

Monday, Sept. 9, 2013

## **Miami U. launches mobile app as part of suicide prevention program**

**OXFORD** — Miami University is now one of approximately 1,500 schools across the country to offer a mobile app as part of its suicide prevention program. Suicide rates and patients with mental illnesses are on the rise among many age groups nationally, and suicide is the third leading cause of death among college students nationally, according to a 2012 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The “Just in Case” app from eReadia LLC is intended to provide a quick connection to support and emergency resources for students encountering a mental health crisis or responding to the needs of a friend in crisis, according to Miami University officials.

“We want to catch the students early,” said Kip Alishio, Miami University’s director of student counseling services. “We don’t want to wait to get them help. It’s important that they get support early on. By providing quick and constantly available access to support, this app will supplement our attempts to increase the early intervention which is so critical when students are experiencing a mental health crisis.”

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The app is completely customized for Miami University and provides intervention strategies, emergency contact information and instructions for regional and Oxford students.

The Just in Case app operates on all major smartphone platforms and provides a set of guidelines and links for both students in crisis and for those who care about them.

“With 18- to 24-year-olds representing the highest smartphone ownership among all age demographics, we think that using this “Just in Case” mobile app to access support and guidance in case of a crisis makes great sense,” said Will DeLamater, president of eReadia, in a release.

Miami University has also partnered with Kognito Interactive to offer an online training in which users learn the common indicators of psychological distress and how best to approach at-risk students for referral to the university’s counseling center.

The program is made available through a \$282,652 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Grant Program.

“Creating an environment in which the Miami community feels comfortable helping one another talk about psychological distress is critical to early

intervention and suicide prevention,” said Mary Bausano, director of counseling services at Miami University’s Hamilton campus, in a release. “College is a difficult time for many, and the more tools the university can provide to help our community, the better.”

Miami University had zero student-committed suicides last year, according to Michelle Vargas, Project Coordinator for Suicide Awareness and Prevention at the university.