Texas Christian University

Program Name: The HOPE Initiative
Grantee Website: Texas Christian University [1]
Program Website: The Hope Initiative - Suicide Prevention [2]
Grant Type: Garrett Lee Smith Campus
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Texas Christian University (TCU) is establishing a comprehensive program called the HOPE Collaborative, with the purpose of expanding current resources to enhance health-care services to better treat mental health and substance use disorders, as well as prevent suicides and suicidal behavior on campus. The HOPE Collaborative seeks to generate a campus climate change through nationally recognized trainings and workshops, voluntary screenings across campus for mental health and substance use problems, creative outreaches, social marketing, and integrated clinical care. In addition to the campus population as a whole, the HOPE Collaborative will specifically target students at risk for suicide, depression, serious mental illness, and substance use disorders that can result in school failure. The project will further incorporate specialized preventive services for students who are military veterans, identify as a gender or sexual minority, and/or are first-generational college students. TCU is a private, four-year teaching and research university located in Fort Worth, Texas.

There are 10,394 enrolled students, with an ethnically diverse population of about 30%. The need for the HOPE Collaborative is pressing as the number of critical mental health and substance use incidents on campus is escalating. For example, during the fall semester of 2017, 366 students presented to counseling with significant depression, 166 students reported thoughts of suicide, and 27 students visited an emergency room due to a substance abuse crisis. In some case, these numbers from the previous semester surpass the totals from previous academic years. Fortunately, the HOPE Collaborative is designed to reach approximately 4,000 people annually through the lifetime of this project. The HOPE Collaborative has 5 goals, founded in best practices, which will impact the university's policy and processes, the utilization of mental health services, and campus knowledge/attitudes regarding mental health issues and substance use among TCU students. These goals are 1) Enhance mental health services for all college students and for those at risk (Employing a crisis care counselor and establish a “Let’s Talk” program); 2) Implement evidence-based trainings to teach responses to mental health and substance use disorders (utilizing Mental Health First Aid); 3) Provide suicide prevention training and resources to faculty (QPR and “Red Folders”); 4) Promote help-seeking and administer voluntary screenings (marketing campaigns, “Mood Check Days,” “Sober Tailgates” at athletic events); and 5) Create specialized preventive services for students of at-risk groups, (Training Symposium for veterans, certified more Safe Zone Allies instructors, “First Gen Days” for first generational students).

Links within this resource