

Annual Congress on Mental Health

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Campus redefined: Creating helpers for mental health issues



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A significant portion of suicide losses are preventable, identifying the root cause before a tragedy occurs is essential in reducing the numbers of suicides worldwide. Education on how to recognize signs of medical conditions of the brain and learn how to speak out openly will normalize the conversation of depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder. 3 Learning Objectives to support title topic:

1. Develop a plan to implement Mental Health First Aid or training by a private company on a college campus/high school to educate all persons on campus the signs of medical conditions of the brain. Education takes precedence over awareness at this point in time. Pilot programs will serve as a test out feedback and analyze effectiveness. Trainings would vary from 2-6 hours dependent on age group, intent and logistics.
2. Approval of administration of who will announce the plan and the measures taken to help students who struggle and help prepare others who can be helpers. This recommendation will help ensure students and staff feels supported by the school in the efforts of truly reducing stigma and learning how to take the next step in helping a friend or themselves.
3. It is extremely important to have proper guidance on constructing these programs to ensure they become a normal "fabric" of the campus culture. A "I got your back mentality" among all individuals so a true support structure can be built and relied upon. A lived experience person is integral to the success of this idea...someone who has a first hand experience with brain illness for relatability purposes.

Biography

Heidi Diskin is a mental health advocate and educator focusing on teaching others to recognize signs of brain illnesses and reducing stigma. She used her own lived experience of living with Bipolar Disorder for 25 years in order to inform people what to look for with the onset of depression, mania and anxiety, so it doesn't go undiagnosed like hers for 12 years. She is a former teacher, an entrepreneur and now a brain health educator. She's a SafeTalk Suicide Prevention trainer and trained in Mental Health First Aid. She gives talks and trainings to schools, community groups, veteran groups and various organizations. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Temple University in Philadelphia. Her true desire is to eliminate cases of depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder and to help prevent suicides among all populations. She has a particular interest at the moment in youth considering the 2nd leading cause of death among youth ages 15-24 is suicide and is rampant in various places across the world.

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