

Chicago Tribune

FOUNDED JUNE 10, 1847

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EDITORIALS

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Mental-health needs of college students

In the wake of the Virginia Tech massacre, campus counseling should have played a bigger role in addressing the mental-health needs of students to prevent the massacre. It is known that Cho Seung Hui was referred to campus counseling after his professor became disturbed about his creative writing assignments. It is also thought that he had taken medication for depression. Had more follow-up been made by his professors seeing that he actually went and sought help from campus counseling, perhaps this tragedy may have been prevented.

Many college students will develop some form of a mental illness during their years in college. It is common for diagnoses of depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders and schizophrenia to be made during these crucial years. Parents, professors, ad-

ministrators, youth advocates, coaches, students and campus mental-health professionals should work together to become aware of the signs and symptoms of mental illness in their students.

Education about mental health needs to be a topic of conversation among educators and those who work with college students to ensure that every student's needs are addressed and each student can achieve his or her dream of obtaining a college degree.

There are many organizations that can help in creating the dialogue between educators, professionals and students. Active Minds on Campus (www.activemindsoncampus.org), based in Washington, is one such place where students can join and form student chapters to educate their peers and faculty about mental-health concerns.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance and the University of Michigan's Depression Center are all united in addressing the growing concern of establishing good campus mental health care on campuses. The Depression Center even does a conference each year on college students and mental health.

It is critical that students who show signs of violence to themselves or others be reported to appropriate authorities and be made to seek treatment if they wish to continue their studies on campus. Everyone on campus needs to work together to make campuses safe and create positive mental health.

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