IUSB Student Peer Advocacy, Support & Recovery: Disempowering Stigma in Mental Health

Outreach/Resources/Team:

- IUSB Student Counseling Center: Kevin Griffith, SCC Director
- South Bend Human Rights Commission: Study Tables on Race: Christine Bettcher, participant & SCC pre-licensed Staff
- IUSB Student Association Civil Rights and Social Justice: Student Organization Officers
- Counseling & Human Services Department: Chaka Ward, faculty & Research Graduate Students
- Active Minds…changing the conversation about Mental Health

Abstract:

The IUSB Student Counseling Center seeks to engage students in a peer-helping support system where stigma in mental health has no power in limiting one’s commitment to academic success and self-determination. As reported in www.whatadifference.org, “among 18-25 year olds, the prevalence of serious mental health conditions is high, yet this age group shows the lowest rate of help-seeking behaviors”. Information exchange and mutual understanding are powerful tools in the quest to disempower stigma in mental health. Evidence based research reflects that peer-led efforts to assist University students in seeking help are gaining momentum. At IUSB, we know that on a yearly basis 550 students will engage in confidential mental health services. Hundreds more will participate in on-line screenings and awareness-outreach events. We can do more!

Narrative:

The goal of IUSB Student Peer Advocacy, Support & Recovery: Disempowering Stigma in Mental Health is two-fold: 1). To re-establish an IUSB chapter with Active Minds, the nation’s only non-profit organization dedicated to utilizing the student voice to raise mental health awareness among college students, and 2). To reach out to our multicultural IUSB community, where all students will have the opportunity to embrace cross-cultural competencies that respect and promote identity, diversity, ethics, equity, and social justice.

- Goal One: Re-establish an IUSB chapter with Active Minds. The Student Counseling Center Director, Kevin Griffith, has made recent inquiry with Active Minds to position our campus community as a thriving environment that will foster student-led peer support prevention and recovery based mental health supports.
Goal Two: Reach out to promote awareness, break down barriers, and enhance mental health supports within our IUSB multicultural community. Over the Spring Semester 2016, IUSB pre-licensed Student Counseling Center staff Christine Bettcher, has participated in “Study Tables on Race” in partnership with the South Bend Human Rights Commission. Cultural identity has been a meaningful conversation in regard to empowering others to demonstrate multicultural awareness and competency with emphasis on neighbors as “fellow-travelers”—in mutual search for collectivism, collaboration, and compassion in developing one’s worldview—with special emphasis on mental health.

According to www.whatadifference.org students with mental health conditions have a high potential to minimize future disability if social acceptance is broadened and they receive the right support”...furthermore, “people with mental illness need to be treated with respect, compassion, and empathy, just as anyone with any other serious but treatable condition”. We cannot agree more! And, we can do more!!!

What will you do to reach your goals? How will assess whether you reach those goals? How will this endeavor impact student success in relationship to retention, persistence, and/or timely graduation?

Vision 2020 Objective One—Outreach: The Student Counseling Center will incorporate IUSB Student Peer Advocacy, Support & Recovery: Disempowering Stigma in Mental Health goals in all New Student Orientation presentations effective: Summer 2016. Information for Active Minds and Student Counseling Center Multicultural Awareness Supports will be essential resources available to students, parents, and faculty/staff.  
***Timeline: New Student Orientation Summer & Fall 2016 and Spring 2017: Sustainable thereafter

Vision 2020 Objective Two—Outreach: The Student Counseling Center will integrate IUSB Student Peer Advocacy, Support & Recovery: Disempowering Stigma in Mental Health goals into all Student Counseling Intake and Assessment systems effective: Fall 2016.  
***Timeline: Fall and Spring Academic Year 2016-2017: Sustainable thereafter

Vision 2020 Objective Three—Assessment: The Student Counseling Center will integrate IUSB Student Peer Advocacy, Support & Recovery: Disempowering Stigma in Mental Health goals into Titanium (SCC’s data management system) to provide quantifiable information and trend analysis in regard to mental health utilization as it pertains to retention, persistence, and/or timely graduation.  
***Timeline: Fall and Spring Academic Year 2016-2017: Sustainable thereafter

Vision 2020 Objective Four—Assessment: The Student Counseling Center will evaluate current trends which suggest a 15-20% increase in student retention as it relates to
mental health support utilization at IUSB, a trend supported by information compiled through www.whatadifference.org. For example, at our IUSB campus, Titanium database information reflects that the Student Counseling Center serves 10% of the University general population, with outreach/resource information to 100% of Beginning and Transfer Students’ through New Student Orientation.

***Timeline: Fall and Spring Academic year 2016-2017: Sustainable thereafter

* Vision 2020 Objective Five—Peer-helping Program Planning: The ultimate success of IUSB Student Peer Advocacy, Support & Recovery: Disempowering Stigma in Mental Health rests in creating an environment whereby the Student Counseling Center serves as a facilitator to a sustainable Student-led mental health support system. Student leadership roles, Student-led conversation series, and Student-centered workshop opportunities will be paramount to meeting the needs of the IUSB community.

1). Student Leadership Roles: As per Active Minds bylaws, all University Chapter initiatives will be student organized and led. The Student Counseling Center and collaborating partners will facilitate a learning environment dedicated to peer-helping student supports, multicultural competency, student success, and retention.

2). Multicultural Identity Workshop Student Scholarships and Conversation Series: Three to five workshop scholarships will be granted to Students for participation in social justice learning experiences with special emphasis on Multicultural Identity. Studies suggest that stigma with mental health is often rooted through barriers to multicultural awareness and identity. Student engagement in Multicultural Identity Workshops empower the learner through appreciation of culture, history, and resources. The Bridges out of Poverty & the Civil Rights Heritage Freedom Summer activity have been designated as collaborative partners with our 2020 Grant proposal. Student learners will be asked to participate in a Spring 2017 Student-led conversation series to share experience and insight based on Workshop participation.

***Timeline: Summer and fall 2016 & Spring 2017 Conversation Series: Sustainable thereafter
Budget: (AY 1 & AY 2)

Active Minds Chapter Start-Up Funds (determined by National Organization guidelines): $600

Multicultural Identity Workshop Student Scholarships: $1200

Marketing Materials—Information Display & Brochures: $500

Hospitality—Pizza/snacks for Student-led Conversation Series: $500

Total Project Request: $2800

***Project Sustainability after one year will be possible through the successful establishment to the Indiana University South Bend Student-led Active Minds Chapter