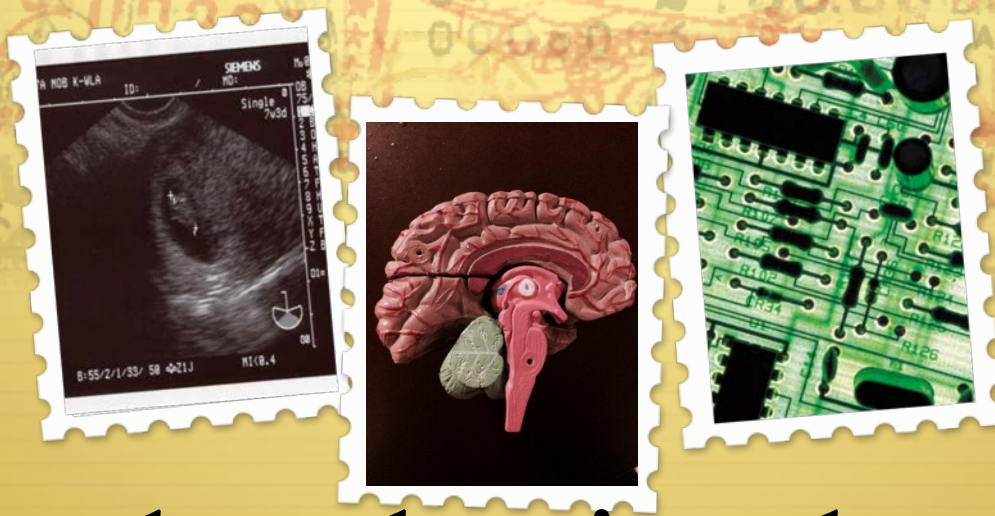




Travel Study and Mental Health

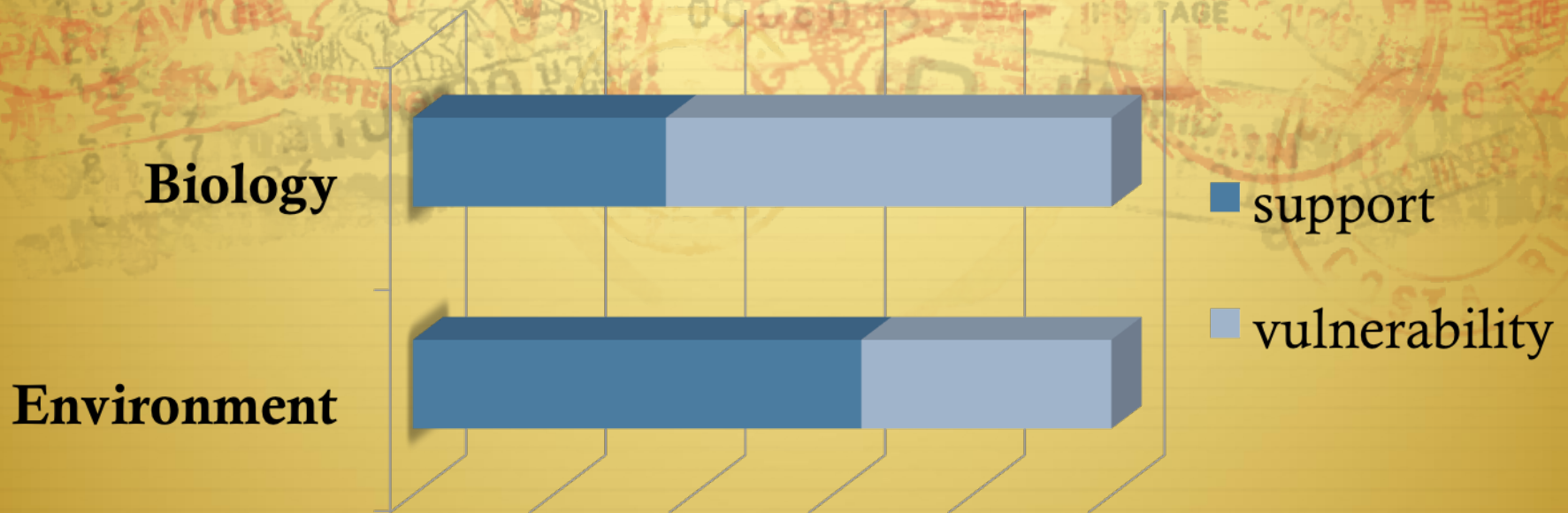
Identifying, Assisting, and Referring Students In Distress

“A Speckled Bird” Presentation



The developing brain + stress =

Frontal Lobe - brain injury and “Executive Functioning”



Young Adulthood & Mental Health

- Diathesis stress model
- Schizophrenia - onset late teens to early 20's
 - Dual diagnosis
 - Medication Vacation



Signs of Distress Checklist

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Signs of Distress:

1. Behavioral Changes
2. Physical Changes
3. Personality Changes



Behavioral Changes



- Decline in the quality of work, assignments not completed
 - Frequent absences from class
 - Inability to sit through classes
 - Disruptive behavior in classes
- Repeated requests for special accommodations such as extensions or postponed examinations
- Turning in course work that has suicidal or homicidal themes
 - Impaired speech or thought patterns

Physical Changes



- Marked change in physical appearance and personal hygiene
 - Dramatic weight gain or loss
- Chronic tiredness, headaches, gastrointestinal problems without a medical explanation
- **Change in sleep patterns:** insomnia, sleeping too much, not needing sleep
- **Disordered eating:** restricting, bingeing, purging, over-exercise
 - **Panic attacks:** overwhelming anxiety

Personality Changes



- Extreme sadness and tearfulness
- Severe depression
- Irritability
- Hostility
- Marked anxiety
- Outbursts of anger
- Withdrawn
- Hyperactive
- Excessive dependency on others
- Mood swings
- Confusion, indecisiveness
- Much more talkative than usual, sentences are tangential or incoherent.



Safety and Other Risk Factors..

DOCUMENT AND CONSULT!

Safety Risk Factors



- **Expressions of hopelessness, powerlessness, or worthlessness:**
 - Inability to adjust or inappropriate reactions to local cultural norms
 - Secretive about experiencing severe emotional distress
- **Verbal statements or notes that have a suicidal or homicidal tone to them:**
 - Poor self esteem; extreme difficulty in working out own identity.
 - Lack of close, supportive friends, or family ties

Safety Risk Factors



- **Expressions of concerns about death or life after death:**
 - Increased isolation
 - Death of a close friend or family member
- **Giving away important possessions:**
 - Sexual assault; sexual harassment
- **Self-injurious or self destructive behaviors:**
 - Break-up of a relationship
 - Poor academic performance
 - Intense academic pressures

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Safety Risk Factors

- **Violent threats against others:**
 - Serious illness
 - Substance abuse issues
- **Out of Control behavior:**
 - Poor problem solving and coping skills





Suggestions for Assisting Students in Distress

Establish a Climate of Trust and Safety, Gather Information & Explore Possible Solutions

- Be friendly without being a “friend”
 - Maintain a professional relationship and establish clear and consistent boundaries. Show interest and support
- Offer to see the student in private to minimize embarrassment and defensiveness
- Acknowledge with care that you are concerned about the student's welfare
- Use constructive self-disclosure to acknowledge your observations of the student's situation and express your concern directly and honestly
- Listen respectfully and provide empathy without necessarily agreeing or disagreeing with the student's point of view. Try not to minimize his/her pain. Try to refrain from making quick judgments



Establish a Climate of Trust and Safety, Gather Information & Explore Possible Solutions

- Ask follow-up questions for better clarification and understanding. Demonstrate that you understand what the student is disclosing by paraphrasing what the student has told you.



- Assist the student in identifying several options and a plan for action. Review past coping strategies. Explore the possible consequences of the student's action and non-action. Develop a backup plan.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Arrange time to follow-up with the student.



Suggestions for making referrals

Referrals



- State clearly why you believe a referral would be helpful
- Be open to listening to any concerns or fears that the student might have about seeking help.
- Try to normalize seeking help by conveying that everyone has problems at times that require assistance.
- Communicate with you are hopeful that change is possible.

Referrals

- Learn about available referral resources so that you can provide specific and appropriate information. Have a list readily available that includes the names, phone numbers, and locations of referral sources.
- Encourage the student to take responsibility for whether he/she will seek assistance.



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