

# Mental Health and College Transition

Brooke Ruxton, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Counseling & Consultation Services

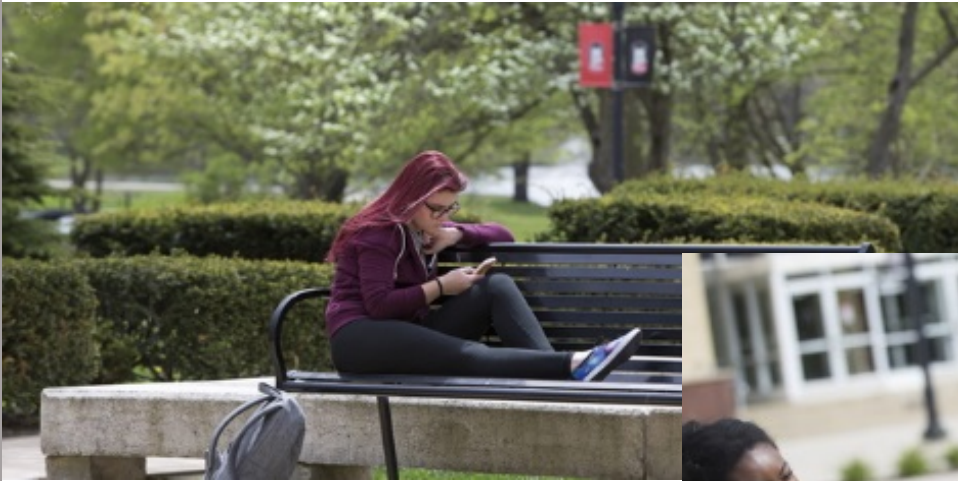
Northern Illinois University

# Overview

- Mental Health Needs on Campus
- Common Challenges
- Planning Ahead
- Resources
- Managing Transition
- Privacy and Information Sharing

# Guiding Thoughts/Discussion

- What do you Want to Know about Mental Health and Transitioning to College?



# Mental Health Needs on Campus

- Growing need for mental health services due to changes in college populations
  - Students have increased access to resources, awareness, and more opportunities
  - ½ of university counseling center clients have previous experience with therapy
- Most common concerns are related to anxiety and depression followed by academic and family stress, and relationship concerns
- Mental health services are available on most college campuses but may look slightly different depending on the school
- Faculty and staff are typically trained to respond to mental health needs or at least provide referrals

# Common Challenges for Students

- New freedom and responsibility
  - Exciting
  - Overwhelming and scary
- New and more demanding academic requirements
- Changing relationships with peers, family, and self
- Financial stress
- Residential living and navigating new relationships
- Diversity- greater exposure to new beliefs and values

Existing  
Needs



New  
Challenges  
and  
Transitions



Plan  
Ahead



# Planning Ahead

- Consider location, size of school, community college vs. four-year
- Find out what services are available and how to access
- Consider housing options in your decision
- University services provide a great deal of support- but it's different from *parental support*
- Talk with current providers regarding recommendations
- Identify potential setbacks/pitfalls and steps to address them
- Include a communication plan with your student
- Now is not the time to make significant changes to a treatment plan

# Resources- Counseling Services

- Usually Counseling and Psychological Services, Counseling Center, Student Counseling, Counseling and Consultation
- Staffed with licensed mental health professionals and trainees
- Provide a variety of therapy services including consultation, referral, crisis response, individual therapy, and therapy groups
- Likely provide on-call or after hours services
- May provide medication management
- Contact early to find out about services, treatment models, how to access services, location, hours, etc.



# Understanding Counseling Resources

- May not provide comprehensive services for all presenting concerns
  - Session Limits
  - Scope of Care
  - Areas of Expertise
  - Impacted by size and needs of the campus
- Growing demand and utilization may lead to high waiting times-  
seek services and information early
- Medication management may be challenging
  - 64% of universities report some type of psychiatric services are available
  - Only 29% of Counseling Center Directors report the services are sufficient

# Disability Resource Services

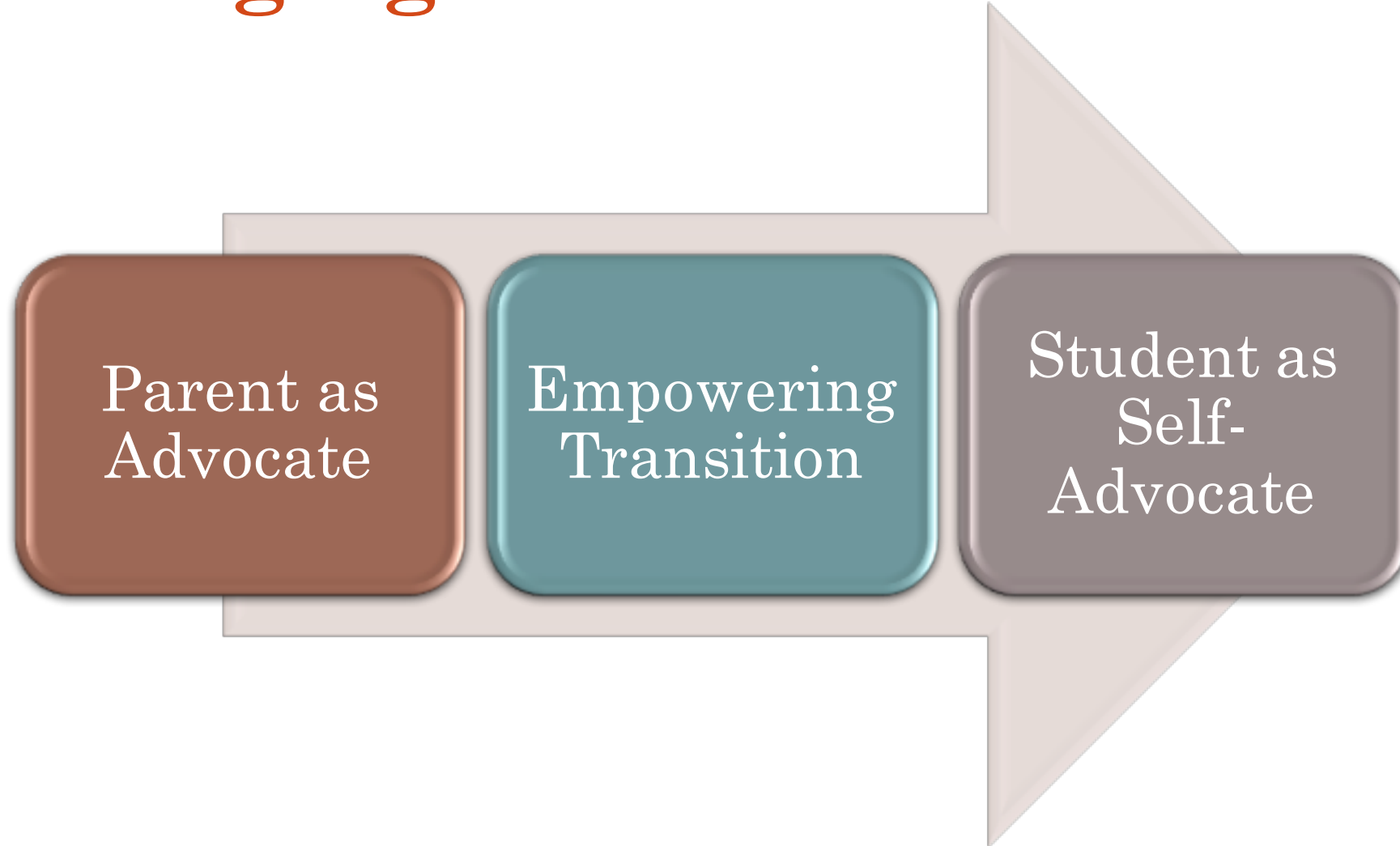
- Contact early to find out how disability resources will interact with your student and what documentation and information they will need
- Responsibility falls on the student to disclose or to choose not to disclose their disability
- Accommodations designed to provide equal access to all students
- Eligibility in high school does not automatically translate to eligibility in college. Work with university to determine appropriate steps

# Additional Resources



- Residence Hall Staff
  - Academic Advisors
  - Tutoring Services
- Security/Police/Public Safety
  - Health Services
  - Student Activities
- Community Resources

# Managing Transition



# Privacy and Information Sharing



- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
- Protects students from disclosure of personal information from K-College
- As your student becomes an adult, your relationship to the law changes.
- Students become the holders of their educational records and need to grant access to you
- Talk about how you will communicate about grades and other educational records
- Emergency Contacts

# Privacy and Information Sharing

- *You are still the expert on your student*
- You can provide information and assist in connecting to resources
- Express concerns as they come up but also work with your student to empower them to navigate the system
- Communicate with your student about sharing information and how you will be involved in their academic and personal life
- Also think about how you will communicate with them



# Questions and Discussion

