

Life at Your Pace: Tips for Navigating Campus Life during COVID

Alison Malmon

Founder and Executive Director of Active Minds

September 22, 2021



Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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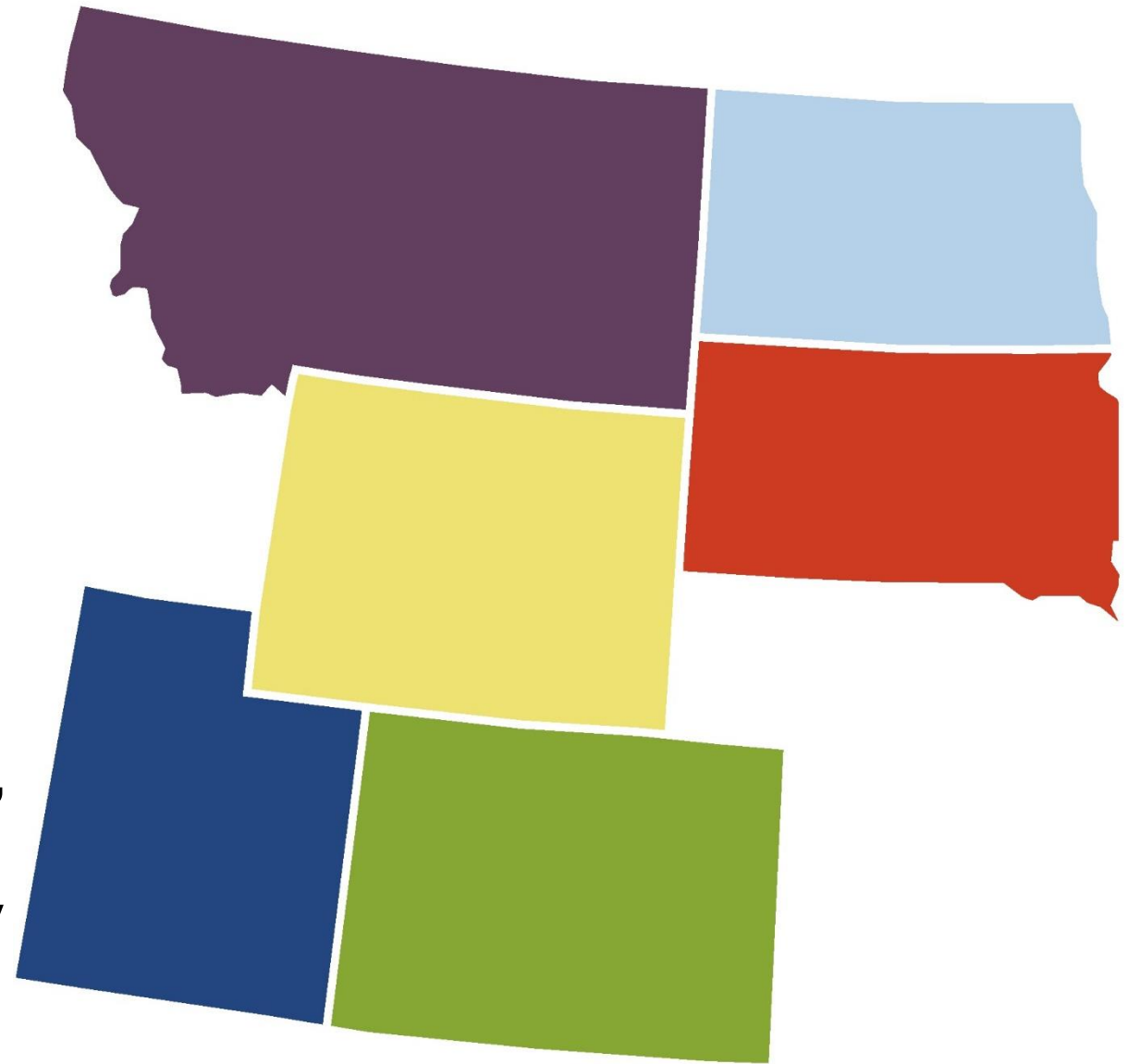
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The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains MHTTC) provides training and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental health concerns throughout Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).

We belong to the Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network, a national network of training and technical assistance centers serving the needs of mental health, substance use and prevention providers. The work of the TTC Network is under a cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).



The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

**STRENGTHS-BASED
AND HOPEFUL**

**INCLUSIVE AND
ACCEPTING OF
DIVERSE CULTURES,
GENDERS,
PERSPECTIVES,
AND EXPERIENCES**

**HEALING-CENTERED AND
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE**

**INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR
OWN JOURNEYS**

**PERSON-FIRST AND
FREE OF LABELS**

**NON-JUDGMENTAL AND
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS**

**RESPECTFUL, CLEAR
AND UNDERSTANDABLE**

**CONSISTENT WITH
OUR ACTIONS,
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS**

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Webinar Outline

- **Introduction**
- **Data** from the pandemic: mental health, access, and retention
- **Emerging** best practices
- **Q&A**



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Introduction

www.activeminds.org

Active Minds is the nation's leading nonprofit supporting mental health awareness and education for young adults. With a presence at more than 1,000 colleges/universities, high schools and communities, Active Minds is powered by a robust Chapter Network, the nationally acclaimed Send Silence Packing® exhibit, and inspiring Active Minds Speakers.

Active Minds is creating communities of support and saving lives.



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Introduction to Active Minds

- Founded in 2003
- Preeminent organization mobilizing young adults to change the conversation about mental health
- Programming, trainings, data collection
- RAND evaluated



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“Life at Your Pace” – Coming out of the Pandemic

Spring 2020

1. Just a month into the pandemic, 80% of college students reported that COVID-19 had **negatively impacted their mental health**; 76% of college students reported **having trouble maintaining a routine***.
2. More than half of students (55%) said that they **would not know where to go** if they or someone they knew needed professional mental health services right away*.

Fall 2020

1. Data from the Healthy Minds Study in the fall of 2020 showed that 29% of college students reported **feeling “somewhat” to “much more affected”** in their mental health access during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
2. In fall 2020, 2/3 of students reported an **increase in supporting others** with their mental wellness**.
3. When asked **what they hoped would remain** from the COVID pandemic, respondents overwhelmingly said “the focus on mental health” and **“taking life at my own pace”****.



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“Life at Your Pace” – Coming out of the Pandemic

1. College enrollment has fallen during the pandemic - some factors that may affect this include: transition to online classes, safety, college cost, and needing to support family. This can exacerbate the income gap for low-income and students of color.
2. The 2021-2022 academic year has started with campuses being all over the place related to their COVID-19 precautions:
 - a) Some campuses/university systems have barred mask mandates in classrooms and vaccine mandates, leading to tension between faculty and students.
 - b) Other campuses have strictly enforced mandates or tightened rules to prevent spread, while others have tried unique strategies to encourage vaccinations and now are beginning to punish unvaccinated students.
3. Students are concerned with their academic performance which is greatly impacting their mental wellbeing.



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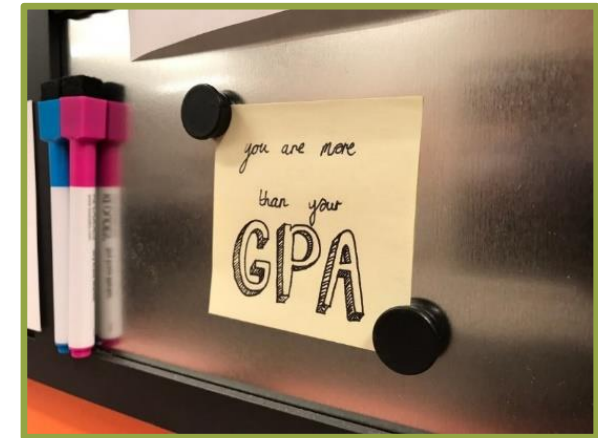
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Emerging Best Practices

1. Promote basic needs security

- a) During the course of the pandemic, 3 in 5 students experienced basic needs insecurity, 39% of students at two-year institutions and 29% of students at four-year institutions experienced food insecurity, and 48% experienced housing insecurity ([The Hope Center, 2021](#)).
- b) During the pandemic 13% of students have delayed graduation, 40% lost a job, internship or job offer, and 29% expect to earn less at age 35. Lower income students are 55% more likely to have delayed graduation due to the pandemic ([Aucejo et al., 2020](#)).



2. Telehealth

- a) Maintain telehealth services and widely promote them - not only does this have ramifications for students in general, students with marginalized identities may be more likely to use these services compared to in-person care ([Active Minds COVID Recommendations](#)).
- b) Prior to the pandemic, university counseling centers provided an average of 17.1 video counseling sessions and during the pandemic this number drastically jumped to an average of 1,165 video counseling sessions, a 6,811% increase ([Gorman et al., 2020](#)).

Emerging Best Practices

3. Adapt services

- a) Campuses need to be prepared for an uptake in service utilization, including ensuring they have recommended numbers of counselors to meet their campus need ([Brown, 2021](#)).

4. Support faculty and staff wellbeing

- a) During the pandemic more than half of faculty experienced symptoms correlated with workplace burnout, including increased stress and anxiety ([Course Hero, 2020](#)). Some solutions provided by faculty include; increased compensation, modifications to teaching load, new/better technology, and increased staff/teaching assistant support ([Course Hero, 2020](#)).
- b) Three out of four faculty reported a decrease in connection to colleagues and students. ([Course Hero, 2020](#)).

5. Support student-driven programming

- a) COVID has expanded online learning ([Lederman, 2021](#)) so programming should follow suit if we want to meet the needs of all students.

Emerging Best Practices: Leave of Absence Policies

From the Active Minds Healthy Campus Award framework



- **Sustainable and policy-oriented solutions:** Ensure your leave of absence policies are equitable and transparent.
 - Webinar series with Ruderman Family Foundation: October 19, October 21, October 28. Registration open at www.activeminds.org in coming weeks.

Questions?



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Additional Resources

- COVID19 Resource Page:

<https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-mhttc/coronavirus-covid-19-mental-health-resources>

- Telehealth Learning & Consultation (TLC) Tuesdays :

<https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mid-america-mhttc/telehealth-learning-and-consultation-tlc-tuesdays>



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Thank You!

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Active Minds

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