ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER
STUDENT AFFAIRS • THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH







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UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER

STUDENT HEALTH & WELLNESS

We support student well-being and success by facilitating and supporting the educational mission of the University of Utah. We provide developmental, preventive, and therapeutic services and programs that promote the intellectual, emotional, cultural, and social development of University of Utah students. We advocate a philosophy of acceptance, compassion, and support for those we serve, as well as for each other. We aspire to respect cultural, individual and role differences as we continually work toward creating a safe and affirming climate for individuals of all ages, cultures, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, languages, mental and physical abilities, national origins, races, religions, sexual orientations, sizes and socioeconomic statuses.



Total Appointments

A total of 13,966 appointments were provided to 2,518 students, an average of 5.49 appointments per student.



Student Impact

On average, student's overall mental/emotional distress levels improved by 22% over their course of treatment at the UCC, as measured on the Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS) at intake and each clinical session.



Programming & Outreach

7,237

Programming and Outreach is an integral part of UCC services that support student mental health and wellbeing. UCC presented 239 outreach and programming events attended by 7,237 students.

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UCC Services

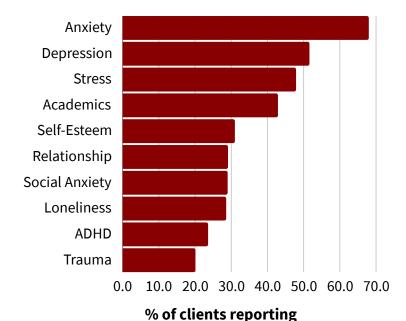


High Client Satisfaction



Students rate the quality of UCC services at every clinical session using the Alliance and Multicultural Survey (AMS). On a scale from 0 (worst possible counseling) to 10 (best possible counseling), the average rating was 8.67, indicating very high overall satisfaction. On a client satisfaction survey, 57.3% of respondenets indicated that counseling enhanced their sense of wellbeing.

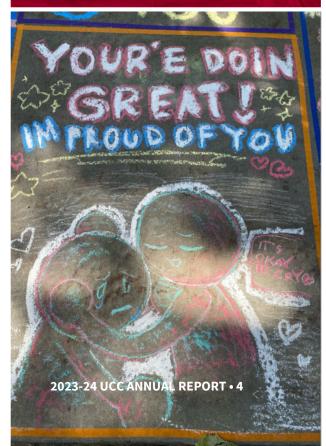
Top 10 concerns reported by UCC clients



(clients select all that apply)







MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Women's Resource Center Clinical & Training

In January 2024, the UCC began to integrate the clinical and training functions of the Women's Resource Center (WRC) into the UCC. The WRC has a long standing legacy of providing feminist multicultural therapy services to students while also providing training to MSW practicum students. The integration was intended to bolster the WRC clinical services and to provide more coordinated, seamless support of students, while preserving the uniqueness of the WRC services. Due to restructuring necessary upon the passage of HB 261, on June 30 the WRC was closed prior to the integration being complete. However, the clinical and training program components of the WRC have been able to be fully merged into the UCC with no interruption to clinical services to students.



Staff Hiring



In recent years, recruitment of counseling center clinical staff has been a significant challenge. In a nationwide study, over 74% of centers reported not having adequate number of qualified applicants.

During the 2023-24 fiscal year, the UCC was successful in hiring five new clinicians. Ongoing searches will continue through Summer 2024 for additional current open positions.

Wait Time Reduction

In Fall 2023, the new Initial Consultation model resulted in a significant reduction in wait time for an initial appointment. For 2023-24, students were able to be seen for an initial appointment within 24-48 hours of first contact with the UCC. This has greatly enhanced student access to mental health support services.



Clinical Capacity

The Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH), with support from the Association of University and Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD) and the International Accreditation of Counseling Services, Inc (IACS), has developed the Clinical Load Index (CLI) to estimate a center's clinical capacity, providing an index and measure of 'clients per standardized counselor'. The higher the CLI, the greater clinician caseloads and the less capacity that is available. Higher CLIs often necessitate a reduction in scope of services, along with increasing wait times and greater staff burnout. A center with a lower CLI typically is able to offer a wider range of mental health services, can be more responsive to student needs, and have shorter wait times.

For Fall 2023, it was estimated that the UCC CLI would be 152, which is higher than 88% of schools in the distribution, across 18.4 standardized counselors. Due to the success of hiring new clinicians and the transition to the Initial Consultation model, the UCC was actually able to significantly improve the UCC CLI to 116, or 21.7 standardized counselors. This has contributed to the improvement of student access to clinical services.



For more information about the Clinical Load Index, visit https://ccmh.psu.edu/cli



MAJOR CHALLENGES

Recruitment and Retention of Clinical Staff

While the UCC was able to hire five new clinical staff members during the 2023-24 year, the ability to effectively recruit and retain clinical staff remains a concern. In a nationwide study, over 68% of college counseling centers have been experiencing increases in staff turnover, the highest level ever measured. However, recruitment of clinical staff has also become increasingly challenging, with 74% of centers reporting not having adequate number of qualified applicants. Fortunately, some recent and current applicant pools have shown some improvement. This will be continued to be monitored during the 2020-25 year.

SOURCE

 $Gorman, K.S. \& Scofield, B.E. (2022). Why counseling center staff are leaving and why we should take notice. Association for University College Counseling Center Directors. \\ https://www.aucccd.org/assets/documents/CCMH%20Blog1_FINAL2.pdf$

Space

The UCC has been located in the Student Services Building (SSB) since 1986 with historically minimal increases in available office square footage, despite an increase in staffing. Fortunately, during Summer 2023, the UCC was allocated 4 additional private offices in the SSB. However, with the addition of the former WRC clinical and training staff, the UCC continues to be short on private office space. It is estimated that once fully staffed, the UCC will be short approximately 3-4 clinical office spaces. Short term solutions are being sought and requests for longer term space allocations are underway.

Office Infrastructure

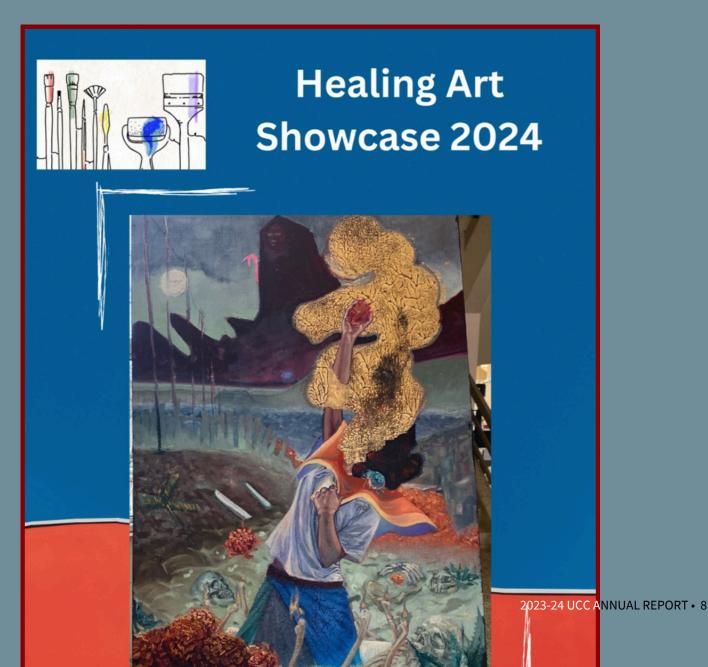
Much of the current office infrastructure (furniture, desks, etc...) in the UCC is aging, with some pieces being over 20 years old. Over the past 5 years, some remodeling of select areas have allowed for replacement and upgrades to furniture, however the majority has not been upgraded. This has resulted in the need for UCC to utilize used surplus items, mismatched furniture, minimal decor, and less-than-ideal therapy furniture. A recent satisfaction survey respondent noted "the facilities are old at the SSB, and I found the floor my counseling was on kind of creepy." Given the number of UCC office and therapy spaces it will require a significant budgetary investment to update and upgrade. The feasibility of this will be explored during the 2024-25 year.



Budget Limitations



The UCC is financially supported by state funding along with a proportion of the student mental health fee. Over 99.6% of the total UCC budget is comprised of staff salary and benefit costs, leaving very minimal budget for operational expenses. Prior to the pandemic, the UCC non-personnel budget was subsidized by client fees, testing center profit, and course revenue. Several changes have occurred over the past 3 years that has eliminated these funding sources. To increase access for students, most client fees were eliminated. In addition, the testing center was separated from the UCC organization and the courses co-taught with the Career and Professional Development Center were discontinued. Without securing ongoing funding to support operational expenses, which continue to increase each year, it may be necessary to divert vacant salary funding lines, further impacting UCC clinical capacity and ability to recruit and retain staff.



STATUS OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Mental Health Peer Educators

STATUS: Implemented and ongoing

The Mental Health Peer Educators (MHPE) program launched in Fall 2023 with two undergraduates students working closely with UCC staff in providing mental health focused programming and outreach. The MHPEs, in partnership with other campus offices engaged the campus community in outreach and programming around mental health. This collaborative program emphasizes a holistic approach to health and wellness for college students, with aims to increase student engagement with campus resources and overall student success.

Adapting to Student Needs SA Strategic Plan alignment- Students Perspective: Increase Awareness & Access and Improve Meaningful Connections & Belonging

Initial Consultation Model

STATUS: Implemented and ongoing

Starting in Fall 2023, the UCC piloted a new Initial Consultation Model. This new approach to initial contact replaced the existing system of an Intake Appointment as the first contact for all students. Instead, the primary first contact occurs during an "Initial Consultation" appointment. These brief, streamlined appointments with a UCC clinical staff member provide greater access, quicker assessment, and more rapid referral to the appropriate UCC, campus or community resource. It complements the Stepped Care Model implemented during the 2022-23 year. The Initial Consultation appointment requires less initial paperwork, while directing students that need a more in depth assessment to the appropriate service. It has resulted in a significant reduction of wait-time for an initial appointment, which averaged 24-48 hours during the 2023-24 year.

Adapting to Student Needs SA Strategic Plan alignment- Students Perspective: Increase Awareness & Access

Policies & Procedures

STATUS: Partially completed and ongoing

Over the past 3 years, the UCC has undergone significant transitions and changes, particularly in procedures and policies. The current Policies & Procedures manual is outdated and inaccurate. An effort is underway to revise and update the UCC Policy & Procedures manual. In addition to revisions and updates, the new manual will be fully electronic, increasing access for staff, and will have the ability to be more dynamically updated. The scope of the manual will be expanded to include a wider range of UCC procedures. This initiative was partially completed during the 2023-24 year. Additional revisions will continue during 2024-25.

Adapting to Student Needs SA Strategic Plan alignment- Internal Processes: Improve Management & Practices and Improve Strategic Communication

Staff Compensation Analysis

STATUS: Completed

In collaboration with the U of U Human Resources, a comprehensive staff compensation analysis was conducted. This included an expanded analysis of comparable higher education institutions, internal university positions, independent practice settings and community agency compensation. Existing internal salary ranges were adjusted and staff identified as below the new ranges received additional compensation increases for the 2024-25 year. Annual compensation analyses will continue to determine if additional adjustments become necessary.

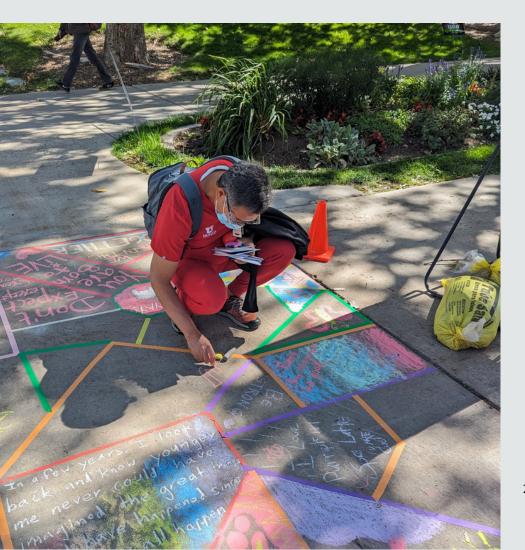
Adapting to Student Needs SA Strategic Plan alignment- Organizational Capacity: Improve Staff Experience

UCC Website Revision

STATUS: Not started

The UCC Website is in need of redesign and updating to better reflect current services and processes. This will include content updates, as well as navigation and visual enhancements. An effort to better align the UCC website with division wide student health and wellbeing resources and services will be emphasized. While necessary, specific updates were conducted during the 2023-24 year, a comprehensive updated was not initiated. Additional planning and work will occur during the 2024-25 year.

Adapting to Student Needs SA Strategic Plan alignment- Students Perspective: Increase Awareness & Access



NEW/CONTINUING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Increase Belonging & Sense of Community for UCC Trainees and Staff

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The UCC training program has launched a series a of informal social events designed to enhance trainees' sense of connection and belonging at the UCC, and allow staff & trainees to build community. We're hosting one event per month, and an additional event at a few key times of the year. Each event is planned by a different member of our Training Strategic Initiatives Group, which includes leadership and other staff members. Some of the events include picnicking in the park, going to the zoo, having a craft night, and attending Drag Bingo at the Union.

PROJECT SCOPE

- Set calendar with at least one event per month
- Organize, schedule and advertise activities for the events

OBJECTIVES

- Connection & Belonging
- Improve Culture
- Improve Staff Experience

INITIATIVE

• Revitalize Engagement & Belonging

METRICS AND OUTCOMES

- Increased staff sense of connection and belonging
- At end of year, collect data from staff and trainees about their experiences attending the events

Therapeutic Facility Dog for the UCC

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This fall we'll be welcoming a new four-legged member to our clinical staff: a facility dog. Our Associate Director for Programming & Outreach, Christina Kelly-LeCluyse, will be receiving specialty training and our center has been approved to integrate this dog into our services, particularly some of our outreach events. The dog will be with Christina or our secondary handler, Josh Newbury, at all times while on campus, and will be integrated into one of our therapy groups. (Students who do not want to come into contact with the dog because of allergies or any other reason will be able to avoid it).

PROJECT SCOPE

- Submit application to Canine Companions (completed)
- Identify primary and secondary handler (completed)
- Handlers complete interviews and initial training (completed)
- Primary handler attend on-site 2-week training (August)
- Develop policy and informed consent (in process)

- Orient and integrate dog into the UCC (late August)
- Begin to offer animal assisted therapy services (anticipated September)

OBJECTIVES

- Increase Student Satisfaction
- Improve Outcomes

INITIATIVE

- Optimize Health & Wellness Access
- Learning & Development Outcomes

METRICS AND OUTCOMES

- Client utilizaton of animal assisted therapy services
- Client satisfaction survey

Suicide Prevention Programming

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The UCC received a generous gift of \$5,000 from the Russon Family Foundation to support the initial development of a suicide prevention program to deliver to students. In collaboration with the Center for Campus Wellness (CCW), the QPR Gatekeeper Training provided by the QPR institute was selected. Initially, at least 10 staff members from UCC, CCW, and other campus partners will be trained to provide this programming on campus.

PROJECT SCOPE

- Secure funding for initial training of certified QPR instructors (completed)
- Select staff to be trained (completed)
- Complete QPR instructor training (anticipated September)
- Begin to advertise, schedule and provide QPR suicide prevention programming to the campus community, with a particular emphasis on HRE students (anticipated October-November)

OBJECTIVES

- Increase Awareness & Access
- Improve Outcomes
- Improve Collaboration & Strategic Partnerships

INITIATIVE

- Optimize Health & Wellness Access
- Project Outcomes

METRICS AND OUTCOMES

of Students and staff that have attended and completed a suicide prevention program