Project HEAL – Academic Year 2021 – 2022 Update

Since the victim services programming was implemented in August of 2018, 336 students have been referred to Project HEAL. Of those 336 referrals, 169 students accepted victim advocacy and assistance. Project HEAL has served 101 survivors of domestic violence, 53 survivors of sexual assault, and 12 survivors of stalking.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, Project HEAL provided comprehensive victim services to 55 OTC students. During Fall 2021 the highest percentage (79%) of students referred to Project HEAL accepted services. The gap between students identified as having experienced interpersonal violence and those who accepted resources was identified in spring of 2019, and Project HEAL has been engaging in efforts to reduce that gap. These efforts have included increased marketing of Project HEAL services to the campus, monitoring the campus climate surrounding interpersonal violence, and more assertive efforts to reach out to survivors once identified. During the Spring 2022 semester, average GPA for Project HEAL students (2.86) was higher than students referred to Project HEAL who did not accept assistance (2.09).

The victim advocate’s average caseload is between 30-40 students and includes new Project HEAL students and students carrying over from previous semesters. During the spring 2022 semester, the victim advocate had 3 students on her caseload who had been working with Project HEAL for over two years.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, Project HEAL provided education, training, and awareness opportunities to 897 students, faculty, staff, and administration. These include professional development trainings, Project HEAL overviews, tabling events and awareness activities, customized prevention education, presentations through community organizations, and Green Dot trainings facilitated by the Project HEAL victim advocate. Since the implementation of Project HEAL in Fall 2018, Project HEAL has helped to train and educate 2,683 members of the campus community.

A survey is sent to Project HEAL students at the end of each semester. In surveys administered during the 2021-2022 academic year, students answered the following to the question, “What is the most helpful aspect of Project HEAL”: “Having an outlet and somewhere to just ask for help. Someone to just genuinely care about my well being,” “emotionally supportive,” and “Just having someone to talk to. Rachel was amazing and even showed up to court when I had to see my abuser.” A victim services program can connect these individuals to important resources and provide unconditional support – decreasing the impact of trauma on their academic functioning. Individuals who have support and access to crisis intervention and case management from a trauma informed perspective may not only perform better academically, but may also feel better cared for by their institution.