A mental illness is a health problem that significantly affects how a person thinks, behaves and interacts with other people. It is diagnosed by a mental health professional. It is not encouraged for you to self diagnose.

Students should know that suicide is the second-leading cause of death for college students, and the main reason is untreated depression. There are more than 1,100 suicides on U.S. college campuses every year. According to the American Psychological Association, depression as a college illness is up about 10% over the last 10 years.

**Warning signs:**
- Loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Problems falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping too much
- Problems concentrating, remembering information or making decisions
- Aches, pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not go away
- Lack of energy
- Loss of appetite or eating too much
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts

An eating disorder is an illness that causes serious disturbances to your everyday diet, such as eating extremely small amounts of food or severely overeating. A person with an eating disorder may have started out just eating smaller or larger amounts of food, but at some point, the urge to eat less or more spiraled out of control. Severe distress or concern about body weight or shape may also signal an eating disorder.

Common disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder. An obsession with eating only healthy or "pure" foods may also signal an eating disorder.

**Warning signs:**
- Extreme thinness (emaciation)
- Relentless pursuit of thinness and unwillingness to maintain a normal or healthy weight
- Extremely restricted eating
- Lack of menstruation (for women)
- Acid reflux, gastrointestinal problems
- Severe dehydration from purging fluids
- Worn tooth enamel, increasingly sensitive and decaying teeth as a result of exposure to stomach acid.
- Hoarding food
- Intense fear of gaining weight
- Distorted body image, self-esteem that is heavily influenced by perceptions of body weight and shape, denial of the seriousness of low body weight
- Chronically inflamed, sore throat
- Swollen salivary glands in the neck & jaw
- Intestinal distress from laxative abuse
- Electrolyte imbalance (too low or too high levels of sodium, calcium, potassium) which can lead to heard attack
- Refusal to eat in front of others

Information from NIMH.org and Everyday Health
Occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. You might feel anxious when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or making an important decision. Anxiety disorders involve more than temporary worry or fear. For a person with an anxiety disorder, the anxiety does not go away and can get worse over time. These feelings can interfere with daily activities such as job performance, school work, and relationships.

**Warning signs:**

- Can’t relax, startles easily
- Has difficulty concentrating
- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Physical symptoms that often accompany the anxiety include fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, muscle aches, difficulty swallowing, trembling, twitching, irritability, sweating, nausea, lightheadedness, having to go to the bathroom frequently, feeling out of breath, and hot flashes.

Cutting, burning, or otherwise injuring yourself in places on your body that can be hidden is a form of self-harm and a response to stress and pressure that seems overwhelming.

Possible signs of a self-harm disorder: consistently wearing long sleeves or long pants on warm days, or having frequent "accidental" injuries. Cutting and other forms of self-harm are often associated with depression and eating disorders.

A survey of college students conducted by Cornell and Princeton University researchers found that about 20% of women and 14% of men have participated in some form of self-harm. Less than 7% reported that they asked for help.

Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance by college students, but abuse of stimulant prescription drugs that help students stay awake to study is also a common problem. Abuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, and prescription drugs (such as ADHD medications) has been and continues to be a major college health issue that contributes to accidents, sexual assaults, and high-risk sexual behavior on campus.

Studies show that 80 percent of college students drink alcohol and 20% admit to binge drinking. Peer pressure to drink and use drugs is a major factor in campus substance abuse rates, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

**Warning signs:**

- Bloodshot eyes, pupils larger or smaller than usual
- Deterioration of physical appearance, personal grooming habits
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination
- Unexplained need for money or financial problems. May borrow or steal to get it.
- Frequently getting into trouble (fights, accidents, legal problems)
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity, agitation or giddiness
- Appears fearful, anxious or paranoid, with no reason
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns.
- Sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing
- Drop in attendance and performance at work or school
- Secretive or suspicious behaviors
- Sudden changes in friends, hangouts, hobbies
- Unexplained change in personality/attitude i.e. mood swings, irritability, angry outbursts
- Lack of motivation; appears lethargic or “spaced out”