SIGNATURE PROGRAM NUMBER ONE: Counseling Services

Signature Program Description

Counseling services offered by the Counseling Center are designed to assist students in working through a variety of mental health concerns that may be interfering with academic and personal success. While individual counseling is the most common modality, students are also seen as couples and in groups.

Some of the common issues that students address at the Counseling Center are depression, anxiety, relationship issues (family, peer, romantic), identity concerns, and adjustment to college. In addition to these concerns, many students are presenting with more serious and chronic mental health concerns such as thought disorders, mood disorders, thoughts of harm to self or others, and substance related issues.

Counseling Services was chosen to be evaluated as a signature program of the Counseling Center because it is the core function of the Center and to provide additional data to what was collected in the past year.

Expectations for Student Achievement

1. Significantly more than one-half of students who have received counseling services during the fall and/or spring semesters of 2009-10 will report that their participation in counseling enabled them to cope more effectively or solve problems in their lives. This will be evidenced by their responding “agree” or “strongly agree” to the following Likert-scale items on the Fall 09 and Spring 10 Counseling Center Student Evaluation of Services:
   a. “Counseling helped me solve a problem in my life.”
   b. “Counseling helped me cope more effectively with my life.”

2. Students who participate in counseling will be able to describe at least three self-care strategies as demonstrated in termination interviews with their counselors.

Link to University and Student Affairs Student Learning Outcomes

University Learning Outcome(s)
A. Personal and Social Responsibility
B. Intellectual and Practical Skills
C. Integrate, Apply, and Reflect

Student Affairs Learning Outcome(s)
A. Personal Development demonstrated through Wellness and Self-Leadership
B. Critical and Constructive Thinking demonstrated through Inquiry and Solving Problems Creatively
C. Synthesis of Advanced Accomplishments demonstrated through Application and Reflection

Assessment Methods and Procedures

Student Evaluation of Services
During the final two to three weeks of each semester, students are asked to complete an evaluation of services prior to their scheduled counseling appointment. They are asked to rate their perceptions of our services on a variety of dimensions including efficacy, impact on level of functioning, Counseling Center climate, and accessibility of services. Responses are then compiled by counselor and a report is given to each staff member summarizing the responses from his or her clientele. Items specific to the Counseling Center’s Learning Outcomes are:

- “Counseling helped me solve a problem in my life.”
- “Counseling helped me cope more effectively with my life.”

These represent student’s perceptions of whether or not they have gained skills and abilities to better cope with or resolve issues in their lives that may be impacting their academic performance.
Termination Surveys
At the end of each counseling relationship with a student, counselors write a Termination Summary that describes the work done, progress achieved, and recommendations for potential future work. Beginning at the end of the Spring 2009 semester, Counselors began attaching a Termination Survey to each of these summaries. These surveys are intended to assess whether or not counselors observed positive changes in students over the course of counseling and whether or not (again based on counselor observation) students who received counseling can identify self-care strategies. The survey also asks whether the termination was planned (i.e. upon achievement of identified goals) versus a result of student drop-out. The four questions included in this survey are:

1. Did you have a termination session with this client?
2. Based on your last session, can the client describe at least three self-care strategies?
3. Did you perceive improvement in the client’s symptoms?
4. Did you perceive improvement in the client’s level of functioning?

These questions were to be answered by counselors based on their clinical judgment of the work and the status of the client at termination. It was not expected that counselors directly ask these questions of students at termination. However, the process of therapy and termination generally involves ongoing assessment of clients in these areas, which allows clinicians to respond to these questions with some accuracy.

Assessment Instruments
1. Student Evaluation of Services (see description above)
2. Termination Surveys (see description above)

Results and Conclusions
Student Evaluation of Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of students indicating “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to the following questions (n=250):</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Counseling helped me solve a problem in my life.”</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Counseling helped me cope more effectively with my life.”</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Termination Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Termination Surveys with a Yes response to the following question (n=514):</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Based on your last session, can the client describe at least three self-care strategies?”</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Target Level Achievement
The data presented above indicate that the majority of students who participate in counseling perceive themselves as learning both problem-solving skills and effective coping strategies. Each of these skill sets is essential to academic and personal success for students.

The data presented above also indicate that the majority of students who participate in counseling are able to identify at least three self-care strategies. Self-care is an important function for personal and academic success.

The data for these two outcome measures indicate that the Counseling Center has achieved the Counseling Services Learning Outcomes.

Evaluation of Assessment Methods and Procedures
Strengths
1. Attempts to measure change in behavior
2. Provides feedback based on student report and counselor report

Weaknesses
1. Measures are subjective and are potentially influenced by biases of the rater
2. Only students who remain in counseling at the end of semesters participate in the Student Evaluation of Services survey; therefore, the data may be positively skewed (i.e. those who dropped out of therapy early and did not receive benefit are not captured in the data)
**Action Taken/Future Plans**

**Connect Results and Program Changes**

These results are shared with all clinical staff in the Counseling Center. They are also provided a summary of their individual results. This information is then used to adjust practices as needed to promote the achievement of learning outcomes. Data is also used to determine staff training/professional development topics. For instance, if students were not reporting that counseling was helping them solve a problem in their lives at such a high rate, we would respond by holding a professional development seminar in Solution Focused Therapy.

This data will continue to be collected and used to inform clinical practices and the need for ongoing training and development. We will continue to assess the methodologies used to assess these learning outcomes and make modifications as necessary that balance clinically appropriate assessment and rigorous assessment methodology.
SIGNATURE PROGRAM NUMBER TWO: STRESS CLINIC

Signature Program Description

Description and Rationale for Selection

Stress Clinic is an ongoing series of workshops designed to help students better understand sources and symptoms of stress and develop better skills for managing stress. The clinic is divided into five interactive workshops that are each focused on a unique aspect of stress management (relaxation, cognition, self-care, relationships, and time-management). It was identified as a signature program for several reasons:

1. Stress affects nearly every student and is one of the most common presenting concerns among students who seek services at the Center.
2. Since any student can drop in for a workshop, the program has a potential to reach a very large number of students, many of whom would not present for more traditional services.
3. Every Stress Clinic session this year was connected with the First Year Success Series, and was thus a significant effort at outreach toward first-year students.

In the 2009-2010 academic year, the total attendance at Stress Clinic sessions was 230 students across 47 workshops.

Expectations for Student Achievement

1. Students will be able to identify at least three signs that they are experiencing stress
2. Students will be able to identify a plan for alleviating stress

Link to Student Affairs Student Learning Outcomes

University Learning Outcome(s)
A. General and Specialized Knowledge
B. Personal and Social Responsibility
C. Intellectual and Practical Skills
D. Integrate, Apply, and Reflect

Student Affairs Learning Outcome(s)
A. General Knowledge demonstrated through General Knowledge Development
B. Personal Development demonstrated through Wellness and Self-Leadership
C. Critical and Constructive Thinking demonstrated through Inquiry and Solving Problems Creatively
D. Synthesis of Advanced Accomplishments demonstrated through Application and Reflection

Assessment Methods and Procedures

Description of Methods and Procedures

All students who attended Counseling Center Stress Clinics were asked to complete a brief evaluation form at the conclusion of the program that contained items intended to measure the Center’s Stress Clinic Learning Outcomes. There are 5 parallel versions of the evaluation form – one for each of the 5 Stress Clinic topics. Evaluation forms were collected from a total of 194 students. The number of evaluations from each of the 5 workshops was as follows:

- Relax Your Body – 69 students
- Nurture Yourself – 26 students
- Conquer Procrastination – 27 students
- Free Your Mind – 54 students
- Improve Your Relationships – 18 students

Assessment Instruments

DIRECT assessment of learning outcomes

Each of the 5 evaluation forms contained questions designed to directly assess the learning outcomes. Students were asked to respond to the following three tasks:

- list 3 ways they know if they’re experiencing stress
- name 2 ways they can cope with the aspect of stress addressed in the session
• name at least 1 way they can apply material from the clinic to their own lives

**INDIRECT assessment of learning outcomes**
The Stress Clinic evaluations also included items on each of the 5 versions that assess learning specific to that topic/session. These items reflect knowledge/skills that are relevant to the overall Stress Clinic learning outcomes (recognizing stress and developing plans for coping). For each of these items, students were asked to generate a rating using the following scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, 4-Strongly Agree.

### Results and Conclusions

#### Description of the Results
The results of these evaluations as they pertain to the Center’s Stress Clinic Learning Outcomes are presented in the subsequent table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items indirectly measuring Stress Clinic learning outcomes:</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learned new relaxation methods during this program</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to practice relaxation on my own</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about how my thought processes affect my stress level</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned to challenge negative thinking</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned ways to think more positively</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned ways to manage everyday stresses</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned tips for good self-care</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned how to maintain an accepting, affirming attitude toward myself</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about relationship issues that can contribute to stress</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about how to recognize healthy or unhealthy patterns in my relationships</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned how to build intimacy with others</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned differences in time use between students who earn As and Fs</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I identified some reasons I procrastinate</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned ways to stop procrastinating</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall percentages of students responding agree or strongly agree to topic-specific items: 41.5% 49.3% 90.8%

The data presented above suggest that students perceive Counseling Center Stress Clinics as contributing to the achievement of the Center’s Stress Clinic learning outcomes. Most students (88-96%) were able to identify signs of stress and plans for coping. Nearly all students also reported agreement with items assessing learning specific to the five topics (72-100%, depending on the specific item). These data suggest that the Counseling Center’s Stress Clinics were able to achieve the Stress Clinic learning outcomes.
Title: Target Level Achievement

All targets/expectations were exceeded in evaluating the Stress Clinic; see table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Expected % of students</th>
<th>Actual % of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List 3 ways to know if you’re experiencing stress</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name 2 ways to cope with stress</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name 1 way to apply the material to your own life</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Title: Evaluation of Assessment Methods and Procedures

Strengths
1. In addition to simple ratings of the session, students were required to supply content that actively demonstrated what they had learned.
2. Students were asked questions that required them to apply concepts to their own lives.
3. Parallel forms allowed us to assess both outcomes that cut across all topics and outcomes that were specific to each session’s content.

Weaknesses
1. Evaluation was done immediately following the session; thus we cannot know whether students actually followed through with the plans they developed during the workshop.
2. It’s unclear whether there’s a meaningful difference between “agree” and “strongly agree” ratings. For example, “strongly agree” responses may mean that the student believed the material was particularly thorough, especially helpful, more interesting, better presented, or she/he may simply have liked the presenter, and so on.

Title: Action Taken/Future Plans

Connect Results and Program Changes

Overall, results indicate that the Stress Clinic program is helping students achieve the intended learning outcomes. This data provides support for continuing the program in the coming year.

Program changes
There were a few items in the Stress Clinic evaluations with which there was lower agreement about learning outcomes; these are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learned ways to think more positively</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned how to maintain an accepting, affirming attitude toward myself</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned how to build intimacy with others</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

These data may indicate areas in which program content can be improved. Additional material and activities can be developed to bolster these pieces of the Stress Clinic workshops.

Target completion date: September 2010
Responsible parties: Outreach committee and/or assigned trainees
Resources needed: Books, worksheets, online resources, or activities we create

Assessment method changes
One weakness of the current evaluation form is the ambiguity in the Likert rating scale. As described above, it is difficult to make meaning of the difference between “agree” and “strongly agree” ratings – or “disagree” and “strongly disagree” ratings. It’s possible that a new set of labels on the Likert scale would produce more meaningful results. This year we can consider other possibilities and may change the Likert scale.

Target completion date: September 2010
Responsible parties: Outreach committee and/or assigned trainees
Resources needed: Discussion, examples of other possibilities
Showcasing Student Learning

The results of these assessments are being shared in the Counseling Center’s annual assessment report and with the staff of the Center. It has the potential to be used to further the Center’s goal of developing alternative funding sources by demonstrating the Counseling Center’s impact on student learning. Although, no proposals have been written to date, this methodology and data could potentially be proposed for presentation at national or regional Student Affairs or Counseling Center conferences.

Proposed 2010-2011 Signature Program Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Proposed Signature Programs (minimum of 3) to Assess for 2010-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alcohol Education Classes: Viewpoints and Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Community of Care Presentations/Trainings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pre-doctoral Internship Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Undergraduate Pre-Internship Course offered by Counseling Center staff through the Department of Psychology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>