



Supporting the Whole Student: *Mental Health, Substance Use, and Well-Being in Higher Education*

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Relevance to the NIMH

NIMH Mission

to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure

- Age group at particular risk for mental illness
 - College, graduate, and professional students are at an age when certain mental illnesses manifest (e.g. depression, schizophrenia, eating disorders, anxiety disorders, substance use d/o)
 - 1/5 college students report a psychiatric diagnosis (Auerbach et al 2016)
 - 83% of these started before matriculation

Auerbach et al 2016



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 - Students are entering school with higher rates of pre-existing mental illness
 - 16% anxiety disorder,
 - 8% mood disorder,
 - 7% behavioral disorders (ADHD, conduct, ODD, IED)
 - 5% SUD
 - Pre-matriculation mental illness increased risk of dropping out

Auerbach et al 2016



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- Age group at particular risk for mental illness
- Stresses and exposures encountered on campus can trigger and/or exacerbate mental illness
 - Sexual violence, hazing, exposure to substances



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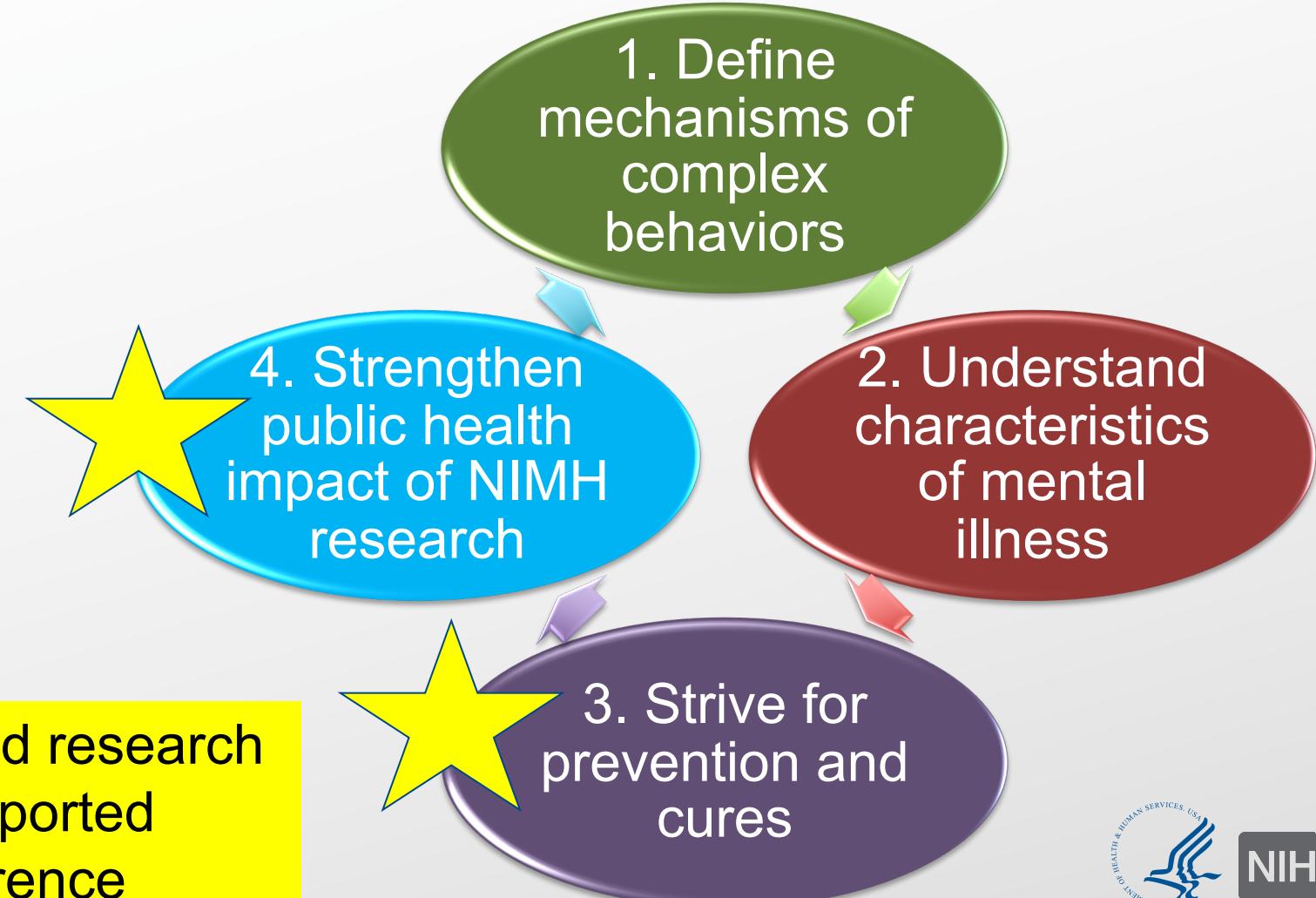
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Key deliverable – prioritized research agenda for how NIMH-supported research can make a difference

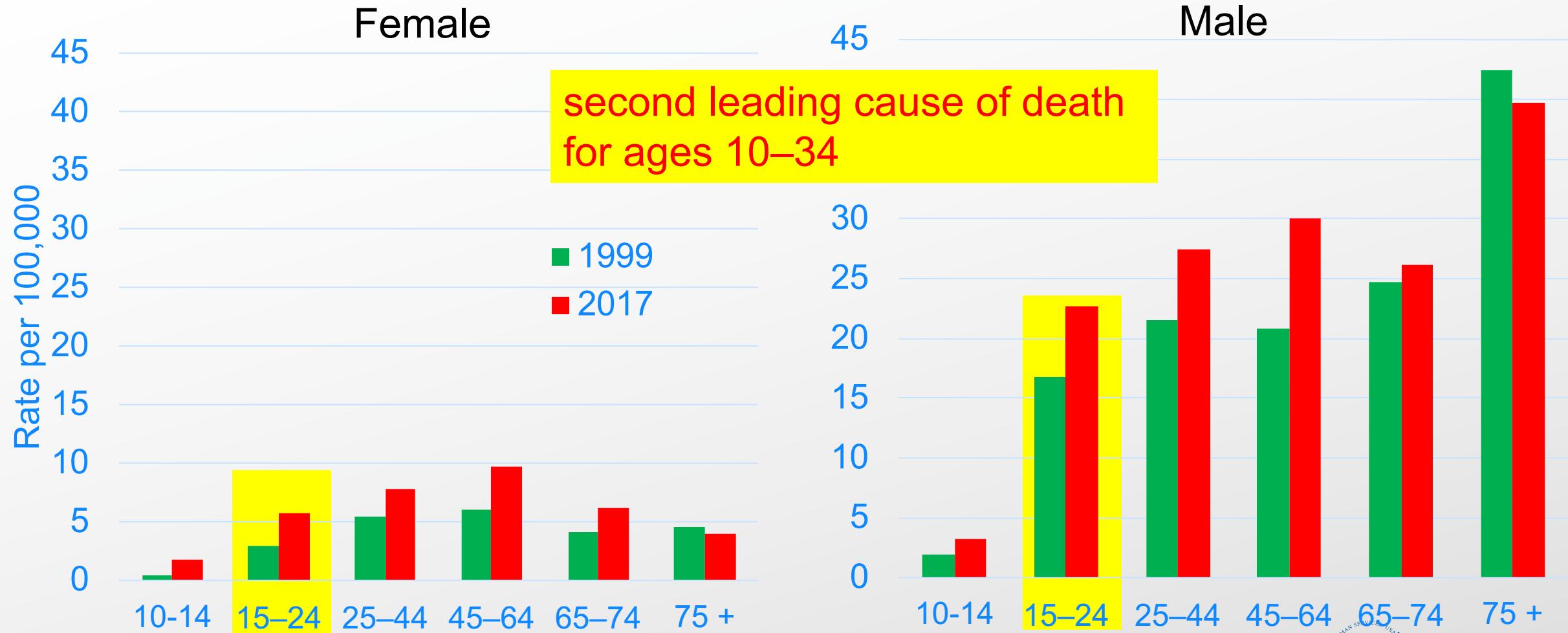
NIMH Strategic Research Objectives



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Suicide Rates are Rising Why?

From 1999 to 2017, age-adjusted suicide rate increased 33%



Source: CDC NCHS Data Brief No. 330, Nov 2018. All differences significant



Need to understand drivers of suicide increase

NEW RESEARCH

Association Between the Release of Netflix's 13 Reasons Why and Suicide Rates in the United States: An Interrupted Times Series Analysis

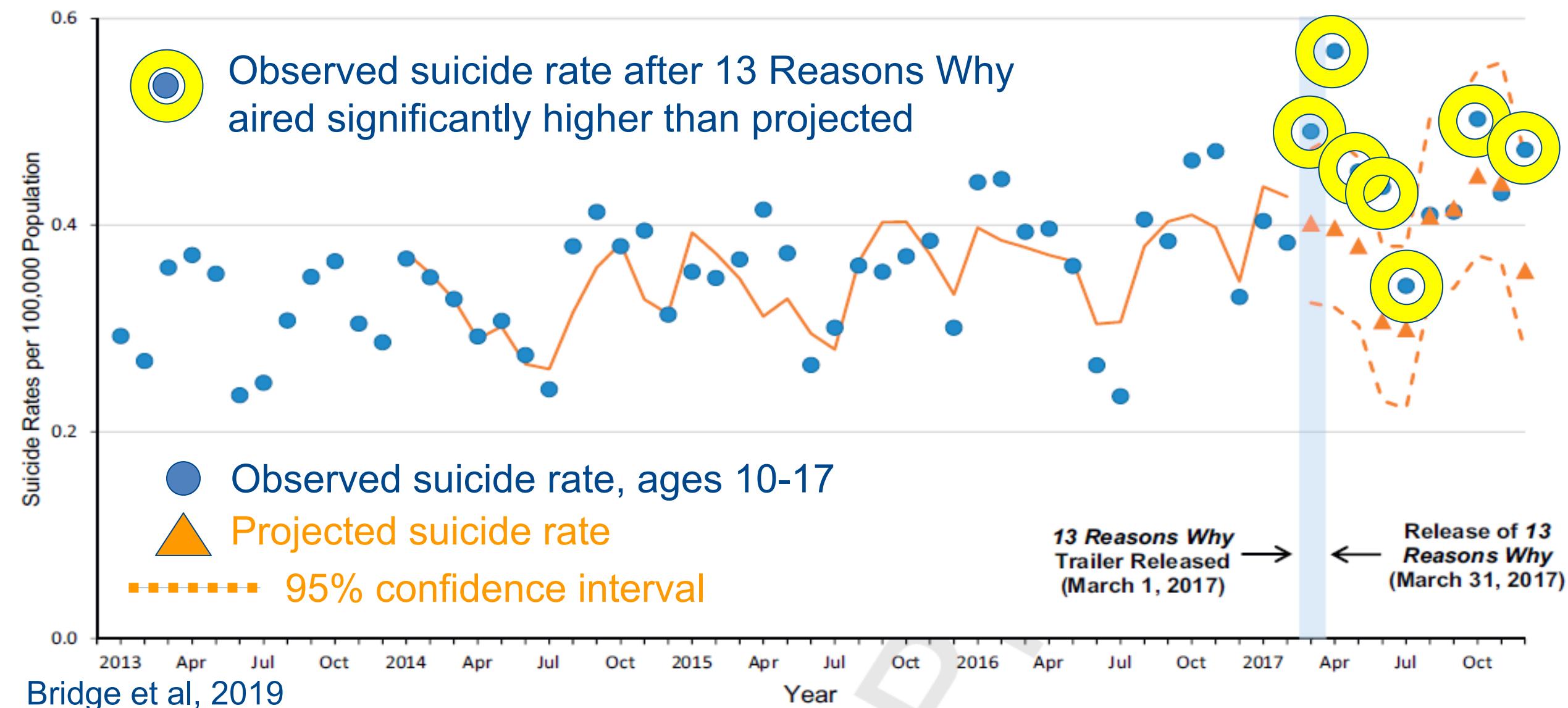
Jeffrey A. Bridge, PhD, Joel B. Greenhouse, PhD, Donna Ruch, PhD, Jack Stevens, PhD,
John Ackerman, PhD, Arielle H. Sheftall, PhD, Lisa M. Horowitz, PhD, MPH,
Kelly J. Kelleher, MD, John V. Campo, MD

Bridge et al, 2019



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Need to understand drivers of suicide increase



Medical Trainees at Special Risk

- Rate of depression in medical students is **27% higher** than the general population (Rotenstein, 2016)
- Medical students were **2-5 times** more likely to have depression than similar aged graduate students in other fields (Dyrbye, 2014)

Medical education needs to stop burning out students — now

By AUGUSTINE M. K. CHOI / AUGUST 29, 2019

STAT

“It’s past time for adding the dimension of self-care to formal and informal medical education curricula. Only if medical students learn to take care of themselves will they ever truly excel at caring for others.”



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NIMH Points of Focus

Role of injury (including traumatic brain injury (TBI), etc.) resulting from sports and/or combat exposure among veterans

Role of trauma exposure

Role of post-graduation stressors

Role of individual psychological and cognitive factors

Role of health care systems and public and private payors in providing mental health and substance use services to the student population

Role of university policies, e.g. placing students on leave or probation for mental health and substance use conditions

Role of social determinants of health

Current availability of existing mental wellness resources for trainees



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NIMH Deliverables from this Project

- Mechanistic understanding of how individual, institutional, psychological, social, economic, and environmental factors lead to adverse mental health outcomes, with special emphasis on how these factors affect the health of the developing brain of emerging adults at the neurobiological, neurochemical, neurophysiological, and neural circuit levels.
- Identify the most promising targets for intervention via pharmacological, psychosocial, or device-based approaches, whether existing or investigational.
- Identify best practices for treatment and service-delivery models to prevent suicide and opioid overdose in this population.
- Prioritized strategies NIH should consider to support student well-being within the context of NIH-funded training mechanisms.



- Students are the future of the biomedical research work force
- To fulfill the NIMH Mission to transform understanding of mental illness through research, we need to support researchers of the future so they can discover preventions, treatments, and cures for mental illness.



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