



SUPPORTING Minds, SUPPORTING Learners

Addressing Student Mental Health
to Advance Academic Success

How Colleges Are Helping Students in Need of Mental Health Support

In 2022–2024, the **Alamo Colleges District (TX)** used a \$200,000 grant from Trellis Foundation and \$300,000 from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to increase mental health and well-being services. As part of this work, Alamo created the Alamo Thrive Cross College Committee to support students as they returned to campus after COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted.

Alamo Colleges also used a train-the-trainers model to provide suicide prevention training across the five district colleges. Six counselors received the training and then taught more than 100 faculty, staff, and student employees to recognize and address the dangers of student suicides. As of 2024, more than 1,300 faculty and staff have been trained in mental health support.

All five Alamo Colleges are [JED Campuses](#), and a JED Campus Advisor helped each campus develop a strategic plan using data from the Healthy Minds Survey and the HOPE Survey of Basic Needs. The Alamo Board approved funding for several new positions to support students' mental health and meet their basic needs. The board added two additional counselors, raising the total number of counselors from 9.5 to 11, and created slots for one social work case manager for each campus.

Students at **Cochise College (AZ)** can use the Meta App, which provides teletherapy. The app allows users to view information about providers and choose one who seems like a good fit. It also offers filters to help users find a provider who meets their criteria. The app is free for Cochise College students.

Columbus State Community College (OH) takes a comprehensive approach to student mental health and well-being. In 2021, the college established a Department of Student Well-Being to address key wellness dimensions that are essential for student success. The college offers on-campus counseling with staff and interns, typically available within a week for intake appointments. In addition, the college provides 24/7 virtual counseling and crisis support through an online platform. The same platform offers on-demand wellness workshops and videos. Finally, the college uses grant funding to help some students cover fees for therapy outside of the college.

The college also addresses foundational wellness needs, such as housing, health, transportation, childcare, and food security. The college has partnered with a local health clinic that provides services at free or reduced rates. Students with transportation challenges receive bus passes, while childcare support is available through the on-campus childcare center and community vouchers. The college's on-campus food pantry is available to all students and does not require proof of need.

In 2021, Hudson County declared **Hudson County Community College [HCCC] (NJ)** a Stigma-Free campus, a designation based on the college's work on mental health and substance abuse awareness. In addition to providing short-term therapy by licensed mental health professionals and 24/7 access to remote support, the college brings many stakeholders into the work of supporting students' mental health.



HCCC is helping faculty and staff develop the skills they need to help students who need mental health support and connect them to appropriate resources. The college is training staff, faculty, and students in Mental Health First Aid, which gives participants the skills they need to identify signs of mental illness and substance use disorders and provide initial support to anyone struggling or experiencing a crisis. The college also provides Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) training, which teaches crisis warning signs as well as how to question, persuade, and refer someone to get help.

HCCC also is a JED Campus. Through the JED Campus program, HCCC has implemented a Mental Health Leave Policy, launched an Active Minds club, printed hotline numbers on all Student ID Cards, launched a campus-wide educational campaign, and designated safe/calm spaces on campus. The college works with partners—including the Hudson Pride Center, Bridgeway Crisis Intervention Services, Women Rising, and Partners in Prevention—that help create a stigma-free environment and provide students with additional resources. Through the HCCC Graduate Internship Program, up to 15 masters-level social workers from area colleges and universities provide services at HCCC as part of completing their master’s degree requirements. With the support of a clinical supervisor, the graduate students provide counseling to HCCC students and facilitate mental health events.

The Student Wellness initiative at **Metropolitan Community College (NE)** is a campus-wide effort to support students in the eight dimensions of well-being: social, physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, financial, occupational, and environmental. Student Wellness includes events, trainings, and virtual learnings. For example, every week the college offers a free 30-minute workshop focused on mental health and wellness tools, resources, and skill building. Students, faculty, and staff are welcome to attend all the workshops or choose the ones that most interest them.

The **Panhandle Partnership (TX)** was established by **Amarillo College** in 2022 with support from Trellis Foundation to support mental health needs across the expansive Panhandle region of West Texas. The four-institution partnership of **Amarillo College, West Texas A&M University, Clarendon College, and Frank Phillips College** maintains a centrally located Panhandle Partnerships Wellness Clinic, which opened in fall 2023 and provides free mental health services—including in-person counseling, online counseling, and mental health screening tools—to students from all four colleges.

Victoria College (TX) provides support through the Counseling Center Without Walls, a program with a full-time therapist who supervises graduate student interns. The college also has a bank of community partners that provide referral pathways and specialty services; teletherapy options; and health promotion activities, including campus awareness of mental health supports. With targeted awareness campaigns and the addition of graduate-level interns, the counseling center tripled the number of students served from spring 2023 to fall 2023. More than three-quarters (77%) of students who used counseling services indicated they would not have been able to obtain mental health support or intervention without these free services.

Waubensee Community College (IL) offers students and community members multiple ways to access mental health and wellness support. The college provides an online anonymous, confidential, free mental health screening tool. This tool uses a small set of questions to help students determine if they or someone they care about should connect with a behavioral health professional. For those who are seeking support, the college has licensed counselors who provide short-term mental health counseling. In addition, the college partners with the Association for Individual Development to offer a 24/7 talk line and a drop-in resource connection. The college also connects students with peer support leaders who are trained in mental health support, stress management, and mentoring. Services are offered in both English and Spanish.

The Alamo Colleges District, Panhandle Partnership, and Victoria College programs were featured in Key Learnings from the Trellis Foundation Postsecondary Mental Health and Wellbeing Learning Community, convened by the Meadows Institute.



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