

NEWS RELEASE

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

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Mental Health 101

Arlington, Va. (August 27, 2009) – Across the country, students are preparing to start or return to college. This is an exciting time, though for some it's overwhelming and stressful. Depression, substance use and eating disorders are increasingly common mental health issues on college campuses.

According to a 2008 American College Health Association survey¹, within the last 12 months, 30 percent of students reported feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function and 49 percent felt overwhelming anxiety. In addition, 10 percent of students also reported being diagnosed or treated for depression and more than six percent seriously considered suicide.

Major depression increases the likelihood of substance abuse, impairs functioning at school, and influences an individual's subsequent development in negative ways. Depression can also co-occur with other disorders, including physical illnesses and other mental disorders, such as anxiety and eating disorders.

College Students and Alcohol, a Sobering Look

College is also a time to enjoy the social atmosphere that thrives on campuses. Most students can balance the mix of academic and social activities, though pressure to participate in binge drinking, drinking large quantities of alcohol most nights during the week, and drinking to feel like a part of the crowd are common occurrences. Most students do not connect alcohol abuse with a potential mental health issue. If a student feels that alcohol has become a problem, it is important for him or her to seek care.

Many colleges have excellent mental health resources associated with their student health services. Checking in with them as a part of the orientation process can be very helpful for many students and families.

Visit www.HealthyMinds.org for additional mental health information.

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About the American Psychiatric Association:

The American Psychiatric Association is the nation's leading medical specialty society whose more than 38,000 physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.

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¹ American College Health Association. American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment: Reference Group Executive Summary Fall 2008. Baltimore: American College Health Association; 2008.