

Psychological Services

Reflection Questions

- 1. Overview: Assess program, services, and division during the 2019-20 year. Describe accomplishments, challenges and how challenges were addressed. Include evidence that illustrates accomplishments and challenges.**

The main challenge that arose for psychological services was the need to switch to online services during the 2019-20 school year. Psychological services moved entirely online in late March 2020, offering appointments through zoom and changing the way that we collected client information.

There has also been an increased demand for services. We have added four part-time faculty since the beginning of the academic year to meet demand for services. We have also created three walk-in groups that run on different days of the week to help students who are on the wait list for individual services. Due in part to worsening mental health on account of the Covid 19 pandemic and the shelter in place orders, we removed the session limits so that students can have access to a therapist for as long as they need it.

Currently, students' overwhelming need for counselors is compounded by the limited mental health resources on our campus due to lack of adequate staffing. The department is in the process of recruiting and hiring additional counseling staff, which has not been easy with therapists being in such high demand during the pandemic. Ensuring that our counselors are carefully vetted, have experience working with college students from diverse backgrounds and share the college's values of equity and inclusion are important aspects of this process. In addition, every time we hire new therapist, their caseloads fill up very quickly. While it is not always possible to offer individual sessions right away, group counseling sessions and referrals to outside mental health providers are additional options. We appreciate the students who have been patiently waiting to receive services.

One major accomplishment for Psychological Services on both campuses (De Anza and Foothill) was being awarded a district-wide Mental Health Support grant from the State Chancellor's Office in Winter of 2020. Since the awarding of the grant, both campuses have been working collaboratively to implement the activities and meet the grant goals, objectives and requirements of the including mental health promotion, stigma reduction and expanding service provision. Adding additional therapists has been a top priority, as Psychological Services understands the overwhelming need for mental health support among De Anza students during these challenging times.

Another accomplishment is how Psychological Services has successfully coordinated with many different departments, including the International Students Program (ISP), the Jean

Miller Resource Room (JMRR), and the athletic department to run group therapy for underserved populations. We held support groups for students during times of heightened emotion and anxiety, including during the Black Lives Matter protests, the change to regulations regarding international students, uncertainty surrounding the 2020 election, the current rise in anti-Asian violence, and the difficulty student athletes had with being unable to return to their respective teams. Psychological Services has also provided support during events for Physical Education and Athletics, Nursing and Allied Healths and events organized by DASB, resource fairs, and Movies for Mental Health to name a few.

Psychological services has provided Multiple didactic trainings to our therapists during the past two years, with topics ranging from particular interventions to culturally relevant and identity specific therapies, as well as background reviews for working with students from particular cultures and identities. Psychological Services has emphasized diversity within the topics being taught and between presenters.

2. Describe how program plans were met, including evidence that illustrate how these program plans were met.

Psychological services planned to increase outreach to underserved populations within the De Anza student body. We did this by coordinating with athletic counselors, the chair of the Jean Miller resource room, ISP staff and health services staff. Based on our collaborations, we developed therapy groups designed to meet the individual needs of each population. Knowing that student athletes were among the most underrepresented students within psychological services, we created a closed group, meaning that the same people who started the group each quarter would be the only participants, in an effort to make the group less stigmatizing by increasing the consistency of participants, with the goal of creating a familial environment. Further, Our Department has created relationships with external providers and low-cost community mental health clinics to provide referrals for our students in the event that they are no longer eligible for our services or have chosen to seek services elsewhere.

3. Describe your experience related to transition of remote work, including online services, instruction, and supporting students offsite during the pandemic.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Director of Psychological Services took more than 10 hours of continuing education regarding Telehealth in order to increase his familiarity with best practices. Other members of the staff, including our therapists and administrative assistant, also took courses to increase their knowledge base regarding Telehealth. A baseline protocol was created for all therapists to ensure Fidelity and to help therapists who had never done Telehealth services feel prepared for the new experience. Instead of walking into our office, students were encouraged to email our

administrative assistant to set up appointments. They were then told they would be given a zoom link with the date and time of their appointment.

4. Describe how Student Equity goals were met and any improvements that were made. Include evidence that illustrate how goals were met using institutional data.

During the pandemic, In the interest of equity, it was decided early on that while we would encourage students to have their camera on for session, it would not be required. Additionally using zoom allowed students without a computer to use our services by calling the number on the zoom invitation. Additionally, as noted above, the Department prioritized outreach to underrepresented populations within the De Anza student body. We have seen a considerable increase in the number of students who identify as Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander, as well as those who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, the previously described decision to remove session limits was made in the interest of equity, as many De Anza students are uninsured and were sheltering in place in environments that were not conducive to their mental health.

Equity, diversity and inclusion continue to be important factors as we select staff and interns for our Department consistent with past years, we have continued to emphasize diversity including, but not limited to diversity of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and socio-economic status.

5. Describe the impact of the 2020 pandemic and all of the associated events have had on the students served by the program. Share what the program review data reveals about the corresponding impacts of the current circumstances.

Students have reported mixed feelings regarding online therapy sessions. On the one hand, students like the flexibility to have session whoever they are and not have to be in one particular location at a particular time. This is especially true for students who have their own car. On the other hand, the idea of having a confidential therapy session somewhere other than a fully confidential clinic means that some students or having therapy sessions in a crowded home or in and outdoor area where they may be overheard. This can be especially difficult for students who are struggling with their interpersonal relationships, as it is possible the very person with whom they're having conflict maybe nearby. Moreover, the decision to allow students an unlimited number of sessions during the pandemic has meant that fewer students have access to the services. There is currently a wait list for individual services, which we have tried to alleviate by offering walk-in groups. The pandemic caused our Department to have to evaluate what would be better for a majority of students having more time with a therapist and continued support throughout an increasingly stressful pandemic or trying to serve as many students as possible but without long term support.

An additional complication of the pandemic was that psychological services had high demand from students living outside the state, and in some cases outside the country. Laws governing the practice of psychology are created at the state level and differ greatly from state to state. We have tried to serve clients regardless of where they are and have needed to invest time in researching each state's regulations, especially considering that every state that declared a state of emergency due to Covid 19 made amendments to their laws. Some states allowed out-of-state practitioners to practice Telehealth with people living in their state, other states required a psychologist to submit a temporary application, while others continued to not allow out-of-state psychologist to practice.

6. Describe resource needs based on current programs and services to effectively and efficiently serve students.

Psychological Program needs currently include an online record keeping system or electronic health record. This is necessary to streamline appointment scheduling and services and reduce our storage needs and environmental impact. It will also allow better communication across departments and make it easier for therapists to complete and review paperwork. Due to the increase in demand for services over the past several academic years, increased staffing will likely be necessary in the future to ensure that every student who wants an appointment can get an appointment. Although our therapists have many skills, few of them are trained in case management, a service that many of our students could benefit from as they navigate the health care system for the first time. Continued training in Telehealth, risk management, and culturally humble care are essential to their continued growth of our staff.

Additional counselors are also currently needed and the department staff will need to hire more full-time counselors as a more permanent solution to a chronic staffing shortage that part-time counseling ranks are insufficient to meet De Anza students' long term therapy needs. This severe need for therapists is evidenced by the many La Voz articles, emails to administrators, and comments from students in shared governance meetings.

7. Other Relevant Information, including future anticipated goals.

Psychological services will continue to place a heavy emphasis on outreach to populations of students who are least likely to seek mental health services, which include, but will not be limited to Black, Latinx and veterans students. We aim to build on the relationships that we've already created, as well as adding other elements. In particular, our department would like to explore the possibility of creating a peer run or peer facilitated support groups. Additionally, considering a name change, perhaps to something like mental health counseling, should be considered in an effort to reduce stigma of seeking therapy, especially for those who might be skeptical of going to psychological services.

Currently, all students can access services free of charge. However, other college counseling departments with higher-than-wanted no show rates have moved to a system where students receive free appointments if they show up but are charged a nominal fee if they failed to show up or do not give sufficient notice that they will be missing their appointment.

Psychological Services recently purchased membership to use the CCAPS-62. Included in this membership is the ability to track data without having therapist need to score the assessment by hand. Additionally, it will make completing the form easier for students will no longer need to complete it by hand. After the implementation of the PyraMed our electronic medical records system this Spring, students will be able to fill out the form online, the form will be automatically scored, and therapists will have immediate access to it. Therapists will then be able to view clients' progress at a glance and data will be easy to report. It will take some time to become familiar with the system, but we are certain it will simplify our data collection process.