Kent State University

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The More Aware Initiative (MAI) is a comprehensive, collaborative, innovative, and unified approach to improving student mental health and wellness, while working to eliminate suicide among Kent State University (KSU) students. In fall 2017, 39,367 students were enrolled at KSU, with 71.2% at the main campus. About 60% are female and 70% are Caucasian. Recent data indicate that KSU students have a higher rate of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and attempted suicide in the last 12 months as compared college students nationally. Over the past five years, suicide attempts, ideation, and threats have generally increased for KSU students. To promote positive mental health and decrease suicidal ideation and attempts at KSU, the initiative will achieve five primary objectives: 1) Infrastructure: develop a comprehensive and coordinated network infrastructure to expand and enhance mental health, substance abuse and related programming and services for the KSU community. The network infrastructure will include peer-led programming and activities designed to improve student mental health and wellness and reduce incidents of students in crisis, 2) Gatekeeper Trainings: offer expanded and comprehensive options for students, faculty, staff, and families to become gatekeepers through online Kognito and QPR trainings and in-person Mental Health First Aid gatekeeper trainings, 3) Mental Health Screenings: promote and offer expanded in-person and online mental health and substance abuse screenings, 4) Increase Awareness of Mental Health Services: develop and implement a comprehensive campaign to promote and raise awareness of mental health and substance use and related issues and services. The campaign will include the creation of branding, developing student service materials, and unification and enhancement of campus mental health web pages, and 5) Increase Prevention Efforts: raise awareness and provide education to students through a peer-led initiative to provide innovative programming and activities. The initiative will develop and host Flash-Up events on the KSU main and all 7 regional campuses that will substantially increase the current reach of mental health and wellness-related programming and activities. Programming will be used to disseminate educational materials, improve mental wellness, raise awareness, increase coping skills and improve resiliency among approximately 39,000 students annually and 117,000 throughout the lifetime of the project. Aspects of the initiative, will specifically focus on at-risk groups such as students identifying as LGBTQ. The initiative will collect data from a variety of sources and levels not only to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative as a whole, but to assess individual programs and activities as promising practices.