MINUTES
May 15, 2006

Attending: Janet Corson-Rikert, Sharon Dittman, Cathy Dove, Betsy East, Greg Eells, Ellen Gainor, Linda Grace-Kobas, Tanni Hall, Jeff Haugaard, Christine Holmes, Kent Hubbell, Anne Lukingbeal, Tim Marchell, Alan Mathios, Susan Murphy, Andy Noel, Brendan O’Brien, Lisa Ryan, Bob Smith, Sharron Thrasher, Catherine Thrasher-Carroll,

Executive Committee member(s): Charles Walcott

Upcoming meetings:

Fall ’06 - TBD Time: TBD Location: TBD

I. Review of the year

A. Adaptation of Air Force model
   1. College Pilot Study
      1. The Air Force model is the most effective approach demonstrated to significantly reduce suicide within a specific community or population of people.
      2. In collaboration with the Jed Foundation, Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Princeton, University of Rochester and Cornell University are participating in this ground-breaking project to systemically address the issue of suicide among the college student population, by adapting elements of the Air Force model to the particular needs and structures within our campus settings.
      3. The components of the pilot study include:
         ▪ Common Research
         ▪ Community Gatekeeper Preparedness
         ▪ Advanced training for clinicians regarding assessment and management of suicidality
         ▪ Strategies for organizational change re: mental health

B. Mental Health Research
   1. 2004-2005 Self-Injury Study
      ▪ Janis Whitlock from the Family Life Development Center has modified and expanded the self-injury survey to address broader mental health components
      ▪ Survey will be administered again in the Fall of 2006
   2. 2005-2006 NCHA Survey
      ▪ Was administered this Spring (’06)
      ▪ We added a number of mental health questions to the survey.
      ▪ We will receive our data June 16th and will compare our data with that of the other Ivy Plus schools.
   3. Engineering School Student Stress Survey
      ▪ This data will be presented at the Mental Health Research Group next week
      ▪ The Engineering academic advising staff (who conducted the survey) are eager to share the information with other colleges here at Cornell, as well as other engineering schools. They hope other colleges will administer this survey to their college’s students, for a comparison of data.
   4. Survey of college Mental Health and Well-Being
      ▪ Jeff Haugaard conducted a survey of recent undergraduate and graduate alumni.
      ▪ His data and data from the Enrolled Student Survey revealed relatively similar rates of suicidal thoughts
C. Gatekeeper preparedness
   1. QPR (Question-Persuade-Refer) program was piloted successfully here at Cornell in January.
   2. A faculty/staff education workgroup has convened to create our own version of gatekeeper training/skill building, including adapting QPR.
      - The group is composed of staff members from the Dean of Students Office, Gannett, Human Resources and faculty members Derek Chang and Ross Brann.
      - The group is strategizing how to reach the largest number of faculty and staff members with information and skill building.
      - The group is re-visiting the idea of leave-behind materials and working on creating web-based information that can be easily accessed.

D. Efforts targeting high-risk populations
   1. The Community Based Services (CBS) Team
      - Presented at one of our council meetings describing the philosophy of their work and giving examples of typical students & situations they encounter during walk-in hours at sites around campus.
      - This approach is reaching students who are less likely to seek mental health services, including Asian & Asian American, other international students, and underrepresented minorities.
      - Graduate and professional school students often utilize the walk-in hours, as well.
   2. Asian/Asian American Students
      - The NYU Vice President for Student Health Henry Chung ’84 presentations to faculty/staff and especially to students underscored the continuing need for culturally appropriate support for Asian/Asian American students.
      - There is a resurgence of interest in a specific letter to A/AA parents.
        (i) A question was posed: If it’s important for A/AA students’ parents to have a specific letter, isn’t it important for all students’ parents?
        (ii) A concern with the initial effort was recalled, in trying to find the fine line between stereotyping and sharing helpful, important information.
        (iii) There are several council members and others (Ray Kim from Arts & Sciences) who would like to work on a letter specifically for A/AA parents, again.
          1. The credibility of a letter may increase if it were to come from A/AA faculty within the individual colleges.
          2. Presenting a social norms approach may help normalize common college experiences such as changing majors.
          3. Timing of messages needs to be considered.
        (iv) Gannett sends out general parent newsletters four times per year. The fall issue addresses mental health issues and concerns. This letter has not yet been sent out in a translated form, which might be an option to explore.
        (v) Supplemental communications with parents may be a possibility for sometime during the year after the council has an opportunity to discuss this further.

E. Strategies for organizational/systems change re: mental health
   1. 2005-2006
      - Formation of the Alert Team
        (i) Members include: Kent Hubble, Tanni Hall, Sharron Thrasher, Mary Elizabeth Grant, Janet Corson-Rikert, Greg Eells, Mahnaz Mousavi, Sharon Mier, Kathy Zoner, Victoria Blodgett, Catherine Thrasher-Carroll, Tim Marchell.
        (ii) Is a “pre-vention” team trying to piece together the puzzle before a student/situation decompensate.
        (iii) Meets weekly for early case identification, fact finding and coordination.
        (iv) Side benefit of this team has been the policy and procedural issues that have been brought to light.
      - Policy connection to Associate Deans
        1. Separation policies/practices within individual colleges are currently being gathered and reviewed to discern best practices.
2. 2006-2007 Plans
   - Alert team
     (i) Administrative function will be transferred from Gannett to the Office of the Dean of Students.
     (ii) Development of connections with academic units.
   - Policy initiatives
     (i) Formulate recommendations for Associate Deans re: separation policies/protocols.
     (ii) Conduct inventory of early warning systems and develop recommendations re: best practices.

F. Proposed (working) goals
1. Identify as many seriously distressed individuals as possible.
2. Provide support or treatment with as many of these individuals as possible.
3. Increase counseling for students from high-risk groups.
4. Provide early support for students to reduce the need for therapy.
5. Reduce the onset of mental health problems.
6. Support faculty, staff and students affected by individuals with mental health problems.

G. Discussion of proposed goals
1. A common theme emerged: What are our objectives? What are we to do concretely?
   - We want to increase awareness and knowledge of signs of distress, when & how to assist and referral options for faculty and staff when they encounter concerning behavior from a student.
   - A suggestion was made that we take each goal and list what actions have been and are being taken, creating a catalogue of objectives. In addition, we will want to think about the next steps or actions for each goal.

Minutes taken by Catherine Thrasher-Carroll