



Who Should Read

Senior Student Affairs
Officers

Counseling Center
Directors and Staff

Mental Health Task
Force/Working Group

Establishing a Sustainable Scope of Service

Guidance for Campus Mental Health Services

How To Use This Guide

- Set and draft a sustainable scope of care statement specific to your campus
- Facilitate a discussion about the limitations and opportunities of resources on and off campus
- Develop and deploy a communication strategy

Student Affairs Forum

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Establishing a Sustainable Scope of Services

A Reader's Guide to This Resource

The growing demand for campus mental health services and the increasing complexity of students' mental health concerns has prompted difficult questions about the scope of campus care. Institutions increasingly recognize that they cannot provide all types of services with finite resources. To keep pace with students' concerns and address expectations about availability of care, campus counseling centers need to set and communicate a sustainable scope of service through a scope of care statement.

This resource provides campus leaders and teams with **discussion guides**, a **compendium** of strategic factors, and a **template** for your scope of care statement. This guide also includes an appendix of **sample scope of care statements** from a variety of institutions, with noted observations about key elements.

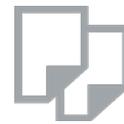


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Demand Is Increasing... And Hiring Isn't Enough

Despite Significant Investments, Institutions Cannot Keep Pace

In recent years, the demand for mental health services on college and university campuses has risen dramatically. Data shows that from 2009-10 to 2014-15, counseling center utilization grew five times faster than institutional enrollment growth.

In light of the increased demand for campus mental health services, many institutions have invested additional resources in campus counseling centers, including hiring additional clinical and professional staff. Despite new investments in additional staff, student distress levels, wait times, and overall demand continue to rise. Increasingly, institutions recognize that hiring more staff is not the answer. There is a growing recognition that fundamental change is necessary to meet demand on campus.

Sustained Levels of Increased Demand for Campus Mental Health Services...

Average Growth, 2009-10 to 2014-15

+ 5.6%

Average percent change in
institutional enrollment

+ 29.6%

Average percent change in
counseling center utilization

5x

Rate at which counseling
center utilization **outpaced**
enrollment growth

...Has Prompted Recognition that Something Needs to Change

“Demand for mental health support is rapidly growing on Canadian campuses. In response, we have poured more and more resources into clinical support services. **Despite the additional investment, both waiting times and student distress are increasing.**”

*Andre Costopoulos, Vice-Provost and Dean of Students
University of Alberta*

“We have been throwing money at this problem for years and it is an endless pit. Our numbers just keep going up. **Hiring more therapists is not the answer. We now know that we can't staff our way out of this problem.**”

*Vice President for Student Affairs
Public Research University*

“Where Should We Focus Our Resources?”

Increasingly, Institutions Can't Do It All

The rising demand for services and increasing complexity of students' mental health concerns has prompted difficult questions about the scope of campus care. Institutions increasingly recognize that they cannot provide all types of services to all students with finite resources. This realization is prompting difficult questions about the mission and goals of campus mental health services. As campus leaders and administrators determine what to prioritize, they are often weighing two values: accessibility and intensity.

Prioritizing Quick Access for All Students

- Clinical resources used to help a greater number of students solve short-term challenges
- High-need students are referred off campus for long-term care
- Intake, triage, and walk-in hours reduce wait times for all students

Accessibility

Prioritizing Ongoing Treatment for High-Need Students

- Clinical resources devoted to a small group of high-need students
- Little to no reliance on community resources to provide care
- Reduced access or longer wait times for non-critical cases

Intensity



As institutions, we all have to determine if we are going to meet every student's needs, reserve resources for students who need them most, or see as many students as we can to get them in an appropriate place to be successful on campus."

*Gillian Berry, Interim Director of Mental Health Services
The George Washington University*

While these two approaches are not mutually exclusive, the reality is that most institutions do not have the resources to effectively provide both. Thus, some institutions are emphasizing accessibility by prioritizing quick access for all students. In this model, clinical resources are used to help the greatest number of students solve short-term challenges on campus. Students with ongoing or complex mental health needs that require more intensive resources are referred off-campus for support.

Other institutions are emphasizing intensity by prioritizing ongoing treatment for high-need students, or students with ongoing or intensive mental health needs. Here, clinical resources are devoted to a small group of students on campus and there is little to no reliance on community resources to provide care. This approach can result in reduced access or longer wait times for new or non-critical student cases.

Defining Your Scope of Care Is No Easy Task

A Growing Tension on Campus

Whether your institution is prioritizing accessibility or intensity, EAB recommends setting and sharing a clear scope of service statement that outlines the parameters of campus services. The process of defining a scope of care is critical to meeting increased demand and setting and communicating expectations early. However, deciding what types of services to prioritize on campus can be challenging due to strained resources and differing perspectives on the goals of providing students with mental health care. On many campuses there is a disconnect between institutional leadership and counseling center staff about what the scope of care should be on campus.

Disconnect Between Campus Leaders and Counseling Center Staff



If we don't provide students with these services on campus, who will?

Our community does not have these resources. As a counselor, even at this university, I have an obligation to help people be well."

*Counseling Center Director
Private Research University*



At what point do we **stop being an educational institution and become a social welfare institution?** I don't know that we have an answer on where or how to make that call."

*Vice President for Student Affairs
Public Research University*

EAB recommends clearly defining a sustainable scope of service based on your institution's mission, campus resources, and available community supports. **Use this guide to facilitate a discussion about the priorities of mental health services and the practical limitations of on-campus care. Then, use the tools and example statements included here to compose and share a written scope of service statement.**

Articulating Your Institution's Priorities

Discussion Guide for Campus Leaders and Counseling Center Staff

Many institutions are grappling with questions about what the goal of campus mental health services should be. For example, is the goal to help students learn to manage their conditions long-term when they leave campus? Or is the goal to equip students with the immediate information and skills they need now to stay in school and maintain academic performance? Differing perspectives among campus leadership, administrators, and staff can make it challenging to agree on what types of services should and should not be offered on campus.

The first step to setting a sustainable scope of service is to define your institution's mission and goals when providing mental health services to students. Use this discussion guide with campus leaders and counseling center staff to come to consensus about your institution's priorities.

1 Why does your institution provide mental health services to students on campus? Be specific.

2 How does your institution's mission influence the mental health services you offer on campus?

3 Does your institution currently prioritize providing quick access to all students seeking mental health support or sustained treatment for students with intensive or ongoing needs? Why?

4 How do you define a student's successful interaction with campus mental health services?

Analyzing Factors that Influence Your Scope of Care

Compendium of Strategic Factors

Once you've reached consensus on the mission and goals of your institution's mental health services, the next step is to review the factors that influence your scope of care. Use this compendium to consider the practical limitations and opportunities of on-campus care.

	Factor	Questions to Consider
CENTER	Most common presenting concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are our center's most common presenting concerns? • What concerns make up 80% or more of our case load? • How do these concerns relate to national data, staff expertise, and available campus resources?
	Recurring instances of specialized concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the less frequent, unique concerns that students commonly present with? (e.g., eating disorders, trauma from sexual abuse or misconduct) • What campus resources address these concerns?
	Staff expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of concerns are our staff best trained and equipped to address on a daily basis? • What types of concerns fall outside of current staff training and expertise?
	Available budget and staffing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have resources to expand staff capacity and/or expertise? • Do we have resources to bring in part-time or on-demand community clinicians to address high-intensity concerns? • Do we have resources to invest in online and tele-supports for students?
	Physical space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have adequate space on campus to house current and/or additional clinicians? • Do we have enough space to expand offerings for dedicated service centers?
CAMPUS	Institutional mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the mission and current scope of campus mental health services align with our institution's mission? • How do current and proposed mental health services support students' academic performance, graduation, and success?
	Available campus supports and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of the counseling center, what other campus supports and services could address students' mental health concerns? • How can we encourage students to view these resources as mental health supports?
	Student and family expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of campus mental health services do students expect from the institution? • How are parents and students introduced to the current scope of campus and community resources?
COMMUNITY	Geographic location and availability of community resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your community, or a nearby community, offer mental health services that students can access? • What types of transportation options exist for students who need to get to a community provider?
	Insurance and financial implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your institution require student health insurance that covers mental health care, on and off campus? • How does your institution communicate with or support students referred off campus without health insurance? • What types of support does your institution provide to students seeking intensive or ongoing mental health care?

Source: Student Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Writing Your Scope of Care

Eight Essential Elements

Now that you've reviewed the factors that influence your scope of care, it is time to bring it all together by writing your institution's scope of care statement. Your statement should be concise, clearly organized, and specific. EAB analyzed existing statements and identified eight essential elements for your scope of care, outlined below. You can also **access sample statements from other institutions in the Appendix (page 11)** for inspiration.

1

TITLE

Common titles include Scope of Care, Scope of Services, etc.

2

MISSION

Primary goals of providing clinical services to students on campus

3

ELIGIBILITY

Consider intake requirements, student status, fee status

4

MODEL

Name and define a short-term therapy model for your campus

5

WHAT'S TREATED ON CAMPUS

Concerns and conditions that are commonly treated on campus

6

CAMPUS SERVICES

Types of services that are available on campus, in and out of counseling services

7

WHAT'S NOT TREATED ON CAMPUS

Concerns and conditions that are commonly referred out for off-campus care

8

REFERRAL PROCESS

How students are referred off campus and supports available through campus

Source: Student Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Communicating Your Scope of Care

Four Ways to Share Your Scope of Care Statement

Once you've finalized your written scope of care statement, you need to share it with students, parents and families, and the broader campus community. Sharing your scope of care statement early and often helps set expectations about on-campus care options and referral processes. EAB recommends communicating your scope of care statement through a variety of means that introduce the scope of care early and reinforce the center's services over time. Below are four ways to communicate your institution's scope of care on campus. You can see additional examples in EAB's *Meeting the Escalating Demand for Mental Health Services* publication, available at eab.com.



1

Post it online

First and foremost, it's essential to openly share your institution's scope of care statement. Post the statement on your counseling center webpage to ensure that it is immediately visible to website visitors seeking information about campus services. Include hyperlinks to other relevant campus services, community providers, or related resources.

3

Host an orientation session

Orientation presents a ripe opportunity to connect with students and their families about campus services and options. At orientation, include information about your scope of service, including what services are offered on campus and what conditions or circumstances might require off-campus care. Encourage parents and families to discuss care options with their students before coming to campus.



2

Send a pre-orientation letter

Today, more students come to campus with a history of mental health conditions or treatment. Send a letter to new students and their families before they come to orientation about the scope of campus services. Set expectations about available care options and educate them about referral protocols so they can ensure continuity of care as students transition to campus.

4

Integrate it in an email campaign

Many campuses send emails reminding students and families about campus mental health services during particularly stressful times of year, such as midterms and finals. Integrate information about your institution's scope of care into these emails to ensure that students understand the types of services they can access across the year.





Scope of Care Statements

APPENDIX

Scope of Service Statements



Navigating This Section

This appendix features scope of care statements from eight U.S. colleges and universities.



Organization

See the below table for the organization of this appendix; statements are organized by institution type and then alphabetically



Observations

Key highlights and standout features of each scope of care statement



Statement Characteristics

Each statement includes the institution, unit name, and official statement title



Source Link

Each statement includes a direct link to its online source

Institution	Characteristics	Pages
Baylor University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private 17,861 students¹ City (midsize) 	13-14
Elon University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private 6,978 students Suburb (midsize) 	15-16
Loyola University Maryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private 6,543 students City (large) 	17-19
Binghamton University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public 18,451 students Suburb (midsize) 	20-24
University of Maryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public 42,801 students Suburb (large) 	25-26
University of Nevada, Reno	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public 23,476 students City (midsize) 	27-30
Weber State University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public 32,760 students City (small) 	31-33
Western Washington University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public 17,291 students City (small) 	34-36

1) Unduplicated 12-month headcount

Source: National Center for Education Statistics; Student Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Baylor University

Scope of Service

Observations

- Overall concise statement that explains the university's commitment to providing care
- Invites all students to speak with Baylor staff about care options
- Includes a list of situations that may require transitions to off-campus care, including appointment frequency, treatment modality, and specialized treatment programs

Baylor University Counseling Center Scope of Service

[Access the statement online](#)

Services Provided | Baylor University Counseling Center

As a university mental health service, Baylor University Counseling Center is equipped to meet a range of unique needs presented by college students. Committed to delivering quality care, the professionals at Baylor University Counseling Center provide a range of short-term mental health services to undergraduate and graduate students.

The Counseling Center staff cares about the wellbeing of every Baylor student. All students are welcome to walk into the Counseling Center for an initial assessment to discuss their concerns with a staff member.

Baylor University Counseling Center provides a wide range of therapeutic interventions for Baylor students. When a student's needs require a more intensive level of care, Baylor University Counseling Center partners with the student to transition to resources within the community.

Situations that may require a transition of care include:

- A need, or request, to be seen more than once a week for individual therapy.
- A need, or request, for uninterrupted individual services from semester to semester.
- A need, or request, for treatment modality not provided by BUCC staff.
- A need, or request, to be seen differently than what is clinically recommended.
- Presence of one or more of the following, such that the best treatment would be an intensive outpatient program (IOP) or higher level of care:
 - Alcohol and Other Drug Addiction
 - Eating disorders
 - Chronic thoughts and/or attempts of self-injury and/or suicide

Baylor University, cont.

Scope of Service

- Request for:
 - Psychological testing or evaluations to attain accommodations through the Office of Access and Learning Accommodations (OALA)
 - Documentation for an emotional support animal

Baylor University Counseling Center is well connected with resources on Baylor's campus and in the Waco community, and the staff works with students to determine the most effective levels of care for their needs. Our goal is to identify the needs of our students and connect them to the appropriate service.

Elon University

Scope of Care

Observations

- Clearly outlines how Counseling Services advances the educational mission of Elon
- Concisely defines a “brief therapy model”
- Offers guidelines about the types of concerns and characteristics that might need care that is outside the scope of campus services

Elon University Counseling Services Scope of Care

[Access the statement online](#)

Counseling Services strives to facilitate the development of Elon University students by providing psychological interventions to promote the holistic well-being of Elon University students. Counseling Services has three essential roles for advancing the educational mission of Elon University:

1. Providing clinical services that help students achieve their academic and personal goals.
2. Educating the campus community about the psychological and developmental needs of students through community level interventions, including outreach programming and consultation.
3. Responding to the psychological effects of crisis impacting individual students and the campus community.

The primary goal of the center’s clinical services is to provide students with appropriate mental health care and assist with personal development. Counseling Services utilizes a brief therapy model, which is focused on helping students to effectively meet a desired change or goal. Clinical services include initial intake assessments, individual counseling, group counseling, psycho-educational programs, and referral to community resources where appropriate.

Counseling Services encourages students to schedule an initial intake appointment to determine the best response to their needs. All students who are eligible for services may receive an initial intake assessment to determine the specific needs of the student and how best to meet those needs. The decision about whether or not the needs of the student fall within the scope of clinical care of Counseling Services will be made after an initial intake meeting with a counselor or, if needed, after consultation with staff counselors and/or the director. The professional judgment of Counseling Services mental health providers will govern the determination in a particular case.

Students with the following concerns and characteristics will likely need a different type or level of care than what is within the role and scope of Elon’s Counseling Services. The list below reflects general guidelines and is intended only as a guide.

Source: Elon University, <https://www.elon.edu/u/health-wellness/counseling-services/overview-of-services/scope-of-care/>; Student Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Elon University, Cont.

Scope of Care

- Students who appear to need long term treatment beyond the scope of our services. Reasons may include:
 - Students consistently needing services more than once per week and/or frequent consultation after hours that cannot be stabilized with short term crisis intervention
 - Students with active eating disorders requiring extensive medical monitoring
 - Students with concerns which a brief therapy model of treatment will not appropriately address
- Students who need services other than what is offered at the Counseling Services. Reasons may include:
 - Students needing intensive outpatient or inpatient treatment
 - Students needing medical detoxification and/or medical stabilization
 - Students seeking on-going mandated treatment
 - Students seeking comprehensive assessments (e.g., learning disabilities, ADHD)
 - Students seeking psychological assessments or evaluations for selection, performance prediction or forensic purposes (e.g., for professional school application, employment security assessment, litigation or legal adjudications)
- Students who need services beyond the clinical expertise of Counseling Services staff
- Students who are unable to comply with treatment
- Students who are already receiving ongoing therapy with another mental health provider
- Students seeking therapy for the sole purpose of obtaining documentation for another office

Loyola University Maryland

Scope of Services

Observations

- Defines the brief therapy model as designed for students managing immediate problems, not ongoing difficulties (6 months or longer)
- Contains a list of common concerns that may be addressed through on-campus, short-term therapy
- Contains a list of common concerns that are likely addressed through referrals to off-campus providers, including authorization for an emotional support animal

Loyola University Maryland Counseling Center Scope of Services

[Access the statement online](#)

Scope of Services

The Counseling Center provides clinical and campus-based services to help students maintain and develop their emotional well-being and achieve their educational and personal goals. We promote a healthy and inclusive community through relationship-building, education, crisis intervention and support.

Our individual services are based on a brief therapy model and are designed to help students manage immediate problems and provide short-term therapy. These services are ideal for issues that have arisen recently or that are expected to resolve relatively quickly. If you are facing ongoing difficulties (6 months or longer) or if you have engaged in ongoing therapy in the past, it is likely that the Counseling Center will recommend that you establish a relationship with a provider in the community to ensure you have access to mental health treatment that is not limited. Decisions regarding treatment recommendations are made by counselors in consultation with the clinical team of the Counseling Center.

In addition to short-term individual therapy, the Counseling Center offers a strong group counseling program with many helpful options. Our group program has been very popular, and counselors often recommend group as the preferred mode of treatment. Whereas our individual counseling is brief, students may participate in one or various groups throughout their time at Loyola. We run multiple groups each year, some specifically themed and some aimed at more general concerns. Themed groups include those for grief and loss, stress management, unhealthy eating or body image, and sexual/gender or racial/ethnic identity concerns. The typical group involves about 8 students, meets weekly for 60-90 minutes, and is facilitated by one or two counselors. Please see our [group page](#) for more information.

When off-campus therapy is recommended or preferred by students, a counselor will support the student through the process of getting connected. We will help to identify several referral options selected specifically for their personal situation. We can help with accessing health insurance benefits and navigating transportation options. Local counseling options include some providers within walking distance to campus and some that provide low or sliding scale fee services.

Loyola University Maryland, cont.

Scope of Services

Access to the Counseling Center for an emergency meeting, and assistance with navigating on or off-campus resources remains available to all students throughout their college career, regardless of whether they have been referred to an off-campus provider for on-going treatment.

Common concerns that may be addressed in short-term therapy may include:

- Mild to moderate anxiety and depression
- Adjustment and developmental concerns
- Interpersonal concerns (friends, family, roommates, romantic partnerships)
- Self-esteem concerns
- Concerns related to the transition to college
- Identity development related to various dimensions of identity (sexual, racial/ethnic, religious, gender, etc.)
- Academic performance and motivation

Concerns that are commonly addressed through a referral to an off-campus provider may include:

- Students whose needs warrant treatment over multiple semesters
- Students needing more than once a week intervention on an ongoing basis
- Long-standing and/or significant depression, mood disorder, or anxiety concerns
- Active, significant eating disorders -- please view [treatment options for Eating Disorders](#) for more information
- Students with alcohol or drug problems as the primary issue (may be referred for on-campus support through the Office of Student Support and Wellness Promotion or to an off-campus provider)
- Forensic evaluations
- Medication evaluations and/or management for students who are not being seen for short-term counseling at the Counseling Center
- Medication evaluation and/or management for attention deficit disorder
- History of inpatient treatment for mental health purposes
- Mandated mental health evaluation or counseling
- Court appearances/testimony/evaluations or court-ordered assessment and treatment
- Students requiring specialized or more intensive treatment

Loyola University Maryland, cont.

Scope of Services

- Students who require counseling to meet an academic requirement and/or are interested in counseling solely to gain clinical experience
- Students whose needs are determined to be beyond the scope of the Counseling Center services through assessment with a counselor and for whom short-term counseling would not be an effective form of treatment
- Learning disability assessments: The Counseling Center does not conduct psychological evaluations for the purpose of determining disability status and also does not make accommodations recommendations for persons who have been diagnosed with a disability. For this reason, we cannot provide documentation for students seeking authorization for an emotional support animal, even if the student is a current or former Counseling Center client. The Counseling Center can provide students with a referral to a community provider for a disability evaluation. An off-campus psychologist or psychiatrist can evaluate a student's disability status and determine if based on the student's condition, an emotional support animal is medically necessary. Alternatively, students may choose to consult with their primary physician.

For more information or to schedule an appointment to discuss what treatment options are best for you, please call 410-617-CARE (2273).

Binghamton University

Scope of Clinical Services and Brief Therapy

Observations

- Clearly defines the goal of the counseling center as tied to student success and engagement
- Easy-to-read list of available campus services, including brief descriptions
- Includes a Q&A about the brief therapy model, including its benefits to students and campus as well as its history at Binghamton

Binghamton University University Counseling Center Scope of UCC Clinical Services & Brief Therapy

[Access the statement online](#)

Scope of UCC Clinical Services & Brief Therapy

The Binghamton University Counseling Center (UCC) is committed to promoting student psychological well-being so that students may fully and effectively engage in all the opportunities available at the University. The UCC provides assessment, counseling, referrals, and related services to students in their pursuit of personal and academic growth, including the strengthening of their emotional, intellectual, behavioral, cultural and spiritual development.

Assessment Process

The UCC invites students to make an initial consultative appointment with one of our counselors to discuss their concerns. This conversation between the counselor and the student generally involves a discussion of the student's current difficulties, a review of treatment options, and recommendations to assist the student in obtaining the appropriate services. Recommendations may include receiving services at the UCC (individual or group therapy), which is based on the brief therapy model, connecting to other campus resources, facilitating ongoing therapy with home providers in a private Skype facilities, or providing referrals to off-campus providers.

Services within the Counseling Center

Individual Counseling: In order to meet significant student demand for service and use resources most effectively, the UCC utilizes a brief therapy model. Brief therapy is short-term and focused on helping students to resolve or effectively manage a specific problem or challenge, or to make a particular desired change. The therapy is typically solution-oriented, and sessions are geared towards direct and active intervention to help clients achieve specific goals. Frequency of sessions may be weekly at first, but more often are every other week.

Binghamton University, cont.

Scope of Clinical Services and Brief Therapy

Group Counseling: In addition to individual counseling, group counseling can provide unique benefits including learning with and from peers, receiving feedback and support from peers in a counselor-facilitated setting, and learning specific skills in a group environment. The UCC has many group offers that are quite popular and effective. The menu of group topics and types offered at the UCC is dynamic and evolving. In addition to being the best treatment option for many presenting problems, group counseling may allow a student to receive more long-term services than would be available through individual therapy.

Same-Day Urgent Counseling: Same-day urgent sessions are generally available for all students. These urgent meeting times are in the afternoon between 2 and 4 p.m. For students with repeated use of urgent services, there may be discussion about referral to alternate or additional resources.

Some of the concerns that are commonly addressed in brief therapy at the UCC are:

- Personal Concerns: stress, anger, loneliness, guilt, grief
- Relationship Concerns: Romantic difficulties, interpersonal conflicts, family problems
- Developmental Concerns: Adjustment to college, life transitions, identity (e.g., personal, cultural, sexual orientation, gender identity)
- Mild to moderate mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression, as appropriate to brief therapy
- Substance Use: Concerns related to mild or moderate alcohol or other drug use/abuse
- Academic Concerns: Performance anxiety, perfectionism, or mental health issues that affect academic difficulties
- Trauma or Interpersonal Violence: Assessment, stabilization and treatment within a brief therapy model

Referral to Community Resources

The UCC brief therapy treatment approach is time-limited due to the natural limits of resources. In keeping with the brief therapy model at the UCC, students whose needs require long-term and/or intensive support will generally be referred to community resources for ongoing treatment. Similarly, students whose needs require a particular type of expertise that is not available in the UCC are also referred to community resources.

During periods of high demand for service, our providers may no longer have openings for new clients, and in that situation the UCC may keep a limited wait list based on anticipated availability in a reasonable time frame; however, in an effort to avoid a delay in care, we may help students to connect with community providers rather than place them on a substantial wait list.

Binghamton University, cont.

Scope of Clinical Services and Brief Therapy

In cases where a student's ongoing needs warrant a referral to community resources, the UCC may provide some interim support to the students as they are connecting to the appropriate community resources. The UCC may provide referrals during or after the initial assessment meeting, or as these factors become more apparent during the course of services. Same-day urgent appointments are also available to students as the need arises.

Some of the concerns that are commonly addressed through referral to services outside of the UCC include:

- A need for intensive, long-term, or open-ended therapy. Possible indicators for longer term or more intensive therapy include:
 - Recent or multiple psychiatric hospitalizations
 - Chronic thoughts of suicide, frequent self-injury behaviors, or history of repeated suicide attempts
 - Evidence or risk of progressive deterioration in mental or emotional functioning that requires intensive intervention
- A need for specialized services not available through the UCC, including but not limited to:
 - Presence of significant drug or alcohol problems such as substance dependence and/or past failed treatments
 - Need for drug testing
 - Presence of severe or long-standing eating disorder symptoms
 - Request for formal psychological assessment (e.g., ADHD testing)
 - Request for psychological evaluation for the purpose of employment clearance or other non-academic purpose
 - Request for services to fulfill students' court-mandated assessment or treatment requirements

The general guidelines listed above are only intended to serve as a guide to assist treatment decisions. The nature and complexity of presenting concerns and the broader context are considered in making the appropriate treatment recommendations(s). Students are evaluated individually and the professional judgment of the mental health providers(s) will determine the treatment recommendation in a particular case.

Brief Therapy

What is Brief Therapy?

Brief Therapy is a form of psychotherapy that is short-term in nature and typically focuses on solutions rather than problems. In doing so, the counselor utilizes a collaborative relationship between the counselor and client. The aim is to emphasize students' strengths and to help them to work actively towards well-defined goals. Brief Therapy is often about bringing successes into the client's awareness which tends to increase hopefulness.

Source: Binghamton University, <https://www.binghamton.edu/counseling/services/scope-of-practice.html>; Student Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Binghamton University, cont.

Scope of Clinical Services and Brief Therapy

Why is it a good approach?

Many clients find that Brief Therapy helps to keep the meetings focused and productive. The time-limited nature of counseling can encourage the client and therapist to work together effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, brief therapy has been shown to be suitable for a wide variety of clients and problems, such as anxiety, depression, grief, relationship issues, stress, and lifestyle changes.

What research supports it?

Research has shown that various forms of time-limited therapy yield very good results. For example, a comprehensive study on solution-focused brief therapy found that it had a positive effect in less time and satisfied the client's need for autonomy more than other forms of psychotherapy (Stams, et al., 2006 as cited in Bannick, 2007).

When and why did the UCC change to brief therapy?

We adopted the brief therapy model of care at the UCC in the Spring 2016 semester in order to reallocate counseling services by spreading resources in the most beneficial way, so that we can serve more students with quicker access. As a result, we have been able to reduce our wait times to initial appointments, as well as reduce the wait for ongoing counseling appointments.

How common is it?

Brief counseling is widely used in the mental health field and has become the most preferred mode of individual service delivery nationally in college counseling (Cooper & Archer, 1999).

How brief is Brief Therapy?

The UCC does not maintain a formal and exact session limit. Instead, working together, the therapist and student determine the number, type, and frequency of sessions that are appropriate for the student based on the nature of the student's concerns as well as available resources. The limits to service are explained within the context of a discussion about each student's presenting concerns. Sessions are usually scheduled every other week.

What if a student needs treatment beyond Brief Therapy?

As described above, brief therapy is appropriate in many circumstances. However, for students who may benefit from longer-term, more frequent, or more specialized counseling, the UCC works to coordinate access to resources in the local off-campus community. For more information about the UCC's *Scope of Service*, see above. Consideration may be given about a student's resources in deciding whether, when, and where to refer to off-campus services. The UCC has an excellent database of community agencies and individual providers, so that a referral can be individualized to the student's insurance, location, type of issue, or other criteria.

Binghamton University, cont.

Scope of Clinical Services and Brief Therapy

How to get the most out of it

To get the most out of a brief therapy experience, clients are encouraged to think about their goals, about how they would like things to be different. Clients are also encouraged to be willing to engage in work. With the help of the counselor, clients will explore ways that will bring them within reach of their goals. This also involves a willingness to devote energy to out-of-session work that the counselor may recommend.

References

Bannink, F.P. (2007). Solution-focused brief therapy. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 37(2), 87-94.

Cooper, S & Archer, J. (1999) Brief therapy in college counseling and mental health. *Journal of American College Health*, 48(1), 21-29.

Stams, G.J., Dekovic, M., Buist, K., & de Vries, L. (2006). Effectiviteit van oplossingsgerichte korte therapie; een meta-analyse (Efficiency of solution-focused brief therapy: a meta-analysis). *Gedragstherapie (Behavior Therapy)*, 39(2), 81-94

University of Maryland

Scope of Our Clinical Services

Observations

- Overall concise statement
- Outlines the purpose and procedure for an intake appointment
- Includes information specific to students with severe or chronic needs

University of Maryland Counseling Center Scope of Our Clinical Services

[Access the statement online](#)

Scope of Our Clinical Services

As the primary campus provider of psychological and consultation services, the Counseling Center offers free and confidential counseling sessions to registered UMD undergraduate and graduate students.

The focus of the initial appointment, referred to as an [intake appointment](#), is to determine the nature and impact of the presenting concerns and to identify options for addressing these issues. If additional treatment is indicated, the intake counselor will recommend the most effective method of treatment, which may include group counseling, career exploration, workshops, individual counseling, or referral to an off-campus mental health provider. In some cases, the intake appointment is sufficient for identifying ways to address the problems.

A Short-Term Model

The Counseling Center, which is staffed by licensed psychologists and counselors, applies a short-term model to individual counseling. In short-term counseling, issues are addressed over a few sessions in a solution-focused manner. The goal is to facilitate adjustment to college, reduce emotional distress, and foster resilience to help students continue attending college and pursue their academic, career, and personal goals. Therapists work to facilitate adjustment, healthy functioning, problem resolution, or symptom relief as quickly as possible. Clients who present with persistent and chronic psychological concerns and require continuous long term treatment are best served by community providers who can offer uninterrupted treatment and care.

Since therapy issues vary from person to person, the length of treatment also varies and is based on goals set by the therapist and client and on ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of treatment. While the Counseling Center provides a maximum of eight individual counseling sessions per 12-month period, most Center clients achieve their therapeutic goals and end counseling in six sessions.

The first step to determining if individual counseling could be helpful is to schedule an [intake appointment](#) by calling the Counseling Center at (301) 314-7651 or stopping by the reception desk in Shoemaker Building.

University of Maryland, cont.

Scope of Our Clinical Services

Severe or Chronic Mental Health Issues

Counseling Center therapists may assist clients in obtaining relief from some of the emotional discomfort that can accompany severe or chronic mental health problems. In such cases, the objective is to stabilize and improve coping while determining whether more intensive treatment is indicated. When long-term treatment or specialized services are needed, the therapist will recommend a referral to community resources.

Referrals are available through an [appointment with our care manager](#). Students in need of psychiatric services, such as evaluation, prescribing and monitoring of psychiatric medication, also may be referred by the Counseling Center to a psychiatrist at the [Mental Health Service in the University Health Center](#).

University of Nevada, Reno

Mission and Scope of Practice

Observations

- Opens with a mission statement tying counseling services to students' personal and academic success and development
- Contains a diversity mission statement that outlines the university's commitment to serving diverse populations, including education and training in multicultural competence
- Defines a short-term therapy model, where treatment may involve multiple modes of treatment beyond individual counseling

University of Nevada, Reno Counseling Services Mission and Scope of Practice

[Access the statement online](#)

Mission Statement

The mission of Counseling Services is to provide psychological services to University of Nevada, Reno students to support and facilitate their personal and academic success and development. Counseling Services also develops and offers prevention and consultation services to assist the university community in maintaining a safe and supportive educational environment.

Diversity Mission Statement

The University of Nevada, Reno Counseling Services acknowledges, accepts, and embraces diversity in its multiple forms, including but not limited to ability, age, cultural identity, ethnicity, gender identity, language, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, race, and religion. We are committed to providing a safe, affirming, accepting, and empowering environment in our relationships amongst our staff and trainees as well as our clients, the university, and the community as a whole.

Counseling Services provides education and training in multicultural competence and humility to practicum students, doctoral interns, postdoctoral fellows, and our professional staff. Counseling Services also provides services and training opportunities that encourage and educate the university community on the importance and value of multiculturalism and diversity in mental health and psychological practice.

In addition to addressing the psychological needs of our student clients, Counseling Services also serves the university community, including:

- Providing consultation to university community members on mental health issues and concerns
- Facilitating supportive outreach/debriefing to the university community following tragic or critical incidents involving students or staff

University of Nevada, Reno, cont.

Mission and Scope of Practice

- Providing prevention and health-awareness programming to improve academic performance and enhance the overall campus milieu
- Conducting training on mental health matters and concerns to a variety of university departments and paraprofessionals
- Providing training and supervision in psychological services to qualified pre-professional university students and post-doctoral residents, increasing the reach of our services and well as educational opportunities for students

Goal of Service

Counseling Services operates within a short-term or intermittent model of individual treatment, in order to maximize our resources in meeting student counseling needs. The primary goal is to improve students' resilience to distress and their repertoire of coping strategies as they navigate through their university experience, empowering them to overcome barriers to their success. After an initial appointment with a counselor, a treatment plan is created, outlining a plan for the type of counseling, approximate number of sessions, and any referrals to be made. The history and complexity of the presenting issues, as well as the short and long-term goals of counseling, are primary considerations in creating the treatment plan. In many cases, individual sessions are one part of a larger plan that may include group counseling, skills training, psychological assessment and/or referrals within the University or the community.

Issues commonly addressed through brief individual or group counseling:

- Academic-related issues (motivation, perfectionism, interpersonal communication, self-discipline)
- Mood or self-esteem (depression, anxiety, self-esteem, social anxiety, self-destructive behaviors)
- Relationship issues (conflicts, communication, break-ups, assertiveness, etc.)
- Adjustment (dealing with transitions, new life circumstances, etc.)
- Grief and loss
- Trauma, sexual assault

Issues or needs usually addressed through referral (sometimes with interim counseling or consultation while appropriate referrals are arranged):

- Long-term weekly psychotherapy
- Couple and family counseling
- Addictions (including gambling) and substance abuse treatment
- Sexual functioning/dysfunction
- Chronic pain management
- Chronic suicidality
- Psychotic symptoms* without medical stabilization

Source: University of Nevada, Reno, <https://www.unr.edu/counseling/mission-and-scope-of-practice>; Student Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

University of Nevada, Reno, cont.

Mission and Scope of Practice

- Eating disorders **without medical stabilization
- Clients who exhibit progressive deterioration in psychological functioning, or in which more intensive treatment than weekly individual counseling sessions is clearly needed

*Psychotic Disorders. Students stabilized through medical treatment of psychotic disorders may be provided intermittent individual or group treatment to provide support for their academic progress and monitoring of symptoms. In such cases, it is required that:

- Clients continue psychiatric/medical treatment
- Clients are not chronically suicidal or self-harming
- Clients understand and agree that they will be referred for more intensive care if they exhibit evidence of progressive deterioration in functioning or if they become non-compliant with treatment planning.

**Eating Disorders Treatment. Students seeking treatment for eating disorders will be required to obtain a medical evaluation through the Student Health Center to determine if they are medically stable. The interdisciplinary Eating Disorder Treatment Team will evaluate and determine the appropriate level of care (i.e., frequency and duration of sessions) and make needed referrals if it is determined that the client is medically unstable or unwilling/unable to comply with treatment planning.

Services that Counseling Services does not provide*:

- Court-mandated counseling services (i.e., anger-management or substance abuse), forensic or custody evaluations
- Counseling or assessment services required by employers, government agencies, or academic departments
- Documentation of psychological conditions for purposes such as special academic, employment, travel, or housing accommodations (i.e., emotional support animals), except when the student making the request is, or has been, a Counseling Services client, and available clinical records and information are sufficient, in the opinion of the clinician, to do so.
- Neuropsychological evaluations
- Individual counseling initiated only for course credit

*Some services are outside our scope of practice, require very specialized providers, or may interfere with our ability to meet our many requests for service (e.g., counseling only for course credit).

University of Nevada, Reno, cont.

Mission and Scope of Practice

As space allows, there is no limit for involvement in therapy or support groups, or in workshops and outreach activities. When such services are limited in space, new clients will be given priority over those who may be opting to repeat or continue with services they have already received.

Because of the high demand for our services, we urge our clients to contact us 24 hours in advance to cancel a scheduled appointment. Repeated "no-shows" may result in termination of that service.

Weber State University

Scope of Practice

Observations

- Opens with a concise mission statement
- Includes a list of circumstances that will likely result in community referral, including long-term conditions or treatment plans, lack of motivation, etc.
- Outlines possible exceptions to exclusionary criteria that account for scenarios where clinicians might extend a client's treatment beyond the standard scope of services

Weber State University Counseling & Psychological Services Center Scope of Practice

[Access the statement online](#)

Scope of Practice

The role of the Weber State University Counseling and Psychological Services Center (CPSC) is to provide brief mental health counseling and related services to help Weber State students identify barriers, improve coping, and achieve personal goals. Our services are available to eligible students whose concerns fall within our scope of practice. Those whose needs cannot be accommodated within our treatment model will be referred to community resources for care. Such referrals might occur immediately following an intake, or they might occur after some treatment and a further assessment of need has taken place.

Eligible Weber State students may receive up to 12 sessions per academic year. Sessions of different treatment categories, such as individual and couples therapy, or individual therapy and medication management, are counted separately. It is not customary, however, for individuals to utilize the maximum number of sessions in multiple categories. Group therapy is an exception; clients may attend as many group sessions as desired without impact on their session limit.

Some examples of clinical issues that will likely be addressed through a community referral include but are not limited to:

- Individuals with chronic mental health conditions that require longer-term, ongoing care.
- Clinical presentations, such as some personality disorders, that indicate short-term therapy may be ineffective and/or detrimental.
- A need or desire to be seen more frequently than CPSC can accommodate. Most of our clients are seen 1-4 times per month.
 - Excessive utilization of CPSC crisis intervention services indicates that standard session frequency is inadequate.
- Chronic suicidality and/or recent history of multiple suicide attempts.
- Severe and chronic self-injury.
- A history of multiple psychiatric hospitalizations.

Source: Weber State University, <https://www.weber.edu/CounselingCenter/scope.html>; Student Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Weber State University, cont.

Scope of Practice

- Issues that require more specialized care than can be provided at CPSC, including:
 - Significant or chronic disordered eating symptoms posing medical danger
 - Significant or chronic substance use/abuse which compromises therapy
- Active symptoms of psychosis at risk for progressive deterioration

Other reasons why we may deny services and/or refer individuals to community resources include but are not limited to:

- Lack of motivation or engagement in treatment, as evidenced by:
 - Unwillingness to provide information sufficient for clinical assessment
 - Inability to identify a treatment goal appropriate for brief therapy
 - Inconsistent attendance
 - Poor compliance with treatment recommendations
 - Failure to follow through with recommended treatment in the context of multiple crisis intervention sessions
- Ongoing treatment relationship with another mental health provider
- Inappropriate, harassing, menacing, threatening, or violent behaviors
- Mandated or required treatment, including but not limited to:
 - Counseling ordered through legal proceedings, such as substance abuse treatment, alcohol education, anger management, parenting education, or domestic violence treatment
 - Counseling required by employers, government agencies, academic departments, or classes
- Individual counseling initiated only to earn credit for a class
 - Some CPSC groups may allow participation for this purpose, with expressed approval by the group facilitator
- Comprehensive psychological evaluation of any type, including but not limited to:
 - Neuropsychological evaluations
 - Forensic assessments
 - Custody evaluations
 - Assessment and documentation for service or support animals
 - Fitness-for-duty evaluations
 - Pre-surgical mental health evaluations

Weber State University, cont.

Scope of Practice

- Medication-management-only treatment plans, including following termination of short-term psychotherapy
- Inappropriate utilization of couples/family therapy to treat the individual mental health needs of a person ineligible for individual CPSC services. Couples/family therapy is reserved for couples/family issues.
- Other situations that are determined to be outside the scope of services provided by CPSC, or in which case a clinical staff member determines that treatment would be detrimental to the client or to the proper functioning of the facility.

Denial/Referral Process

During the intake appointment or during any subsequent stage of treatment, a CPSC clinician may determine that a client's needs appear to fall outside our scope of practice. In such instances, the clinician is encouraged to consult with colleagues and/or the Director regarding case disposition. If the clinician is a trainee, the supervisor must be consulted.

When a community referral is the most appropriate treatment option for a client, he/she should be provided with approximately three referral options. These options should, to the best of the clinician's ability, address client circumstances regarding insurance, finances, and transportation.

CPSC clinicians are not case managers, and are not responsible for ensuring that clients follow up on referrals provided. Such contacts are encouraged, however, in cases with a moderate or higher level of risk or instability.

Possible Exceptions to Exclusionary Criteria

Occasionally, CPSC clinicians may provide services that extend beyond our scope of practice. Circumstances which may warrant such services include but are not limited to:

- Appropriate management of a crisis occurring when the majority of a student's 12 sessions have been utilized
- Coverage through upcoming graduation within the semester
- Completion of treatment for clients making good progress, but needing limited extension of services
- Supporting high-functioning clients with chronic conditions on well-defined short-term therapy goals
- Longer-term therapy for committed and progressing clients comprising 5% or less of any clinician's caseload, for training and diversity

When a client's circumstances represent a possible exception to exclusionary criteria, the clinician must present the case to CPSC clinical staff for consultation and approval.

Western Washington University

Scope of Services

Observations

- Includes criteria for determining service eligibility on campus
- Contains an explicit list of “solution-focused” services that are offered through the center alongside a list of services that are outside the center’s scope
- Explains that students can access referral services, including a case manager, when accessing off-campus care

Western Washington University Counseling Center Scope of Services

[Access the statement online](#)

Eligibility for Services

The Counseling Center provides clinical and outreach services for currently enrolled WWU students. This includes:

- Any WWU student who is currently enrolled for at least 6 credits and has paid the Health Fee (\$96 per quarter)*
- Non-WWU matriculating students, as may be the case with some students enrolled in specific programs operating through Extended Education (e.g., some international student programs), who have paid the Health Fee
- Other students (e.g., student teachers, students at off-campus locations) who have paid the Health Fee

* Fee provides eligibility for services at the Counseling Center and the Student Health Center. The Counseling Center’s Client Services Coordinator is available to assist with verifying eligibility for services.

Services We Provide

The Counseling Center utilizes a brief, solution-focused counseling model in which individual therapy sessions are offered on a short-term basis. Students are free to participate in an unlimited number of group sessions and workshops. The specific services we provide include:

- Initial assessment appointments
- Short-term individual counseling
- Crisis services
- Group counseling
- Workshops

Western Washington University, cont.

Scope of Services

- Outreach programming
- Referral services
- Couples counseling (if both individuals are eligible for services)

Examples

- Personal concerns: Stress and anxiety, depression, anger, loneliness, guilt, low self-esteem, and grief
- Relationship concerns: Romantic relationship difficulties, sexual concerns, roommate problems, and family issues
- Cultural concerns: Impact of oppression, power, privilege, identity, and intersectionality
- Developmental concerns: Identity development, adjustment to college, and life transitions
- Academic concerns: Performance anxiety, perfectionism, underachievement, and low motivation
- Other concerns, which may include: Effects of trauma, sexual assault, abuse, family history, spirituality, body image, food preoccupation, and healthy lifestyle choices

Services Outside of Our Scope

Students whose needs fall outside the scope of services or scheduling availability of the Counseling Center are referred to community resources. The Counseling Center provides referral services after the initial session or as these factors become more apparent during the course of services. The Center's case manager can provide referral options and offer additional assistance as necessary. You also can look at our online community provider referral database to search for a therapist who meets your needs.

Some of the issues that are commonly addressed through referral to services outside of the Counseling Center for longer-term or more intensive counseling include:

- Request for formal psychological evaluation for the purpose of employment clearance, determining eligibility for vocational rehabilitation or disability benefits, or documentation for emotional support or service animals.
- Learning disability, neuropsychological, or ADHD assessment.
- Student concerns that require regular weekly appointments throughout the quarter.
- Student concerns that required open-ended, ongoing psychotherapy before coming to Western Washington University.

Source: Western Washington University, <https://counseling.wvu.edu/scope-services>; Student Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Western Washington University, cont.

Scope of Services

- A history of multiple hospitalizations, chronic suicidality and/or self-injury behaviors; history of repeated suicide attempts.
- Evidence or risk of progressive deterioration in mental or emotional functioning, requiring intensive intervention.
- Presence of impairing drug and/or alcohol problems.
- Presence of impairing eating disorder.
- Court-mandated assessment or treatment requirements

Please note the nature and complexity of presenting concerns are considered in making the appropriate treatment recommendation(s). Cases are evaluated individually and the professional judgment of the mental health provider(s) will determine the treatment decision in a particular situation.



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