

A dramatic sky with dark, heavy clouds over a body of water at sunset or sunrise. The clouds are dark and textured, with some light breaking through near the horizon. The water is dark and calm, reflecting the light from the sky. The horizon line is visible in the distance, with some small structures or buildings visible on the left side.

From Crisis to Care

Unpacking and reshaping the dominant narrative about college mental health

THE CHRONICLE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Overwhelmed

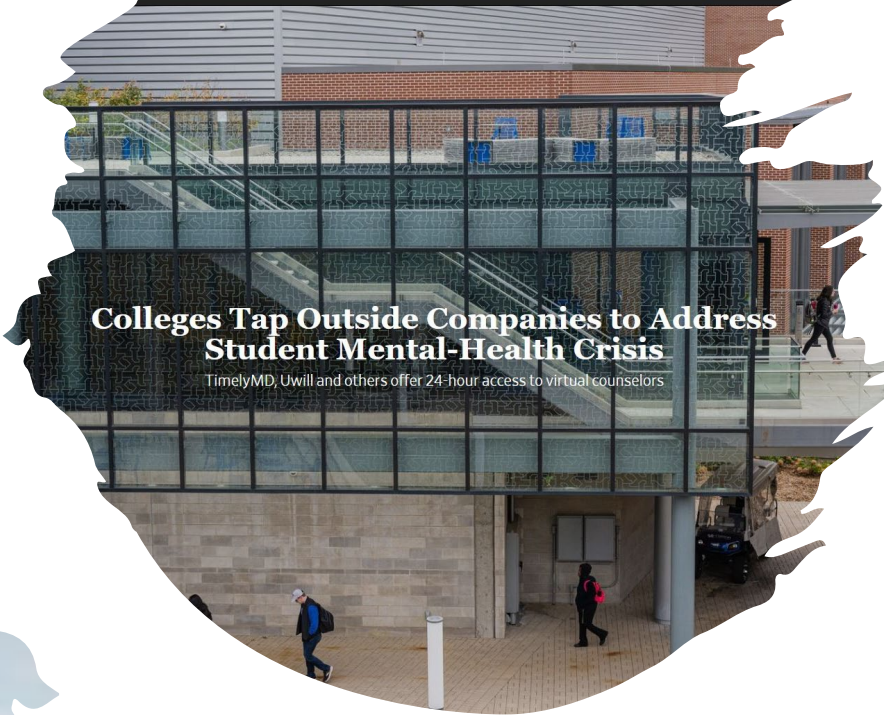
The real campus mental-health crisis
and new models for well-being



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Colleges Tap Outside Companies to Address Student Mental-Health Crisis

TimelyMD, Uwill and others offer 24-hour access to virtual counselors



The New York Times

'Nobody Has Openings': Mental Health Providers Struggle to Meet Demand

With anxiety and depression on the rise during the pandemic, it
has been challenging for people to get the help they need.

Give this article



276



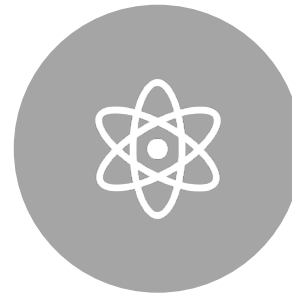
The Crisis Narrative

- Combination of threads
- Driving perceptions of our work
- What is a crisis?
- Where has it entered your life?

Framing the Session / Approach



Let's Acknowledge: sometimes "the mental health crisis" feels true.



Fusion & Defusion: do we believe every thought or story we have is 100% true? What is the *function* of a story, this story?



Even if & when the story has some truth, is it **helpful**? When & When not?



Can we examine the story and get some **creative distance**: what other ways we can look at the situation?



Goals of the Session

- Identify the dynamics helping to create a crisis narrative
- Assess how the dominant narrative is impacting lived experience
- Shifting from Crisis to Care




Detangling
the
Threads

Media & Social Media

Industry & Advocacy

Research



HEALTH & WELLNESS

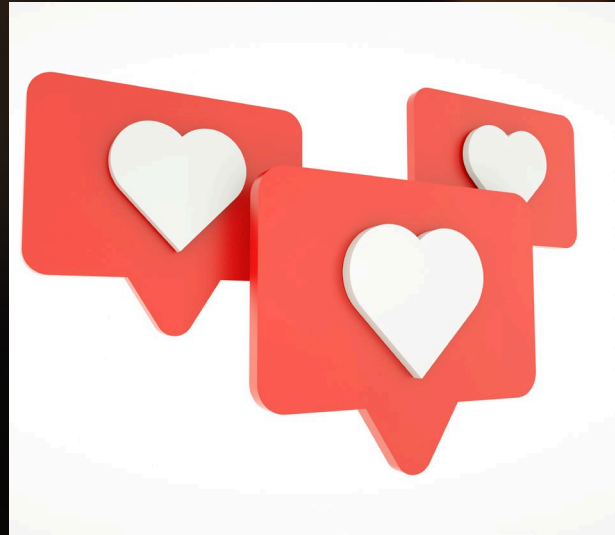
With Therapists in Short Supply, College Students Counsel Each Other

Some colleges train undergrads to help fellow students as demand for mental-health services rises



Media/Social Media

- Sales/Subscriptions to Ad revenue
- Rapid news cycles/sensationalism
- Social media echo chamber





Industry & Advocacy

- Operational vendors to service providers
- 10B+ investments 2021-2023
- Distress=Mental Health with a megaphone

College students: Mental health problems and treatment considerations.

Authors: [Pedrelli, Paola](#). Massachusetts
[Nyer, Maren](#). Massachusetts
[Yeung, Albert](#). Massachusetts
[Zulauf, Courtney](#). Massachusetts
[Wilens, Timothy](#). Massachusetts

Address: Pedrelli, Paola, Massachusetts

Source: [Academic Psychiatry](#), Vol 39

'I hate it, it's ruining my life': College students' early academic year experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Authors: Madrigal, Leilani. Department of Kinesiology, California State University, Long Beach, Long Beach, CA, US, leilani.madrigal@csulb.edu
Blevins, Anastasia. Department of Kinesiology, California State University, Long Beach, Long Beach, CA, US

Address: Madrigal, Leilani, Department of Kinesiology, California State University, MS 4901, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, CA, US, 90840-4901, leilani.madrigal@csulb.edu

Source: Traumatology, Vol 28(3), Sep, 2022. pp. 325-335.

- Role of crisis narrative in getting published
- Surveys, surveys, surveys
- Funding for crisis

Research

Our Role

- How have we gotten resources?
- What do we try to "own"?
- How do we contribute?



Untying the Knot

- Perceived distress vs. Functional impairment
 - CCMH & HMS
 - SMI*: 1990 (5.4%) - 2021 (5.5%)
 - AMI*: 2021 (22.8%)

*National Institutes of Mental Health,
March 2023, <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>



Untying the Knot

- Broadening of "mental health" & role of diagnostic language
 - How can people describe their experiences?
 - How can people get attention for their pain?
 - What do people know to do with their pain?



Structural Impacts of the Crisis Narrative

- Helpful impacts
- Reactive modes
- Immediate vs long term strategies
- Freezing: "you can't hire your way out"
- Scrutiny or criticism
- Campus constituents' reactions and requests

Emotional Impacts of the Crisis Narrative

How might we feel when we are led by the crisis narrative? Or when those around us are?

- Over-mobilizing
- Desperately scrambling
- Hopeless...that things are getting worse and worse
- Inundated
- Confused, stretched in multiple directions





From Crisis to Care

- What do we do in a crisis?
- What do we do for care?
- What can you do?
 - Question the narrative
 - Intentional decisions
 - Buddha was right
 - It's treatment AND population
 - Think and engage critically



Creative Perspectives

- Fostering a non-anxious presence to a range of facts, trends, and stats.
- How do we position ourselves to be care providers vs crisis counselors? Emotionally, strategically?
- Consider the multiple stories we can tell our campus stakeholders.
- What if we are seeing change rather than decay?
- "New Normal"?
- Silver Linings in the current trends might not just be linings, they might be the next wave.

Questions for the audience

- If the crisis narrative isn't the only one, what other narratives come to mind for you?
- What examples can you find on your campus, or elsewhere in your experience, to support other narratives?
- What do you think are *helpful* narratives? Helpful in terms of evoking something creative, resourceful, meaningful?

