

# Take Care of the Cru

By Victor Bradley Melchor, Sports Editor, The Bells | University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

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With the first day of finals just days away, there is a lot of stress and anxiety floating around campus as students prepare for finals and seniors prepare for life after college. To gauge the current mental health levels around campus, the NewsCru conducted a poll via Fizz to try and get an accurate and anonymous response from students.

Each student was given these three options to choose from and asked to select the one they felt best reflected their current mental health status: consistently positive mental health, inconsistent mental health, and consistently negative mental health. Of the 251 students who took this poll, 137 chose the option of consistently negative mental health, 114 chose the option of inconsistent mental health, and zero selected the option of consistently positive mental health.

With the stigma surrounding mental health making it difficult for students to speak out about their struggles, many of our peers find themselves suffering in silence and isolation .

“Our students are walking around carrying a ridiculous load,” said counselor Karen DuBroc, the director of student counseling services. “We are here to listen to you and help you carry those burdens, and our goal is to make all of our students feel loved, welcomed, wanted, seen, and heard.”

Located on the third floor of Mabee Student Center in Suite 310, the Student Counseling Services is an extremely helpful resource for students to aid them in their mental health.

“I was worried that [with] coming into college and adjusting to such a new environment I wouldn't be able to keep up with all the healthy habits I had built to manage my mental health,” said one anonymous student. “During Welcome Week I heard about the free counseling that UMHB offers, so I thought I'd sign up and see if that would help. I met with my counselor every other Tuesday of my first semester and it really did help. I talked to her about everything from stress about classes to homesickness to my relationship with my parents and trauma I experienced as a teenager.

“Even if it wasn't anything super groundbreaking, it was nice to know that there was someone outside of my immediate circle with no biases or attachments that I could talk to about things that were bothering me.”

While NewsCru encourages everyone who needs assistance to visit the student counselors, DuBroc offered some advice for students who might not want to start counseling right before heading home for the summer. “Cover your basics, focus on getting quality restorative sleep,

take time before bed to detox from social media and the outside world, and prioritize getting enough sleep. Make time to decompress both by yourself and with loved ones, doing things that you enjoy. Little things like getting outside more and surrounding yourself with people who are good for your soul can have a tremendous impact on your mental health, as well as making sure you're eating and drinking enough water, because your mind needs it just as much as your body does.”

Students can also help their peers through this stressful time. While many people feel that the best course of action when it comes to supporting fellow students is to simply leave them alone and give them space, sometimes it is important to push them in the right direction and make sure that they are not feeling alone. Whether it be normalizing seeking out counseling, going with them to an appointment, or even sharing one's own struggles, everyone has the power to empower them and give them the support they need.

To schedule an appointment with a UMHB student counselor, visit [www.umhb.edu/resources/counseling/home](http://www.umhb.edu/resources/counseling/home) and fill out a counseling intake form.