**SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY NEWS**

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Press Release:

**SACRED HEART DIRECTOR OF COUNSELING JAMES GEISLER PUBLISHES MENTAL HEALTH BOOK FOR IMPROVING STUDENT WELLNESS**

Website (55 characters or less):

New Book Offers Mental Health Toolkit for Students

Website homepage headline (**40 characters or less**):

New Book to Aid Campus Wellness

Subhead:

*James Geisler knew that college campuses need more resources to aid students and their mental health, this book is his solution.*

FAIRFIELD, Conn.—For [James Geisler](https://www.sacredheart.edu/phonebook/james-geisler.php), executive director of [wellness services](https://www.sacredheart.edu/offices--departments-directory/counseling-center/) at Sacred Heart University, mental health counseling isn’t just a career, but a lifelong passion. It’s this underlying passion that is on display in the pages of his first book, *Thrive Year One: The Essential Mental Health Workbook for First-Year College Students,* a guidebook for early college students as they navigate their first days in a new environment.

The book starts with a note from the author, saying, “you have already lived all your worst days.” This notion is incredibly important to Geisler, who believes that speaking about fear and desensitizing some of the fears that college students face is key to ensuring that college can be the best four years of your life.

“For some students, this is the first time they’ll deal with failure, personal expectations, or new fears. This book is a guide to learning how to live and work through these issues.”

The book is filled with prompts and questions meant to challenge young adults on the precipice of a new life-changing experience like going away to college. Geisler has expertly tailored the questions, reflecting the most re-occurring issues he has seen in his career. Prompts such as, “how do we deal with failure,” “how do we define our fears” and “how can we give ourselves positive affirmations,” ensure that students start their journey of self-discovery on the right foot.

For Geisler, the publishing of *Thrive* was not a pet project, but a genuine response to the issues he has faced in the four years since taking over as executive director.

“When I came to SHU in 2020, there was a nationwide mental health crisis on college campuses; this crisis was only further expedited by the pandemic. While we were doing the right thing by talking about it and recognizing that there was a problem, I noticed that no one was taking any action to combat the crisis. I couldn’t stand pat anymore.”

*Thrive* is Geisler’s response to the ongoing conversation about mental health, providing tangible resources for students who, unfortunately, have become overlooked in discussions on how to combat the issue.

“In the effort to decipher and fix the problem at hand, counselors, parents and teachers, at both high school and college levels have tried to find solutions, but in all the discourse, it’s the student who is left caught in the crossfire,” Geisler says.

He hopes that the book will provide a foundation for collegiate mental health, a resource for all students who are ever plagued by negative thoughts their day-to-day lives.

Geisler’s message to schools across the state is straightforward yet profound, “We can no longer afford to be reactive to the mental health struggles of our students. This generation is not just open to talking about mental health – they’re ready for change. It’s up to us to provide them the tools to thrive mentally and emotionally as they embark on this new chapter,” says Geisler, adding, “by investing in their wellness today, we are shaping the leaders of tomorrow; the time for action is now. This is the future of education, and it starts with mental health.”

[*Thrive*](https://www.amazon.com/Thrive-Year-One-Essential-First-Year/dp/B0DJK1T7MT)is available to purchase and for parents whose students have worked with the book, they believe it is an invaluable resource, one mother said, “helping college-bound kids manage their expectations, anticipate the hardships that await and learn adaptive ways to work through them is so important. There are so many mental health challenges on college campuses right now and college kids will benefit so much from this workbook.”

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***About Sacred Heart University***

As the second-largest Catholic university in New England, and one of the fastest-growing private doctoral institutions in the U.S., Sacred Heart University is a national leader in shaping higher education for the 21st century. SHU offers more than 100 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs on its Fairfield, Conn., campus. Sacred Heart also has a campus in Dingle, Ireland, and offers online programs. More than 10,000 students attend the University’s eight colleges and schools: College of Arts & Sciences; School of Communication, Media & the Arts; School of Social Work; School of Computer Science & Engineering; College of Health Professions; the Isabelle Farrington College of Education & Human Development; the Jack Welch College of Business & Technology and the Dr. Susan L. Davis, R.N., & Richard J. Henley College of Nursing. Sacred Heart, a Laudato Si’ campus, stands out from other Catholic institutions as it was established and led by laity. The contemporary Catholic university is rooted in the rich Catholic intellectual tradition and the liberal arts, and at the same time cultivates students to be forward thinkers who enact change—in their own lives, professions and in their communities. The Princeton Review includes SHU in its *Best 390 Colleges: 2025 Edition*, and *Best Business Schools: 2024 Edition*. Sacred Heart is home to the award-winning, NPR-affiliate station, WSHU Public Radio, a Division I athletics program and an impressive performing arts program that includes choir, band, dance and theatre. [www.sacredheart.edu](http://www.sacredheart.edu/)

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