of the shift in culture surrounding mental health and the decrease in stigma in younger generations, more students are opening up about their mental health to individuals with whom they have an established relationship. [Creating a culture of caring](#) doesn't have to be hard, but it does require time and attention. Frequently, students want to be heard and taken seriously for big and small things. Simply getting to know students is the first step, and once rapport has been built, students will be more likely to come to faculty and staff in times of need.

HBCUs often have campus communities that value relationship building, so it's not surprising that their faculty and staff already have open communication with students. However, it can be challenging to know exactly what to say if someone says they are stressed, having a difficult day, or struggling with their mental

health. [Active Minds' Validate-Appreciate-Refer \(V-A-R\) training](#) provides individuals on campus with the skills to validate another's feelings and let them know that they have been heard, appreciate their courage and affirm that there are resources, and refer them to skills and support. Administrators at Paul Quinn College noted how students have different personalities and experiences and react differently to stressors. Therefore, they prioritize spending time with and getting to know students' baselines in order to recognize signs when a student is struggling.

TAKEAWAYS

Encourage faculty/staff to have early communication with incoming students.

Provide opportunities for faculty/staff to interact with students outside the classroom.



DENMARK
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

CASE STUDY

Denmark Technical College

At Denmark Technical College, a public two-year institution in Denmark, SC with a population of approximately 491 students,¹⁶ the president builds individual relationships with incoming students by sending personalized emails. He responds to their replies and provides his personal cell phone number to students. Administrators show support to students by attending campus-wide activities, such as sporting events. By establishing relationships with students outside of the classroom or counseling center office, faculty and staff demonstrate their full commitment to students as people.

"There are multiple touchpoints where you're seeing administrators, faculty, staff interact with the students outside of the capacity that they normally would interact with. When you talk about building community, it starts there. Speaking with students in the residence halls, the student center, the cafeteria, and student sporting events. When students see us outside the classroom, [we are] buying into them as human beings."

-Dr. Lamar White, Denmark Technical College

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Educate Campus Community Members

From mental health awareness week campaigns to presentations and workshops to [mental health conferences](#) to [new student orientation](#), HBCUs have developed unique ways to educate their communities on important topics. Depending on each campus' needs, there are educational trainings and workshops focusing on different topics. For example, Denmark Technical College provides mandated training to incoming students on alcohol and substance misuse and Title IX. Other important topics include [self-care](#), [signs and symptoms of mental illness](#), [crisis resources](#), and [conversational skills](#). For these topics, HBCUs have implemented evidence-based training, such as [Mental Health First Aid](#) and [QPR](#), for students and faculty/staff. To increase engagement, Coppin State University gives out fun trinkets such as fidget spinners and poppers that double as stress management tools and educational resources. These can include information about the counseling

center and other services, signs of mental illness to look out for, and tips on coping with stress in healthy ways.

TAKEAWAYS

Train faculty/staff and students to recognize signs of mental illness and how to intervene.

Educate the campus community on the importance of mental health and the benefits of self-care.

Provide a platform for students and faculty/staff ambassadors to share their experiences using mental health services to show others what the process is like.

Provide educational initiatives tailored to campus needs.



CASE STUDY

Rust College

Certain populations within HBCUs may experience more stigma than others. Therefore, educational programs designed to target these individuals may be beneficial. Rust College, the first HBCU in the state of Mississippi with a population of approximately 623 students,¹⁶ established in 1866, one year after the Civil War ended, hosts barbershop talks to encourage male students to discuss different topics including traditionally taboo topics like mental health. They provide an incentive and a supportive environment.

"It's an all-male conversation. We bring in barbers to give free haircuts, and we just talk how guys do at the barbershop...about different things that guys go through on a daily basis. One of my goals in life is to break that stigma of guys being afraid of being viewed as weak or not manly to express themselves and be in tune with their emotions. I think the barbershop [talks] will continue to dispel that stigma and make guys more comfortable [talking about mental health]."

-Kenderick Armstrong, Rust College

Another group that may benefit from targeted educational programming is incoming students. Rust College collaborates with different organizations to provide mental health education for students in a first-year program.

"This is more centered towards the first-year students, but Rust College's academic enrichment program (AEP)[has] six key areas, and one of the key areas is mental health awareness. We're going to be reaching out to more organizations on campus to help bring awareness to mental health in the HBCU community."

-Kenderick Armstrong, Rust College

8 /

Assess Campus Needs

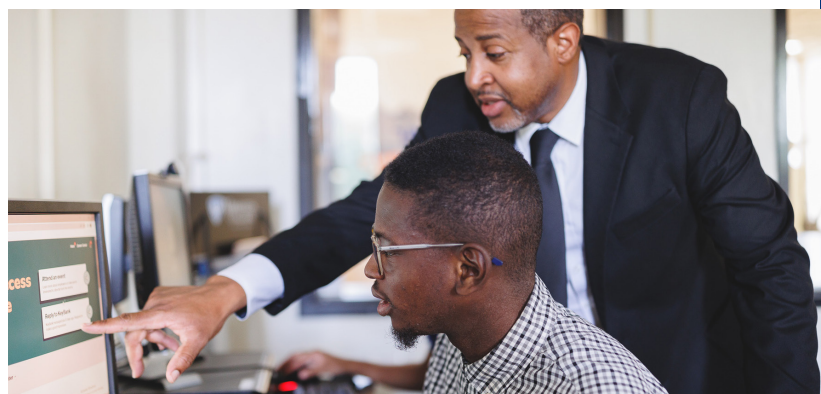
TAKEAWAYS

Assessments can provide valuable information to help campuses anticipate emerging issues related to the mental and physical needs of students and address them in innovative and creative ways, such as informing new programs and services and improving existing ones. HBCUs have used a variety of assessment tools such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, town halls with administration, and reports from partners, such as residence life, outside providers, and researchers, such as the [Healthy Minds Network](#). While collecting data with ongoing assessment processes is recommended, some campuses may be presented with opportunities to start an assessment or add on a new assessment to existing processes. For example, after a campus crisis, Lincoln University hired external consultants to conduct a climate survey assessment and provide recommendations for improving services and programs on campus. Therefore, accountability in not only showcasing strengths but also in making changes is necessary.

Coordinate across departments to ensure assessment of wellness indicators.

Use assessment tools to learn more about the campus community and their mental health views to better connect them to resources.

Highlight strengths and develop an action plan to prioritize areas of growth.





CASE STUDY

Morgan State University

Morgan State University, a public four-year institution in Baltimore, MD with a population of approximately 7,634 students,¹⁶ established a Mental Health Task Force that is composed of faculty and staff across departments. This group assesses services and programs through a holistic approach to mental health.

"We have looked at our current strategies that have been available to our university across the board and seen what has been utilized the most, what is actually appearing to be working, and its effectiveness. Then, seeing where the gaps lie in those services, [how] we can add in additional services and see how we can modify those services again."

-Januarie McDonald, Morgan State University

From their assessment, they were able to make recommendations including strengthening their counseling center by increasing the salaries of counseling staff and hiring specialists to serve student athletes and residential students. Morgan State also plans to bring together a multidisciplinary committee to enforce those task force recommendations.

"We're going to have a Mental Health and Wellness committee that'll be ongoing throughout the year and continue to look at the recommendations that our task force made to ensure the implementation of the recommendations. The Committee will rotate membership [where] we bring together [different departments] to make sure that we have the programs to address a lot of different needs."

-Dr. Kevin Banks, Morgan State University

Implementing Multiple Strategies

It's clear that campus mental health can be a complex challenge, requiring holistic strategies and collaborations between many different stakeholders. Therefore, HBCUs are creating multi-pronged solutions to funding, access, and stigma barriers.

Morgan State University received a grant through the federal government to work with the Maryland Department of Health to hold Mental Health First Aid Training for their campus community including anyone from resident advisors to administration. They are currently training Mental Health First Aid instructors whom they hope to embed across the campus. Through the train-the-trainer model, Morgan State aims to sustain the program even as student instructors graduate or otherwise leave.

TAKEAWAYS

"We are now in the process of training about 22 people to become Mental Health First Aid Trainers as well as we're bringing Mental Health First Aid Training on the campus

to our employees. We're going to also bring it to our students when they come back in the fall. We believe going with this training model will help us provide additional resources to our students and employees. Having a group of Mental Health First Aid trainers will position us to respond to the community needs when we have incidents that require some community dialogue, or just need to have a cadre of staff and students available to just be in a room or on a Zoom with folks to address their concerns."

Establish sustainable mental health programs through a train-the-trainer model.

House wellness services under one roof.

-Dr. Kevin Banks, Morgan State University

Morehouse School of Medicine, a private medical school in Atlanta, GA with a population of approximately 665 students,¹⁶ combines the recommendations for increasing access to mental health supports and creating systems level campus strategies by providing different health services under the same roof. Providing a centralized location on campus for health services creates awareness of where resources can be utilized. This may also lessen the impact of stigma since there is not a specific building designated for mental health support. Therefore, no one would know if a student was seeing a psychologist or a primary care physician.

"We have a Student Health and Wellness Center that has a behavioral health component. And students who may need to be referred for psychotherapy or even psychiatric assessment can then access services through the Student Health and Wellness Center. But students there can come in for primary care as well as behavioral health. It's set up so that the waiting area is just one waiting area. There's no separate section to say I'm coming here for behavioral health. You come in, maybe seeing primary care, sports medicine, psychiatrists or the psychologist, or the doctoral-level social workers. That's why we called it the Student Health and Wellness Center. It's holistic. It combines primary care, behavioral health, and specialty services."

-Dr. Gail Mattox, Morehouse School of Medicine



Active Minds

Active Minds (activeminds.org) is the nation's leading nonprofit organization promoting mental health awareness and education for young adults. Through award-winning programs and services, Active Minds is empowering a new generation to speak openly, act courageously, and change the conversation around mental health for everyone.

Active Minds is dedicated to saving lives and building stronger families and communities. Active Minds has a presence at more than 1,000 campuses, schools, communities, and workplaces nationwide, and is powered by a robust Chapter Network, the nationally acclaimed Send Silence Packing® display, inspiring Active Minds Speakers, and our tailored Active Minds @Work initiative.

To learn more, visit activeminds.org.

UNCF Institute for Capacity Building

UNCF's ICB partners with Black higher education institutions to support their transformation and continual innovation—all to propel student success, community advancement and the fight for educational equity and racial justice.

In addition to providing a range of direct support and technical assistance to 42 Black colleges and universities, ICB promotes the adoption of best practices emerging from this collective work by the entire network of 102 HBCUs and 64 Predominantly Black Institutions. Each year ICB organizes UNCF UNITE, the most influential gathering on Black higher education.

To learn more, visit uncficc.org.

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- Rachel Manson, MSW, LSW, Director, Counseling Services at Lincoln University
- Gail Mattox, M.D., DLFAACAP, DLFAPA, Professor and Chair of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Morehouse School of Medicine
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