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A COLLEGE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Recent research confrms what college mental health professionals and administrators have noticed over the past few decades: there is a mental health crisis taking place on college campuses.[5] Growing numbers of students arrive on campus with histories of signifcant mental health challenges, and higher proportions of college students report taking psychiatric medications than ever before.[6] Unfortunately, the need for mental health support is rapidly outpacing existing infrastructures.

The need to prevent the tragic loss of life among students and to promote their mental health and emotional well-being has spurred large-scale research efforts to better understand student needs and how to meet them more effectively. Annual reports, including one by the Center for Collegiate Mental Health in 2015,[7] indicate rising rates of mental illness symptoms, including self-injury and suicidal thoughts, contributing to an increased demand for mental health services on campuses.[8] Taken together, these research efforts have produced a more sophisticated understanding of the most common symptoms and stressors reported by college students.

RISKS FACING STUDENTS OF COLOR

While many college students arrive on campus feeling emotionally and academically unprepared, demographic analysis has shown that frst-year African American college students are more likely than their white peers to report feeling overwhelmed most or all of the time during their frst term (51% vs. 40%). Students of color are also

METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

The Steve Fund and JED developed their recommendations after obtaining snapshots of current programs and exploring how they could be improved and replicated. The goal was to answer a set of key questions regarding best practices for meeting the emotional well-being and mental health needs of students of color. These included:

a) What is the current state of knowledge regarding mental health in students of color?
b) What are top-level programs doing to address the mental health needs of students of color?

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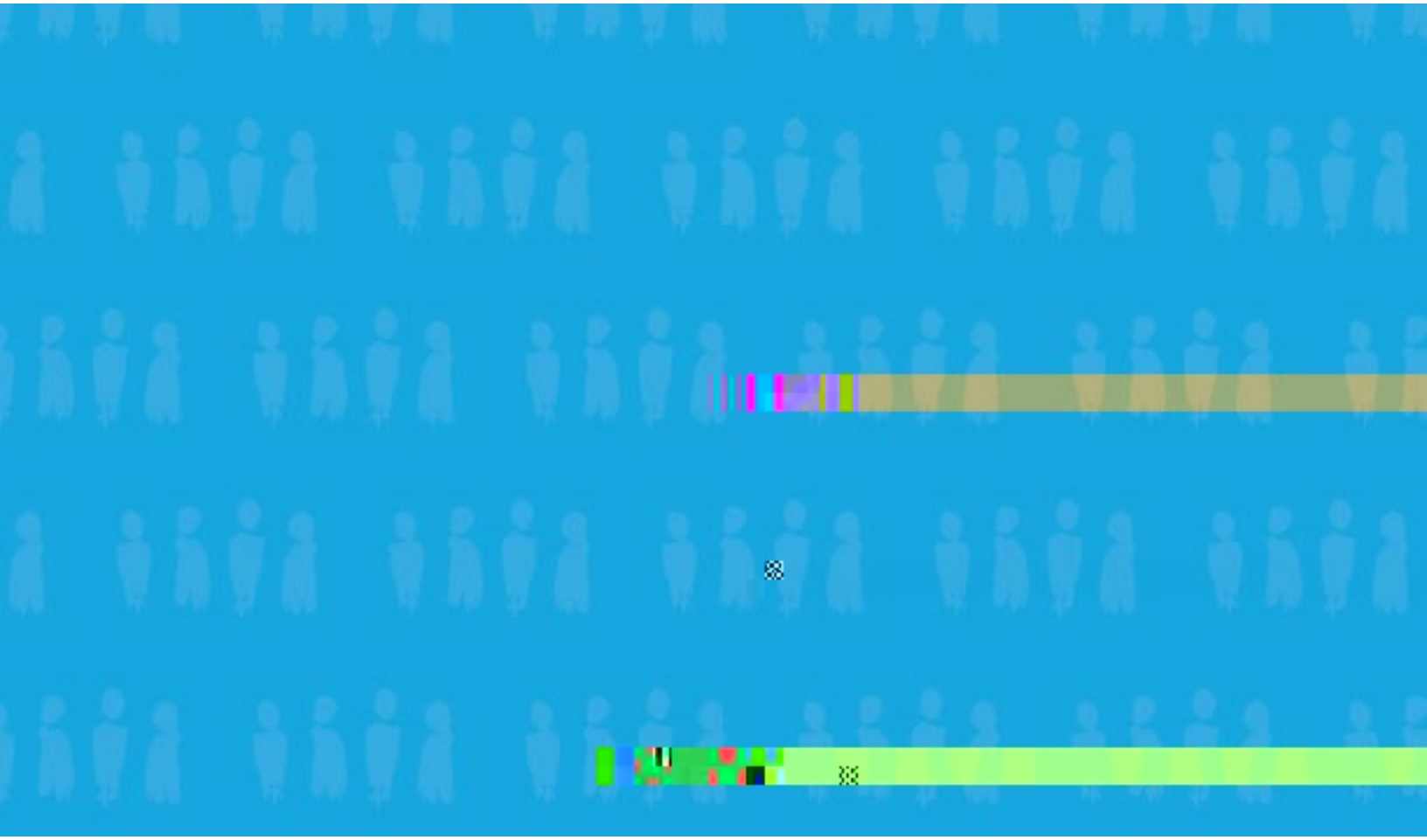
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