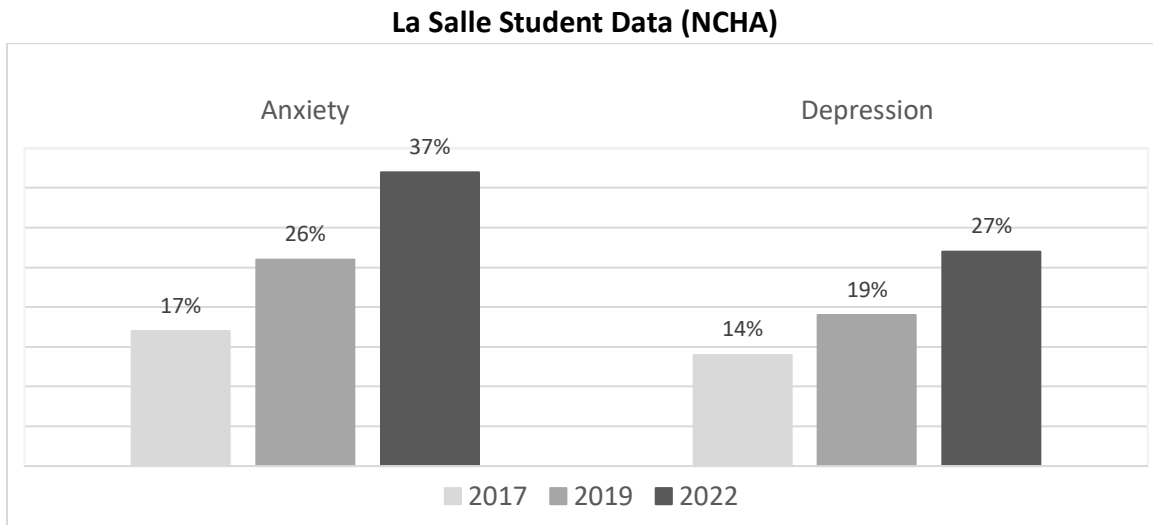


Strategies for Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs

Anxiety and depression are the most prevalent mental health concerns reported by college students. According to the National College Health Assessment (NCHA), the reported rates of anxiety and depression have doubled in the last 5 years for La Salle students.



Anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders impact areas of the brain that are essential for memory, attention, information processing, and executive function. This can make it difficult to retain new information and recall previously learned information.

Identify Common Symptoms

Anxiety

- Avoidance (classroom, assignments, exams, peers, interacting with instructors)
- Physical Symptoms (headaches, migraines, tension, weakened immune system)
- Difficulty sleeping
- Isolation
- Inability to focus
- Uncontrollable worry, nervousness, restlessness
- Substance abuse

Depression

- Feelings of sadness, irritability, guilt, worthlessness, and hopelessness
- Sleep difficulties (too much or too little)
- Changes in appearance (weight loss or gain, may appear more disheveled)
- Trouble concentrating and low motivation
- Physical symptoms (low energy, easily fatigued, headaches, muscle aches)
- Substance abuse
- Suicidal ideation, including attempts and self-harm

Strategies for Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs

Helpful Strategies

- Start the semester with a survey that students can complete regarding any difficulties they may have with learning or any other personal challenges they're experiencing (e.g. "What I wish my professor knew").
- Create opportunities for students to provide feedback anonymously throughout the semester in order to better understand both emotional and academic needs. This could also include allowing students to provide self-reflections after exams or large assignments to assess ways in which mental health concerns may be interfering with academic performance.
- Check in with students if you notice excessive absences or a decline in performance, attitude, participation, etc. Provide them with campus resources that are available for additional support.
- **Foster relationships with students.** Social support is one of the most significant protective factors for college student success. Research from the Jed Foundation suggests that regular check-ins with professors can significantly reduce student stress, anxiety, and depressive thoughts.

Resources and Services Available on Campus

- Academic Support Programs and Services
 - Student Success Coaching (first year students only)
 - Academic Coaching
 - Tutoring
 - Supplemental Instruction
 - Academic Accommodations (if applicable)
- Students of Concern
- Student Counseling Center
 - Available to all undergraduate and graduate students who are taking at least 6 credits
 - Daily walk-in hour at 1pm and 3pm

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Morgan Churchill, MA, MS, LPC
Student Counseling Center
215-951-1954
churchillm@lasalle.edu