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**EXPERTS TO ADDRESS COLLEGE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AT SECOND ANNUAL 'NEW JERSEY HIGHER EDUCATION MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT'**

**Summit set for Jan. 9, 2025, at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey**

**Unique Opportunity for Cross-Collaboration with Practitioners from New Jersey's 54 Colleges and Universities**

**Trenton, N.J.**— Hundreds of professionals and frontline practitioners from New Jersey's 54 colleges and universities will gather for the second annual New Jersey Higher Education Mental Health Summit on January 9, 2025. Hosted by Stevens Institute of Technology on its campus overlooking Manhattan in Hoboken, New Jersey, the event aims to promote collaboration, innovation, and shared best practices to support student success and address one of the [leading factors](#) affecting persistence and college completion: mental health.

Registration for the Summit is open. [Register online](#) today. Last year's inaugural Summit was a sellout, drawing more than 500 participants, including frontline mental health practitioners and advocates, state and local policymakers, and institutional leaders. This year's programming has expanded and offers a unique opportunity to connect and learn from peers across disciplines.

"This year's Summit emphasizes the importance of understanding mental health and the need for collective action. It focuses on equipping higher education practitioners with the tools to create a more inclusive and supportive campus environment," said **Summit Co-Chair Takeem Dean, Ed.D., assistant vice president for students affairs at Stevens Institute of Technology.**

The Summit will include soon-to-be announced featured speakers, a 20-booth resource fair featuring mental health providers and program offers, and 20 breakout sessions. The morning and afternoon one-hour sessions will explore critical topics such as basic needs insecurity,

disconnectedness, integrating behavioral healthcare on campus, substance misuse, leveraging social media, and more. Among the sessions offered at the Summit are:

- Building Community and Collaboration: Collegiate Recovery, Harm Reduction, and Student Well-Being in Higher Education
- The New College Experience: Addressing the Growing Epidemic of Disconnectedness Among College Students
- The WHY, WHAT and HOW of Integrating Behavioral Health into University Healthcare Practices
- Understanding the Link Between Mental Health and Substance Misuse on College Campuses and How to Reduce the Risk
- The Tik-Tock-ization of Mental Health: Leveraging Social Media for Student Support
- Not Everyone Needs Therapy: Integrating Non-Clinical Case Management into College and University Wellness Centers

The selected sessions promote innovative solutions and effective strategies to build student resilience, empowering higher education professionals to enhance and sustain cultures of well-being across campuses statewide. [Visit this link](#) for a full list of scheduled programs and their presenters.

“In planning the second annual Summit, it was clear we needed to continue to provide opportunities for leaders and practitioners to come together to learn from each other, exchange ideas and share best practices for responding to mental and behavioral health issues,” said **Summit Co-Chair Anne Newman, Ph.D., associate vice chancellor for student affairs and dean of students at Rutgers University.**

Attendees will benefit from learning about actionable strategies to address students’ mental health challenges while enhancing their understanding of how to foster success among diverse campus populations. Designed to engage a wide range of higher education professionals, the Summit is not only valuable for campus mental health practitioners and counseling services but also student affairs leaders; residence life teams; campus police; athletic trainers; disability support services professionals; diversity, equity, inclusion and justice staff; health services; Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program advisors; and first-generation student program leaders.

“Partnering with our peers to share forward-thinking and holistic strategies for supporting our students’ mental health and well-being has allowed for great strides in combating this challenge,” said **Stevens President Nariman Farvardin, Ph.D.** “Hosting this forum reflects our commitment to facing these challenges head on and with the creative thinking the problem demands.”

“It’s gratifying to see the momentum from last year’s inaugural Summit lead to a second annual event, given the continuing challenges all of our institutions face in addressing the mental health and well-being of our students. Collaborations like this bring out the best in New Jersey higher education: sharing information, asking questions, highlighting trends, and identifying best practices and emerging ideas so that every college and university student across the state gains from our collective experience and wisdom,” said **Jonathan Holloway, Ph.D., president of Rutgers University and vice chair of the New Jersey Presidents’ Council.**

According to the national [2023–24 Healthy Minds Study](#), 38% of college students reported moderate or severe depression symptoms, down from 44% two years ago. While still above pre-

pandemic levels, this marks the second consecutive year of decline, suggesting a potential trend of improvement in student mental health.

“We’ve seen positive momentum in the college mental health space,” said **Georgian Court University President and New Jersey Presidents’ Council Chair Joseph Marbach, Ph.D.**

“We have a long way to go, but early signs of notable declines in mental health distress among students have been encouraging. Greater institutional focus on mental health has brought about more awareness and greater access to services to the benefit of students. It is imperative that we sustain our efforts and continue to respond to the ongoing need for proactive, systemic approaches to support student mental health.”

“From the statewide virtual mental health partnership with UWill, providing accessible teletherapy counseling for students, and this annual Summit, New Jersey higher education leaders, practitioners, and policymakers continue to show an unwavering commitment to the success and well-being of our college students,” said **New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education Brian K. Bridges**. “By fostering collaboration and building on proven best practices, we can ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive—both academically and personally—while reinforcing New Jersey as a leader in prioritizing student wellness and success.”

“As higher education institutions, we are entrusted with the well-being of our students, and mental health is at the forefront of our responsibility. This summit presents a critical opportunity for college and university leaders, mental health professionals, and lawmakers to come together to share insights, explore solutions, and forge a path toward stronger mental health support systems across campuses,” said **Cindy Jebb, Ph.D., president of Ramapo College of New Jersey and presidents’ chair for the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities**. “Our colleges and universities remain deeply committed to fostering mental wellness. At Ramapo College, for example, we regard well-being as an integral part of the student experience to ensure every learner has the tools they need to grow and thrive.”

“Responding to the mental health challenges faced by today’s college-age young people requires commitment and compassion. To be effective in supporting our students and other young people, we must also work hard to identify, follow and share best practices rooted in an understanding of these challenges,” said **Princeton University President Christopher L. Eisgruber**. “The Summit offers an important opportunity to focus on such best practices, which can benefit students on campuses across New Jersey and beyond.”

“New Jersey’s 18 community colleges have made a collective statewide commitment to ensuring we are meeting the mental health and wellness needs of our over 200,000 students through expanded services and partnerships,” said **Michael Gorman, Ed.D., president of Salem Community College and chair of the New Jersey Community College presidents**.

“The Summit is a vital gathering for higher education leaders and practitioners committed to addressing the growing mental health needs of our students. By coming together, we can share insights, innovate solutions, and ensure that every institution has the tools to support student success, both in and outside the classroom.”

Sponsorships help reduce expenses and encourage participation from all of the State’s higher education institutions. UWill, a mental health and wellness platform, is serving as a lead sponsor of this year’s Summit. For more information about the Summit, including sponsorship opportunities and registration details, visit the [New Jersey Mental Health Summit 2025 website](#).

View [photos](#) and [video](#) from last year’s Summit.

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**About the NJ Higher Education Mental Health Summit:**

The Summit is planned and coordinated by professionals from New Jersey's higher education sectors—including private and independent colleges, public four-year institutions, and community colleges—and is open to all members of the state's higher education community. Input from student-facing campus professionals determines the focus and direction of each unique Summit. The Summit was first established in 2022 by institutions from the Independent Colleges and Universities of New Jersey in response to ongoing conversations about the rising concern over the mental health challenges facing today's college students.