

Targeting High Risk Groups

Pace University's Counseling Center-
NYC

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- Private university – 5 campuses in NYC and Westchester-14,000
- Main Campus-NYC, 9,000 students very diverse population
- Abut diverse neighborhoods of Chinatown and the Lower East Side as well as the World Trade Center and Wall Street

Pace University

- 8% were Black,
- 8% were Asian/Pacific Islander,
- 8% were Hispanic,
- 1% were Native American/Alaskan Native,
- 39% were White,
- 29% identified as “Other” or “Unknown” (most likely of mixed background)
- and 7% identified as international students

– Data Sources

- Counseling center data on rates of ideation and attempts
- ~~Research consortium study participant~~ student survey data **High Risk Groups**
- Neighboring populations and appreciation of the impact they have (e.g., Chinatown, the Lower East Side)

Identification and Prioritization of High Risk Groups (continued)

- Literature review
 - Latinas and Asian women at highest risk
- Culminating in NY State OMH grant during Summer 2008 which identified specific risk factors for those groups:
 - Family emphasis on academic performance
 - Conflicts with parents
 - Respect for parents and larger family (e.g., Familismo)
 - Acculturation and Enculturation (e.g., Marianismo and Machismo)
 - Discrimination
 - Stigma associated with accessing mental health services

Offer to go with the person to seek help from her parents, a counselor, or other sources of support.

What is Counseling?
Counseling is a process that helps people with personal, academic, social, or vocational problems. Pace University's Counseling Center is here to make students to make the best possible decisions and to provide them with support. As an active, collaborative effort, a student and counselor work together to clarify issues and concerns, set goals, and explore possible courses of action. Through this process, students often become more self-aware, independent, and effective at pursuing their personal goals. Sometimes personal problems get in the way of academic success and speaking to a counselor during a difficult time can help students bring their focus back to their studies.

The Counseling Center's services are free of charge to currently enrolled Pace students. Services are confidential, and the Center's policy on confidentiality is in accordance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association.

You Can Help
First and foremost, take suicide seriously. It is always better to err on the side of caution. Additionally, here are other steps you can take when someone you know exhibits potential warning signs for suicide:

- Seek support from others. Do not allow yourself to be swayed to secrecy.
- Listen and accept the other person's feelings. Try not to judge or argue.
- Be direct and listen. Do not get stucked by his plans.
- Never discuss someone to kill themselves.
- Offer to go with the person to seek help from her parents, a counselor, or other source of support.
- If possible, never leave the person alone.

Find Someone Else Who Can Help

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • The Counseling Center | • Resident advisors |
| • Campus Security | • Family or friends |
| • A religious or spiritual counselor | |

We are here to help.

Counseling Center
144 W. 111th Street
10th Floor
New York, NY 10036
(212) 875-5446
www.pace.edu/counseling

**Get in the Know:
Suicide Prevention
for Latina
College Students**

PACE UNIVERSITY

Latina college students, Depression, and Suicide

Latinas are at a higher risk for attempting suicide than individuals from many other ethnic groups, and are twice as likely to commit suicide as Latinos. This underlines the need for suicide awareness, outreach, and prevention efforts within the Latin community. Additionally, Latinas report some of the highest rates of depression. Problems related to school, including poor academic performance, are correlated with those who commit suicide.

Risk Factors

- A history of physical or sexual abuse
- A family history of depression and/or suicide
- Conflict within family, particularly problems communicating with parents
- Questioning one's sexuality
- Dealings with a romantic partner
- Conflicts with friends, roommates, or peers
- Previous suicide attempt(s) or thoughts of killing oneself
- A recent loss (e.g., death)
- Impulsive decisions
- Isolation from spiritual community
- Discrimination
- Difficulty with acculturation
- Generalized conflict
- Unwillingness to seek mental health services

Latinas report some of the highest rates of depression. Problems related to school, including poor academic performance, are correlated with those who commit suicide.

Know the Warning Signs

Although individuals vary in how they respond to suicidal thoughts, there are common warning signs that may suggest someone is considering suicide. It's especially important to notice and follow up when someone you know is acting out of character. An individual may be at risk for suicide if she:

- Reports feeling depressed
- Talks about wanting to commit suicide
- Experiences anxiety and/or stress
- Is focused on death and dying
- Writes poems, letters, or stories about death and/or suicide
- Starts giving away possessions
- Experiences feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
- Is having academic problems
- Withdraws from family, community, or friends, or has lost interest in activities she once enjoyed
- Prepares for death by making out a will
- Says things like, "I don't deserve to be here," "I wish I were dead," "I am going to kill myself," or "I want to die."
- Increases use of alcohol and/or other drugs
- Engages in reckless behaviors

Family Factors

It's important to consider the central role of family in the Latino community. For adolescent Latinas, there can be a strong clash between families—strong identification with the mother and extended family—and young women desire for autonomy. Entering college, choosing a major, and contemplating a career outside of the home may go against this cultural belief. Conflicts may be worsened by cultural superstitions that limit the freedom of choice or expression in activities outside of the home, or dissonance regarding romantic partners as well. Some may feel guilty or disloyal to their family by discussing family issues with others.

Predictive Factors

Practically a factor's extent (the likelihood of suicide). They often contribute toward the potential for suicide. Some factors include:

- Religion
- Family relationships (e.g., positive support from parents)
- Romantic relationships
- Friendships
- Future personal and academic goals
- Strong sense of cultural identity
- Fear of death

What is Depression?

Depression is a condition that affects a variety of all ages, sexes, religions, and racial/ethnic populations. Contrary to what many believe, a person with depression cannot "snap out of it" or "snap out of it" any more than someone with a medical problem can just "snap out of it." Depression can be passed from one generation to the next. Sometimes stress or other life events trigger depression, or it results from a combination of factors. Chronic depression is diagnosed when a person has symptoms that last longer than a few days or weeks. This can be accompanied by thoughts of wanting to hurt or kill oneself. Fortunately, depression can be treated.

What Does Depression Look Like?

Recognizing depression is a crucial first step in getting treatment or a friend being able to help. The signs of depression may not seem like a sign for help, so it's important to understand what to look for.

Common Concerns among Latina College Students: What is the Experience of Depression?

- Engaging in risky behaviors, violence, unprotected sexual practices, alcohol and other drug abuse, and/or driving under the influence
- Isolation, withdrawal, conflicts with roommates, parents, friends, and/or romantic partners
- Academic problems: Missing classes, not completing assignments, lower grades, conflicts with professors, and/or falling behind in courses

- ### Strategic thinking to identify students at risk of suicide and encouraging help-seeking
- Beyond data – understanding the specifics of Pace culture
 - Residents versus commuters
 - Needs of urban students with contact and connection to NYC
 - History of discrimination
 - Created study group to look at Research Consortium data relating to diverse student groups
 - Adjusted goals from Cohort 1 grant to Cohort 3 grant – based on data about who students tell when suicidal
 - Experience with trying to bring students to counseling center for focus groups – stigma overrode food and gifts!

Tailoring programs

- Rethinking gatekeeper training –
 - target student clubs and organizations
 - leaders and more persuasive students
- More in depth multicultural approaches –
 - fostering multicultural competence in relation to suicide prevention (identification and referral) in diverse groups via:
 - creation of a toolkits (fact sheets, resources, quizzes for RAs)
 - trainings for faculty, staff, students, and other Counseling Centers.