ANNUAL REPORT

WELLNESS & PREVENTION SERVICES
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

ACADEMIC YEAR 2016-2017
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About BU Wellness & Prevention Services

BU Wellness & Prevention Services (WPS) helps BU students stay healthy throughout their time on campus with programs, services, and resources that promote their well-being. These include:

- Research-backed prevention programs
- Counseling and recovery programs for alcohol and other drugs
- Campus-wide wellness events
- Peer health education programs
- Leadership on the Alcohol and Mental Health Task Forces
- Resources on mental health, sleep, sexual health & relationships, alcohol & drugs

Overview

This year WPS partnered with numerous campus stakeholders to address critical student health concerns. Over 15,600 BU students engaged in education, events, and activities sponsored by WPS:

- 9,162 students received resources on mental health, sleep, alcohol safety, and flu prevention from peers
- 5,250 students engaged in programs to promote sexual health, communication, and violence prevention
- 954 students participated in classes and workshops related to alcohol, marijuana, and stress management
- 280 students received counseling and clinical support for alcohol and drug concerns
MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

More students are arriving on BU’s campus with preexisting mental health issues, academic pressures, and anxieties about fitting in. Over half of BU students experience tremendous or above-average stress¹ and the number of students seeking help in crisis has more than doubled in the past 4 academic years.²

WPS promoted students’ mental health and wellbeing this year by:

• Co-chairing the new Mental Health Taskforce comprised of 11 University staff and administrators
• Collaborating with BU Student Government’s Mental Health Committee on multiple prevention programs
• Conducting focus groups on student stress, management techniques, and communication strategies
• Supporting a peer-driven campaign to de-stigmatize mental health called, You Are Not Alone
• Sponsoring a campus-wide fair to promote campus & community resources for mental health
• Hiring a Mental Health Promotion Graduate Assistant to increase capacity for outreach and programming

Spring into Wellness Fair

For the second consecutive year, WPS organized a campus-wide mental health fair with the goals of:

• Creating an environment to discuss topics that might be stigmatized or intimidating
• Providing students with tools and tips for improving their own mental health
• Introducing students to health resources on and near campus
• Empowering students to be proactive and confident in caring for themselves and others

Impact

Over 150 students engaged with mental health resources and participated in activities like therapy dogs, gratitude games, a giant ball pit, and watercolor art. An evaluation shows that after attending the fair:

• 100% of students are more aware of mental health resources
• 100% are more aware of how to promote their mental health
• 98% feel well-prepared to help a friend in distress
• 93% are more likely to seek help if they are in distress

“I thought [the fair] was a very supportive and educational environment. It was very nice to be able to step back from stress and school for a bit and spend a night focusing on mental health.”

¹ BU Healthy Minds Survey (2016)
² BU Behavioral Medicine psychiatric hospitalization rates
Wellness Program Kits

Wellness Program Kits are designed for resident assistants (RAs) and other student leaders to host educational programs about sleep, stress, alcohol safety, and other health topics with their peers.

Impact

Program kits reached 7,668 students this year. After using a kit, RAs report the following impacts on their peers:

- 98% can accurately measure standard alcoholic drink portions
- 95% learn new tips for stress management
- 80% are more aware of personal sleep challenges

Program kits also help RAs connect with their residents:

- 94% speak about stress management techniques
- 91% discuss tips for better sleep
- 93% are more confident discussing safer drinking

Social Media

WPS increased its social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram this year. Daily posts focused on topics like healthier eating, managing stress, safer sex, sleep habits, and mindfulness.

A Humans of Wellness campaign featured student leaders and staff and garnered nearly 10,000 Facebook views and 200 likes on Instagram:

"Wellness Program Kits were] a great way to introduce my residents to BU resources!"
PEER EDUCATION

College students frequently look to their peers for health information. Peer education programs are a popular, evidence-based approach to encouraging healthier habits on college campuses.

This year, 16 BU undergraduates served as Student Health Ambassadors (SHAs) and liaisons between SHS and the BU community. SHAs are peer educators who are trained by professionals in stress management, sleep hygiene, alcohol and drug prevention, and sexual health. Together, SHAs delivered 36 workshops and events and distributed 1,000 stress management resources to their peers.

Impact

SHAs complete a 360-degree evaluation to assess their individual performance, the program, and group goals.

Results show that 100% of SHAs feel the WPS program:

- Positively impacts their experience at BU
- Allows them to make a difference on campus
- Enhances their leadership skills
- Encourages them to make healthier decisions
- Makes them better candidates for future jobs and graduate programs

SHAs engage in professional development related to medicine and public health. This year, topics included health communication, research, transferable skills, and resume writing. Several Student Health Ambassadors also presented at the NASPA Bacchus Initiatives Regional Peer Education Conference in Boston, Massachusetts.

“I learned how important wellness really is, and that I can do something to help others that have faced some of the same obstacles that I have throughout my time at BU.”
SEXUAL HEALTH & VIOLENCE PREVENTION

WPS also addresses students’ sexual health and experience of sexual violence. Among sexually active BU students, only half regularly use condoms to prevent unplanned pregnancy and STIs. According to BU’s 2015 Campus Climate Survey, 18% of students also report experiencing at least one form of sexual misconduct.

WPS provides several innovative prevention programs to encourage a sex-positive campus culture and help reduce sexual violence. Goals of the programs include:

- Providing medically accurate health information
- Promoting enthusiastic consent and communication skills
- Encouraging safer sex and STI testing
- Promoting campus and community resources

Condom Fairy

The Condom Fairy program is a free and discreet mail-order service for safer sex supplies and education on healthy relationships.

Impact

Nearly 5,000 Condom Fairy packages were mailed to BU students this year. The program evaluation shows that:

- 98% know of specific questions to ask to be sure they have their partner’s consent
- 98% have either used or plan to use the condoms they received
- 100 students were tested for STIs after receiving a Condom Fairy package
- 118 students ordered consensual valentine cards through a partnership with SARP and BU Snapchat

Sex in the Dark

Sex in the Dark (SITD) is a unique Q&A panel that brings together experts from a variety of disciplines to answer BU students’ anonymous questions about sexual health and relationships.

SITD includes skits written and performed by SARP Ambassadors on topics such as enthusiastic consent and sexual identity. Other SITD partners include numerous community and local organizations.

Impact

Over 250 students attended the event this year. Students report that after attending SITD:

- 83% are more informed about their sexual health
- 81% are more prepared to talk about sexual issues with a partner
- 80% are more comfortable accessing sexuality resources

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3 BU National College Health Assessment Survey (2017)
ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Reducing rates of dangerous drinking and drug-use remain a focus of WPS. According to a recent campus-wide survey, over half of BU students who drink alcohol have experienced negative consequences in the past year.4

WPS provides prevention, counseling, and policy recommendations to support all BU students, regardless of their choices with alcohol. This year, WPS efforts resulted in:

- 99% of first-year students completing the AlcoholEdu for College® course
- 3,358 students receiving community safety, alcohol and marijuana education and resources
- 50 staff and administrators engaging in campus-wide prevention strategies and programs
- 26 students joining the newly launched Collegiate Recovery Program
- 20 parents convening to talk about preventing alcohol abuse at the Parents Leadership Council

Alcohol Transports

185 BU students were transported to the hospital for alcohol intoxication this year. Of those transported: 57% were first-year students; 62% were female; 17% were 21 or older; 7% had a prior alcohol transport; 0.19 was the median blood alcohol level (n=138), indicative of medical risk. Transports peaked in early fall and spring semesters.

WPS outreached all transported students to participate in counseling. Underage students are required to complete counseling through BU’s conduct system. This year, 74% of all transported students were seen for counseling in WPS. On average, students attended their first counseling appointment within 2 weeks of their alcohol transport.

The Alcohol Task Force addressed high-risk drinking on “Marathon Monday” this year with a multi-pronged prevention strategy: publicized policy enforcement in BU Today; alcohol-free activities promoted on social media; and a party safety meeting with 50 Greek Life members, BU and Boston Police officers, General Council, Student Activities, and WPS. Efforts helped to reduce transports over the holiday weekend from 13 to 3 from 2016 to ’17.

Alcohol & Marijuana Education for Sanctioned Students

Students who violate BU alcohol or marijuana policies attend a 90-minute class taught by trained graduate students and WPS staff.

The evidence-based classes focus on:

- Understanding risks related to alcohol and marijuana
- Impacts on personal and academic goals
- Strategies for reducing harm if using these drugs

4 BU National College Health Assessment Survey (2017)
Impact
Students complete a survey before, immediately after, and 6-weeks post-class. Results show impacts on students 6 weeks after attending the classes:

- 100% know of campus marijuana policies
- 96% know how alcohol and marijuana impact sleep
- 20% more students correctly identify BU drinking norms
- 1 in 3 students report changing their drinking habits

Collegiate Recovery Program
The BU Collegiate Recovery Program (BU CRP) launched this year with 26 members ranging in age, class year, and length of recovery. The BU CRP outreaches incoming and current students and those returning from leave-of-absences. CRP members meet regularly for dinner, AA meetings, CRP group meetings, and numerous social activities. The CRP has also developed a number of partnerships with several BU departments, local government agencies, and businesses.

Impact
A year-end program evaluation reveals that:

- 100% of members make meaningful connections through the CRP
- 100% of members did not relapse during their CRP involvement
- 85% feel the CRP supports and empowers them as a person in recovery

“[The CRP] definitely changed [my view of BU] for the better...It's made me realize that the BU community is more diverse than I thought. I also feel like the university cares about people like me, in a way that I've never felt before...It's really refreshing to feel like BU cares and wants to support us.”