



Student Mental Health and the Law: A Resource for Institutions of Higher Education

Setting
Higher Education

Type of Program
Protocols & Guidelines

NSSP Goals Addressed
8.3, 8.4

Program Description

Developed by The Jed Foundation, *Student Mental Health and the Law: A Resource for Institutions of Higher Education* addresses issues of law and liability that can be challenging as colleges develop policies for and work with students who are distressed or suicidal. *Student Mental Health and the Law* provides clarification of FERPA, disability law and other legal issues colleges face, and includes “good practice” guidelines for addressing campus mental health and working with students in distress. Good practice guidelines include:

- Encouraging campus-wide communication
- Developing an emergency contact notification protocol
- Establishing a case management team
- Developing leave of absence (LOA) protocols
- Avoiding “zero-tolerance” policies for self-harm
- Understanding the complexities of mandating assessment and treatment
- Establishing individualized re-entry requirements
- Encouraging students to be proactive about their mental health
- Offering insurance with mental health coverage
- Promoting appropriate boundaries
- Developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU)
- Proactively addressing potential conflicts
- Reaching out to affected students
- Establishing and following appropriate policies and protocols

Program Objectives

Users of *Student Mental Health and the Law* should have:

1. Increased understanding of applicable laws and professional guidelines related to student mental health;
2. Increased knowledge of good practice recommendations related to student mental health.

Program Development

Student Mental Health and the Law was developed through a collaborative process that included 18 leaders from the fields of higher education law, education administration, and mental health. A one-day meeting was followed by document drafts that were iteratively reviewed by panel members until a preliminary document and set of good practice guidelines were agreed upon. The document was further reviewed by additional campus experts prior to finalization.

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Costs

Student Mental Health and the Law: A Resource for Institutions of Higher Education is available for free. It can be downloaded from the Jed Foundation website: www.jedfoundation.org/legal

*The content of programs listed in Section II (Expert and Consensus Statements) of the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry address specific goals of the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* and have been reviewed by a panel of three suicide prevention experts and found to meet standards of importance, likelihood of meeting objectives, accuracy, safety, congruence with prevailing knowledge, and appropriateness of development process. Programs were not reviewed for evidence of effectiveness. Additional information about the Best Practices Registry can be found at www.sprc.org.

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