

Addressing mental health: Student tools and resources

By **Asia Rowell** - August 20, 2021



In a survey conducted by Boston University mental health researcher Sarah Ketchen Lipson, half of the nearly 33,000 college students surveyed experienced depression or anxiety during the fall 2020 semester. (Anna Tarazevich, Pexels)

After a year of uncertainty and remote college classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, the mental health of Salt Lake Community College students is a priority.

In June 2020, the percentage of people experiencing symptoms of anxiety disorder was three times higher than the year before, according to survey results published by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). In April 2021, [Ohio State University](#) conducted a survey that found increased levels of anxiety, depression and burnout among its students.

Mental health workers at SLCC are preparing to combat any issues affecting a student's well-being after months of social isolation, according to Cielle Smith with the Center for Health and Counseling.

When the pandemic first broke out, Smith said she saw fewer clients at the college.

"Many were unsure if telehealth would be useful for them," she explained. "Over the past year and a half, we have seen an increase in how many sessions we have been having though, so we have been fairly busy."

Smith said other mental health facilities have also been impacted and many still have long waitlists. Still, she's confident SLCC'S mental health services team is balancing the demand.

Mental health counselors have raised concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic adversely impacted student mental health because of the remote situation and isolation from their instructors and peers.

But for Michael Ponce, a pre-med student at SLCC, the transition from in-person classes to online, was the opposite.

"I consider myself tech-savvy, so I've been able to navigate through Canvas and do all my assignments with no trouble," Ponce said.

Ponce did, however, acknowledge the COVID-19 pandemic was tough on his mental health.

"Not being able to go out and see my family or friends was really hard for me," Ponce described. "It was also hard on my mental health just feeling like my life and the world was in chaos and out of control."

Smith suggested students struggling with mental health access professional help, connect with others or make meaningful contributions to communities, such as volunteer work.

The Center for Health and Counseling also offers resources and tools on [its website](#), including a mental health self-evaluation tool that allows students to assess their own health and determine whether they'd like to seek additional help.

The center also provides counseling for different needs, including anxiety and depression, relationship conflicts, grief and loss, academic challenges and family problems.

For more information from resources outside of SLCC, there are other helplines, such as the [suicide prevention lifeline](#) and [SafeUT](#).

THE CENTER FOR HEALTH & COUNSELING IS HERE FOR SUPPORT:



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The Center for Health and Counseling at Salt Lake Community College offers services to help students with mental health care. (Courtesy image)