



WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

INTERFACE Referral Service

What is INTERFACE Referral Service? www.interface.williamjames.edu

- INTERFACE Referral Service is a mental health resource and referral Helpline available to subscribing communities in Massachusetts Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm.
- The Helpline assists callers by gathering information about the mental health concern and utilizing a database of providers to connect the caller to referrals for mental health professionals that match their need based on location, specialty, insurance or fee requirement and availability
- Callers receive a match, on average, within 2 weeks of their call to INTERFACE
- After providing referrals, counselors contact callers to follow up to see if the referrals provided were a good fit for the needs described on intake, to provide additional support and education, and continue to work with the caller until a successful match has been made or the caller indicates they no longer want to pursue mental health services.
- The Helpline is staffed by both licensed mental health professionals as well as masters prepared doctoral students from William James College.
- In addition to the Helpline, INTERFACE Referral Service maintains an extensive website covering mental health related topics complete with articles, book recommendations and resources both locally and nationally. The website also has many guides to help callers navigate the mental health system from an article on how to determine your health insurance benefits to what questions you can ask when interviewing a potential therapist.

What's the history behind the INTERFACE Referral Service?

- The INTERFACE referral service began in Newton in 2003 as part of a grant. In 2006, William James College created the Freedman Center for Child and Family Development and in 2007 acquired the program from the Newton Public Schools to become part of the Freedman Center. The program had success serving Newton and was soon supported to expand to the neighboring town of Waltham and a section of Boston to determine if the same model could work with a community with less socio-economic advantage and a broader set of demographics and need.
- The pilot in Waltham and Boston was successful and since then has expanded to now serve 48 individual communities within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 9 communities as part of a state initiative, the Suffolk and Norfolk County Juvenile Court Clinics, and the Department of Disabled Persons Protection Commission. In addition provides support for (2) state initiatives; MCPAP & MCPAP for Moms.
- By utilizing students through the school, the service is able to provide mental health trained staff to callers while keeping the overall cost of the service low, making it accessible to more communities in Massachusetts and beyond.
- In addition, utilizing students helps to train the upcoming work force in the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental illness. Students learn issues related to access to care and how individuals actually navigate the challenging mental health system

How is the INTERFACE Referral Service important to a community?

- In communities served, the INTERFACE Referral Service becomes a mental health touch point, providing not only referral support directly to families, but also to be available for consultation to school mental health staff and clinicians in the community
- INTERFACE acts as a clearinghouse related to mental health resources in a community as well as helping to connect community members to mental health information in their own area
- Most importantly, facilitating easy access to mental health services significantly improves an individual's abilities to connect with the appropriate mental health services in their own community. Schools and pediatricians also report that having the service helps to ensure that individuals are able to follow-through when mental health services are recommended.

What has research shown about importance of the INTERFACE Referral Service in access to care?

An independent research evaluation of INTERFACE Referral service was conducted in 2012.

- 413 referral case records were selected to be surveyed and 43% of those surveyed responded.
- 58% of the respondents reported they had tried to find a mental health provider on their own
- 94% of primary contact respondents reported that the Helpline was important in helping them address their mental health concerns
- 81% of primary contacts reported that targets were meeting with mental health providers referred through the Helpline.
- 99% of primary contact respondents felt that Helpline counselors were knowledgeable about their mental health concerns, and 97% felt that counselors were knowledgeable about available mental health services

In April 2017, a research study was conducted on the INTERFACE Referral Service to assess factors associated with disengagement in Mental Health Care.

- The study looked at intake records of 467 individuals with 67.2% of the individuals under the age of 25 and 32.5% of the individuals age 25 and older.
- National data indicate initial appointment non-attendance occurs at a rate of 20% to 57% within the mental health care field and disengagement rates are estimated at approximately 30% across populations. Our overall disengagement rate was lower at 27.6%.
- This study found individuals who used the INTERFACE comprehensive referral service to disengage at a much lower rate of 1.3% during the initial phase of the referral process, in which a referral for mental health services is offered to the individual. Similarly, disengagement rates were found to be very low, at 7.5% in the second phase of the process, in which the referral delivery was confirmed with the participant. This is likely due to the expeditiousness with which referrals are offered through the Interface referral program.
- Particularly vulnerable for not making initial appointments are people who experience a long delay between initial point of contact and scheduled appointment. The average time between initial contact and scheduled appointment for those who used INTERFACE Referral Service, is 14 days.
- These results demonstrate that INTERFACE is successful not only in helping people access services, but in supporting them through the process of finding the right match and establishing sustained care.