

Student Mental Health

Results of the 2025 Healthy Minds Survey

About the Healthy Minds Survey

The Healthy Minds Survey provides important data on the intersection of mental health and student success to better understand students' mental health needs and the issues that impact them. The Healthy Minds Network at the University of Michigan surveys dozens of campuses each year as part of the [Healthy Minds Study](#), allowing universities to understand the state of student mental health on their campus and compare their data against national trends.

The Healthy Minds Survey has been administered at the University of Wisconsin–Madison every three years since 2016. In winter 2025, UW–Madison administered the fourth iteration of the survey.

2025 Healthy Minds Survey



Format

30-minute survey with multiple-choice questions about mental health, sleep habits, alcohol consumption, sexual violence, and other topics.



Administration Dates

February 17 through March 24, 2025



Participants

25,000 UW–Madison undergraduate and graduate students were invited to the survey.



Response Rate

1,857 students responded (a representative sample of our student population)

What's in This Report

This report shares key findings from the 2025 Healthy Minds Survey, while highlighting trends and recent campus efforts to support student mental health. In doing so, we hope to provide an overview of the changing state of mental health on campus and continue charting a path toward a healthier, more supportive campus. This report focuses on findings in seven key areas to help both leaders and our campus community set priorities around policies, programs, and systems on campus.

Reflecting on 10 Years of Student Mental Health

The first iteration of the Healthy Minds Survey was administered at UW–Madison in 2016. The 2025 survey marks nearly 10 years of UW–Madison surveying student mental health. In reviewing the 2025 data, we look back on key trends in the data alongside changes to programs, policies, and resources available to students on our campus. While data from the Healthy Minds Survey is only one piece of the complex picture of student mental health, it provides a chance to look at successes and opportunities to consider for future efforts.

2016

Healthy Minds Survey first administered

Key Findings:

- This survey provided a baseline against which UW–Madison could continue to track trends in student mental health.
- UW–Madison’s mental health data is similar to peer institutions.

2019

Second administration of Healthy Minds Survey

Key Findings:

- While mental health concerns increased, therapy use also increased.
- Mental health disparities affect marginalized groups.
- Most students feel that mental health impacts their academics.

2022

Third administration of Healthy Minds Survey

Key Findings:

- Students are experiencing substantial and varied mental health concerns that significantly impact academics.
- However, students are accessing help.
- UW–Madison undergraduates have high levels of high-risk alcohol use.

2025

Fourth administration of Healthy Minds Survey

Progress Informed by Survey Findings

Training

- Recognize, Respond, Refer suicide prevention trainings for students, faculty, and staff
- UHS staff trained to screen for depression at medical appointments
- Additional mental health training for advisors and instructors
- Crisis/Mental health support training for Behavioral Intervention Team

Staffing

- Increased staffing for UHS Suicide Prevention and UHS Mental Health Services
- Embedded UHS mental health providers in academic and student support spaces
- UHS and UWPD co-responder model

Support

- Expanded virtual and on-demand mental health support options
- Badger Recovery collegiate recovery program
- Dual registration for mental health student organizations
- Rec Well peer wellness coaching
- Renaming of Office of Student Assistance and Support to better reflect the mission and services

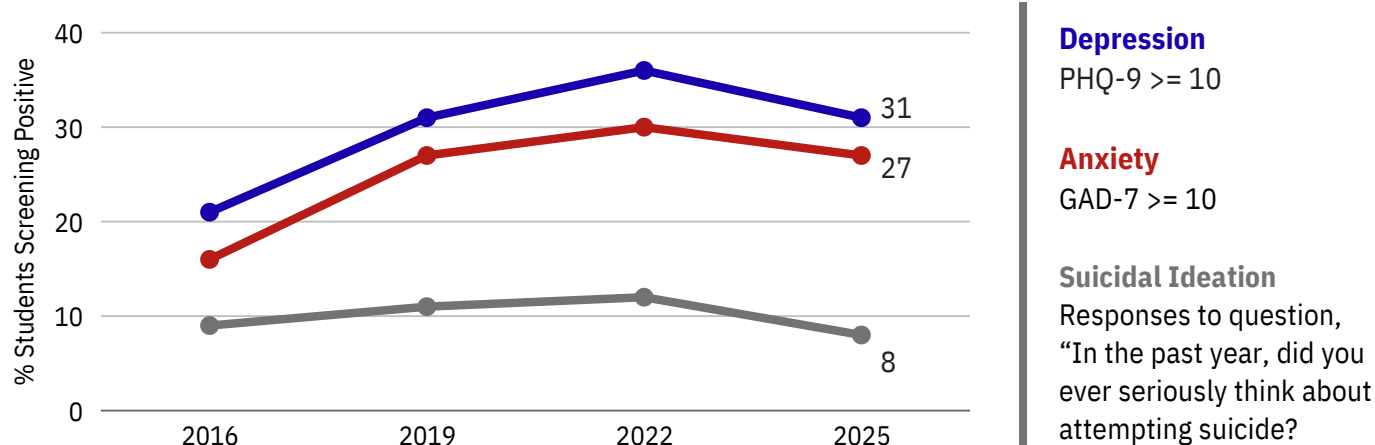
Key Findings

FINDING 1

While significant mental health needs remain, there are improvements in mental health on campus

For the first time since UW–Madison began using the Healthy Minds Survey, findings indicated decreases in rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Figure 1). UW–Madison’s trends reflect national trends, and data show that UW–Madison has lower rates of mental health conditions compared to national averages.

Figure 1: Student Mental Health | Rates of Depression, Anxiety, and Suicidal Ideation



KEY TAKEAWAY

Optimism and a call for continued focus

The 2025 survey indicates improvements in student mental health. These trends may reflect the impact of significant efforts to create a campus that supports mental health and offers services that meet student needs. Based on feedback from prior surveys, UHS made several key changes:

- **Increased mental health staffing capacity** to better meet the demand for services.
- **More virtual and 24/7 mental health resources**, including online therapy through Uwill.
- **Embedded providers** in schools, colleges, and student support spaces.

While the improvements in student mental health are encouraging, many students are still experiencing mental health challenges, which makes a case for continued focus.

UHS Embedded Providers

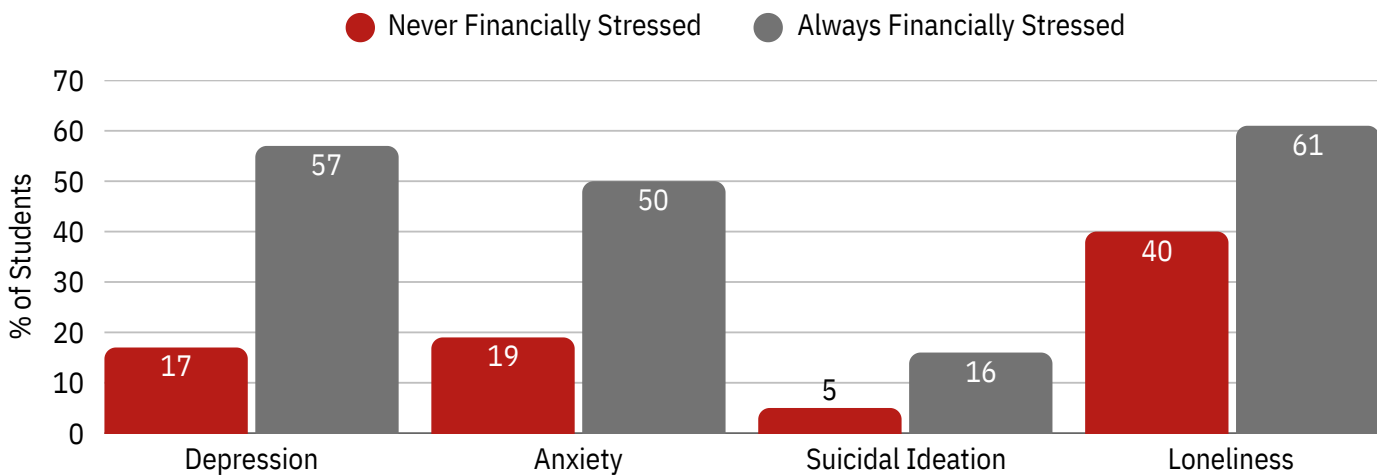
The **Embedded Mental Health Provider Program** increases student access to mental health care across campus by providing on-site support in academic and student services spaces. Mental health professionals in academic departments, student centers, and student housing offer both immediate and ongoing support tailored to the unique needs of each student population. This program aims to build trust and awareness while supporting early intervention.

FINDING 2

Students facing financial stress report higher levels of mental distress

Significant disparities in mental health exist between students who report their current financial situation as being “always stressful” compared with those who report it being “never stressful” (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Mental Health and Financial Stress | Disparities Among Students



KEY TAKEAWAY

Opportunities to work at the intersection of basic needs and mental health

Campus data shows that more limited income students are attending UW–Madison, with the 2025 freshman class including the highest ever percentage of Pell Grant recipients. This data points to a need to consider how campus supports the mental health of students with limited income. Over the past several years, UW–Madison has worked to organize and share resources around basic needs support for students, including through scholarship programs, financial aid, the Open Seat Food Pantry, and Badger FARE.

At UHS, mental health services are provided at no cost to students through their tuition and fees. UHS remains committed to continuing to improve access to mental health care for all students, including those with financial stress. Mental health support is a basic need for students, and UHS will be working closely with other initiatives and offices that support students’ basic needs on campus.

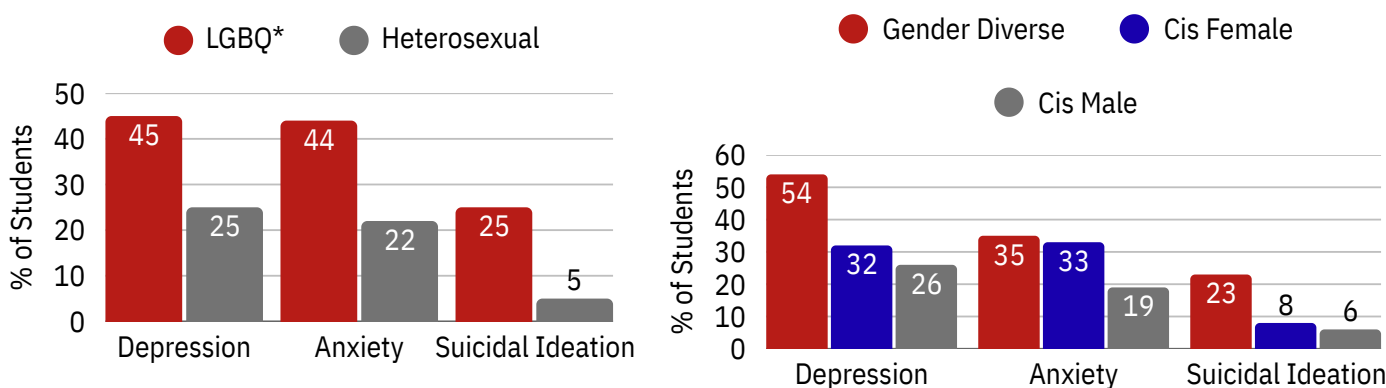
First-Generation and Limited Income Services

In 2026, UW–Madison will expand support for first generation and limited income students with a dedicated campus office.

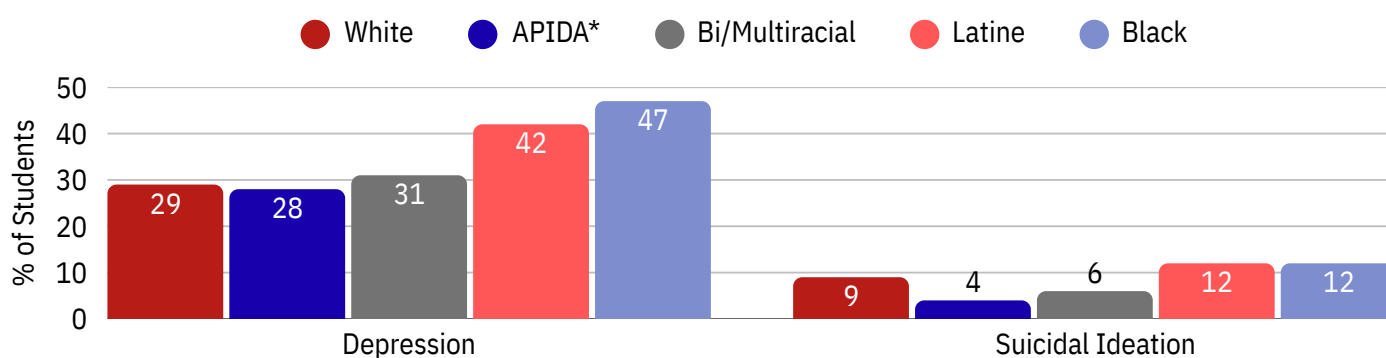
This office will bring together resources, partnerships, and programs to offer holistic, responsive, and student-centered support. Through cohort-based experiences and other initiatives, the office will connect students to campus services and support systems.

FINDING 3**There are disparities in mental health based on students' identities**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and gender diverse students experience significantly more mental health concerns than their heterosexual and cisgender peers. Black and Latine students also experience higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Mental Health and Identity | Disparities Among Students

*Students identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer



*Students identifying as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Desi American

KEY TAKEAWAY**Focusing on meeting students where they are**

While overall student mental health has seen improvements, rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation among LGBQ students, gender diverse students, and students of color are concerning high. This points to a need to ensure equitable access to mental health support.

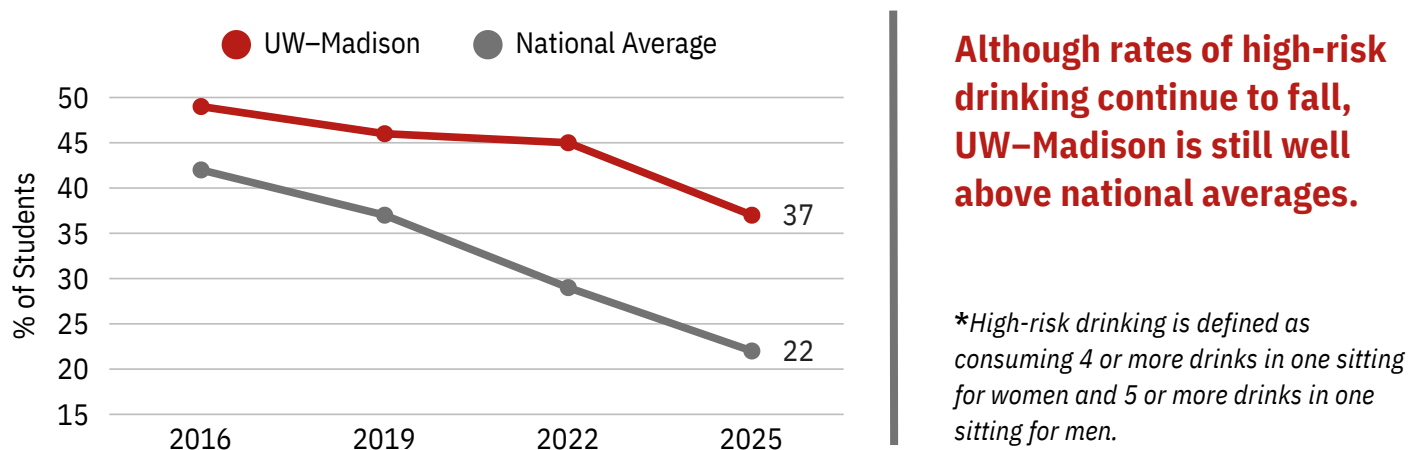
UHS meets students where they are through Let's Talk, outreach events, and embedded providers. UHS offers multiple mental health events each week in the Gender and Sexuality Campus Center (GSCC). Hearts & Crafts is an informal drop-in space where students can participate in various artistic activities with counselors who are readily available resources. Let's Talk, an informal, confidential consultation with a UHS counselor, is offered in the GSCC weekly. UHS also offers mental health programming at the Multicultural Student Center (MSC) and has an embedded provider at the MSC. Programming hosted at the GSCC and MSC is open to all students.

FINDING 4

Alcohol use and student connection remain important issues on campus

For many years, UHS has measured student alcohol use through multiple student surveys. AlcoholEdu data from the incoming first-year class showed lower rates of student alcohol use. Lower rates of alcohol use were also reflected in the Healthy Minds Survey data (Figure 4). This indicates similar trends among all undergraduate and graduate students.

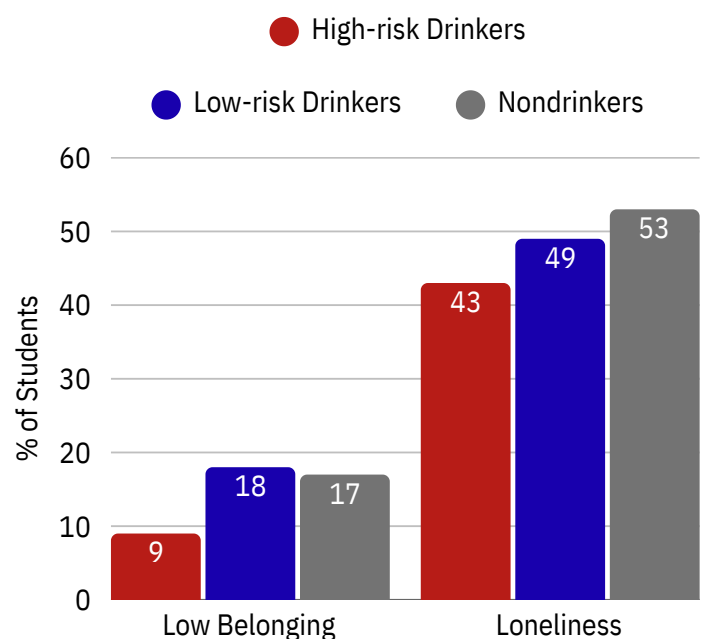
Figure 4: High-Risk Drinking* | UW–Madison Versus National Averages



Data also reflected a link between alcohol use and rates of belonging, with nondrinkers experiencing the lowest levels of belonging and high-risk drinkers experiencing the highest rates of belonging. This mirrors trends seen in past iterations of both the Healthy Minds Survey and the Color of Drinking. For the first time in 2025, the Healthy Minds Survey also measured rates of student loneliness, with nearly half (49%) of students reporting feelings of loneliness. Higher rates of loneliness were seen among nondrinkers, indicating that the link between alcohol and social connection remains (Figure 5).

Loneliness was measured according to the UCLA Loneliness Scale, which measures students' feelings of loneliness, asking questions about how often they feel isolated, left out, or lacking companionship. This scale does not provide an objective measure of students' levels of social isolation.

Figure 5: Belonging and Loneliness | By Drinker Type



KEY TAKEAWAY

Alcohol and belonging

Findings from the Healthy Minds Survey and other campus surveys illustrate that high-risk drinking appears to be a pathway to belonging and connection on campus. Nondrinkers on campus feel lower rates of belonging and higher rates of loneliness. Intentionally creating substance-free and recovery-friendly connection opportunities is especially important as we see increasing rates of nondrinkers among our student population.

WUD Wellness

The **Wisconsin Union Directorate (WUD) Wellness Committee** designs programs that foster a vibrant substance-free campus culture, promote mental health and wellness, and encourage meaningful connections among students. Recent events have focused on growth and self-discovery, advocacy and awareness, and community-building.

The Wisconsin Union also recently launched **The Well**, a dedicated, alcohol-free space for students to connect, study, relax, and participate in wellness-related programs.

42%
of students have not
used alcohol in the
past two weeks

During spring 2025,
Badger Recovery served
students in recovery
**through 500+
engagements**

Badger Recovery

Badger Recovery is UW–Madison's collegiate recovery program, which plays a vital role in supporting UW–Madison students in recovery from substance use, eating disorders, and/or addictive behaviors.

Connection is a key part of recovery, since students in recovery often face stigma and isolation. Badger Recovery offers multiple recovery meetings and social events each week to support the community and connection needed for students to heal, maintain their recovery, and flourish both socially and academically.

FINDING 5

Mental health impacts academics

More than two-thirds of UW–Madison students experienced at least one day in the past four weeks where emotional or mental difficulties hurt their academic performance (Figure 6). Students also frequently reported that they would speak to instructors and advisors when mental health was impacting their academic performance; however, more than a third of students said that they would not talk to anyone (Figure 7).

Figure 6: Academic Impacts | Number of Days in Past 4 Weeks Where Emotional/Mental Difficulties Hurt Academic Performance

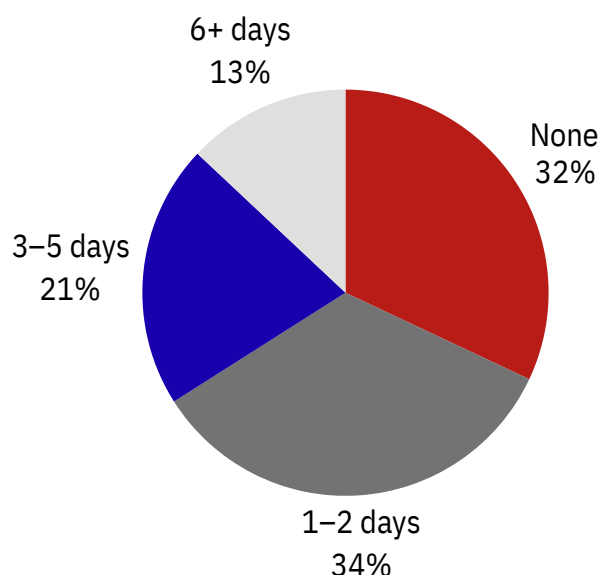
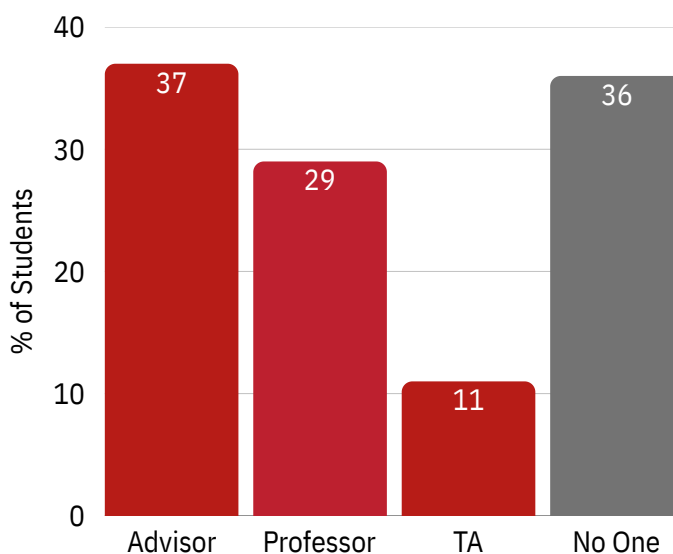


Figure 7: Academic Help Seeking | Who Students Would Talk to if Mental Health Was Impacting Academic Performance



KEY TAKEAWAY

Building mental health support in academic and student services

Mental health and academics are connected on campus. Academic pressures impact students' mental health, and their mental health impacts their academic performance. UW–Madison must continue to work to foster an environment where students feel supported both academically and emotionally. Significant work is already underway in this area through partnerships between UHS; the McBurney Disability Resource Center; the Office of Student Assistance and Support; the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Mentoring; and the Office of Academic and Career Success.

OACS Student Mental Health Community of Practice

The Office of Academic and Career Success (OACS) **Student Mental Health Community of Practice** is a community of advising, career services, and learning support staff who have completed 8+ hours of mental health first aid and suicide prevention training. The group connects regularly to share resources and practice skills related to supporting student and colleague mental health.

FINDING 6**Students are seeking clinical help, and mental health stigma is decreasing**

Continuing trends seen in past iterations of the Healthy Minds Survey, students report high rates of accessing mental health care.

Students also report a decrease in perceived stigma around seeking mental health care, pointing toward a campus culture that is growing more supportive of mental health (Figure 8).

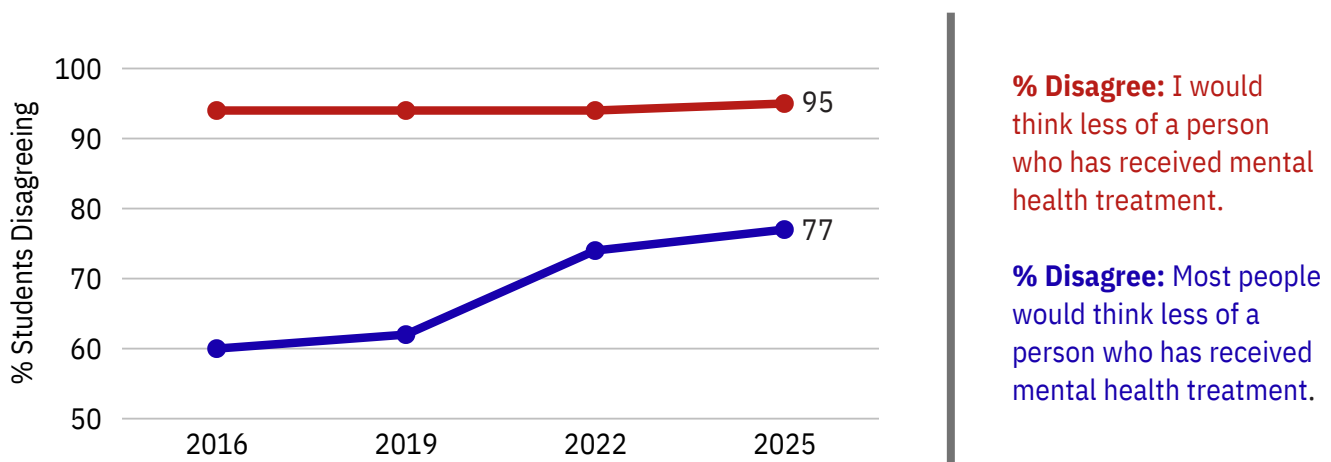
54%

**of students have
accessed therapy
in their lifetime**

62%

**of students report
knowing where to
seek resources**

Figure 8: Mental Health Stigma | Individual and Peer Stigma Around Receiving Mental Health Treatment

**KEY TAKEAWAY****Clarifying social norms to challenge stigma**

While students hold a belief that their peers are less accepting of mental health treatment than they are themselves, this gap has been closing over time. In 2016, only 5% of students said they would think less of someone who sought mental health care; however, 40% believed most of their peers held that view.

To address this gap, UHS launched a series of social norming campaigns over the past decade to challenge stigma and reframe student perceptions. Through consistent messaging, peer engagement, and data-informed outreach, those efforts have helped reduce the misperception to 23%.

FINDING 7**Students frequently turn to friends, roommates, partners, and classmates for support, but those peers don't always feel confident in their support skills**

Beyond seeking professional mental health care, students frequently report receiving support from their peers. However, there is room for improvement in students' feelings of readiness and confidence in supporting someone's mental health. Students report that they don't always know how and when to support a friend, roommate, partner, or classmate who is struggling with their mental health.

76%

of students would speak to a peer (friend, roommate, partner, or classmate) if they were struggling with their mental health.

51%

of students say that they have a good idea of how to recognize when someone is in emotional or mental health distress.

36%

of students say that they feel confident in helping someone with a mental health problem.

KEY TAKEAWAY**Partnership with student organizations**

Because students frequently report seeking support from peers, an important area of focus is building students' capacity to support mental health. Recent efforts in this area have included a formalized partnership between UHS, the Student Activity Center, and the Office for Student Organizations, Leadership & Involvement (SOLI), alongside four mental health-focused student organizations. Through dual registration, UHS supports these student organizations with advising, training, and other ongoing assistance. This partnership is a collaborative commitment to improving student mental health.

Student Mental Health Hub

In September 2025, UHS began managing a dedicated shared space for registered student organizations focused on mental health. This space, located in the Student Activity Center, offers drop-in office hours staffed by student organizations, student-led mental health programming, and peer support.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Campus-level strategies

A mental health-supporting campus goes beyond supporting students who are struggling. It considers the bigger picture to understand how the campus environment—including policies, programs, and systems—influences student mental health. This means working collaboratively to create a more supportive campus environment. Here are a few examples of work already underway in this area:

- **The UW–Madison Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council** offers a multidisciplinary, cross-sector perspective for campus partners to work together to prevent suicide and promote positive mental health among students.
- **The Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)** is an interdisciplinary campus team that supports student success, health, and wellbeing. BIT members work together to identify interventions and support for students experiencing disruptive or concerning behaviors, difficulty accessing resources, academic distress, self-harm, and personal, emotional, and/or psychological difficulties.
- **Social norming efforts** aim to correct misconceptions about peer behaviors, decrease stigma, and promote healthier, more positive actions among students. The data from the 2025 Healthy Minds Survey will be used in a social norming campaign that will be shared across campus later this year.

Building campus capacity to support mental health

Findings from the 2022 Healthy Minds Survey supported the expansion of training and capacity-building for UW–Madison faculty, staff, and students through Recognize, Respond, Refer. This framework builds our campus community's capacity to support mental health and prevent suicide. Through trainings, education, and resources, this framework helps students, faculty, and staff grow their skills to better recognize signs that may indicate someone needs help, respond compassionately, and refer someone to resources for continued support.



Several departments, groups, and organizations on campus have invested in supporting student mental health by requiring suicide prevention trainings for their staff. Consider integrating mental health training into professional development, onboarding, and student educational opportunities for your department, organization, or group. UHS has worked with departments to incentivize participation in trainings, customize trainings based on audience or role, and consult on how to better support student mental health.

Offering widespread or universal education to support mental health helps ensure that anyone a student may turn to on campus is prepared to help. While utilization of mental health services remains high, data continue to show that students frequently seek help from peers, instructors, advisors, and others. This means that everyone on campus has a chance to reduce stigma, support mental health, refer to resources, and intervene.

Visit go.wisc.edu/RRR to learn more about Recognize, Respond, Refer.

What You Can Do



Be better prepared to support student mental health

Take one hour to complete online suicide prevention training through Recognize, Respond, Refer. This training is available to undergraduate and graduate/professional students, as well as faculty and staff through Canvas. Whether you are a student looking to better support a friend, roommate, or classmate, or someone who teaches, mentors, or supervises students, this training is one concrete action you can take to contribute to a culture of support on campus.



Familiarize yourself with resources, and get support

- **University Health Services (UHS)** provides access to no-cost, confidential mental health services for UW–Madison students, including individual therapy, group counseling, and psychiatry. Same-day and next-day virtual appointments are available, as well as other services that don't require an appointment, such as Let's Talk drop-in sessions. Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling 608-265-5600 (option 9).
- **The Office of Student Assistance and Support (OSAS)** helps students navigate personal, academic, or health issues, including mental health issues. Those who have concerns about a student's wellbeing can submit an OSAS Student of Concern Referral.
- **The McBurney Disability Resource Center** provides support for disability-related accommodations. Students with a diagnosed mental health or psychiatric condition can receive accommodations to support them in the university setting.



Share this data

The Healthy Minds Survey presents important data on student mental health, including needs, trends, and social norms. By sharing this data, UHS hopes to break down stigma around mental health and help-seeking in our campus community, as well as draw attention to areas where there are opportunities to better meet student needs.

Looking for more detailed data or recommendations for your school, college, or department? Presentations and consultation are available.

Contact us: uhs@uhs.wisc.edu