



# Graduate Student Mental Health: National Trends and Strategies

Nance Roy, Ed.D  
Chief Clinical Officer  
The Jed Foundation





## 2018 study in Nature Biotechnology

- Graduate students are 6x more likely to experience depression and anxiety than the general population
- 41% scored moderate to severe anxiety on the GAD7 compared to 6 % of the general population
- 39% scored moderate to severe depression on the PHQ9 compared to 6 % of the general population
- Transgender/non-conforming gender and women have higher rates of anxiety and depression
- 7% reported seriously considering suicide in the past year (Eisenberg, 2018)



Factors impacting mental health

- Poor work-life balance
- Long hours, little pay
- Pressure to produce/competition for grant funding
- Lack of “real” mentorship
- Don’t feel valued by PI/mentor
- PI/mentor not viewed as asset to their career
- Financial concerns – debt
- Few job prospects
- Isolation
- Lack of social support





# Comprehensive Approach for Supporting Graduate Student Mental Health



CAMPUS

# JED'S Comprehensive Framework

We believe in a **comprehensive, public health approach** to **promoting emotional well-being and preventing suicide and serious substance abuse.**

**Campus-wide responsibility**

**Support from Senior Leadership**



# Strategies

- **Life Skills**
  - Self care Faculty need to role model
  - Stress reduction Mindfulness, yoga
- **Social Connectedness**
  - Sense of isolation
  - Increase peer support (groups, opportunity to gather)
- **Identifying Students at Risk**
  - Educate/train everyone on campus – especially faculty and students
- **Increase Help Seeking**
  - Stigma reduction campaigns
  - Storytelling – lived experience (Daniel Jackson Portraits of Resilience MIT)



# Strategies

- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**
  - Diverse staff
  - Accessibility (fee, hours, insurance)
  - Referral system
- **Crisis Management**
  - MOU's with area hospitals
  - Leave policies
- **Means Restriction**
  - Environmental scan
  - Secure potentially dangerous areas
  - Drug collection days





# Thank you.



**The Jed Foundation**  
6 East 39th Street, Ste. 1204,  
New York, NY 10016

[jedfoundation.org](http://jedfoundation.org)