



Dynamic Staffing Models for Campus Counseling Centers

Meeting the Escalating Demand for Mental Health Services

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Student Affairs Forum



2018 Webconference Series

Meeting the Growing Demand for Campus Mental Health Services

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Institutions are struggling with an undefined and unsustainable scope of mental health care that is overly dependent on traditional models to connect students with on campus mental health support. EAB's research explores how institutions can maximize existing clinical resources and target interventions to key student segments on campus.

Upcoming Webconferences

5 **Wednesday, June 20, 1:00 – 1:30pm EST**
Four Strategies to Reinvigorate Group Therapy on Campus

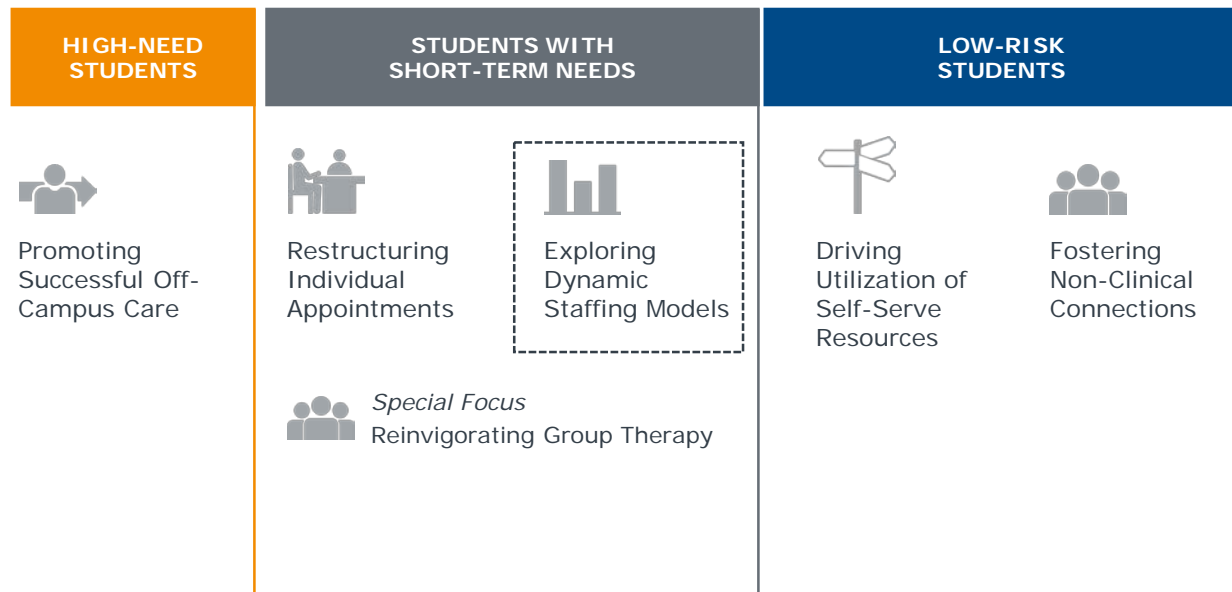
6 **Thursday, July 12, 2:00 – 2:30pm EST**
How to Connect Low-Risk Students to Meaningful Resources on Campus

Visit eab.com to **view on-demand recordings** of each webinar in this series, including:

- [Trends in Campus Mental Health Services](#)
- [Promote Successful Off-Campus Mental Health Care for High-Need Students](#)
- [How to Instill a Goal-Oriented Focus in Individual Counseling Appointments](#)

Meeting the Growing Demand

Mapping Targeted Interventions to Key Student Segments



Wanted: Individual Therapy

More Students Are Seeking Short-Term Therapy on Campus

Demand for Individual Appointments Outpaces Enrollment Growth

Average Growth, 2009-10 to 2014-15

5.6%

Average percent change in
institutional enrollment

38.4%

Average percent change in
counseling center appointments

7x

Rate at which demand for
counseling center appointments
outpaced enrollment growth

Students Are Demanding Increased Access to Individualized Care

“Students come to campus expecting **individual counseling**. We had a protest last year where students were chanting, “more free therapy, less free football.” We can’t simply ignore them when they ask for more support on campus.”

*Director of Counseling Services
Public Research University*

“A growing attitude among our students is a desire to “**get their money’s worth**” from the fees they pay on campus. We’ve seen a rising number of students coming to counseling services because they feel like they already paid for it.”

*Vice President for Student Affairs
Public Research University*



More Students, Longer Wait Times

Counseling Centers Cannot Keep Pace with Students Seeking Help

Waiting for an Appointment...

1 in 3

About **one-third** of institutions maintain a **waitlist for individual therapy appointments**

2-3 weeks

Average wait times for individual therapy appointments on campus is **2-3 weeks** and **longer during busier times of year**, such as midterms and finals

...Means Students Don't Get The Help They Need When They Need It

“ Things start to **back up like a traffic jam**. A lot can happen in four or five weeks during a quarter in college. It really wasn't OK to have that delay in place.”

*Gary Dunn, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services
University of California, Santa Cruz*

“ When students summon the courage and make time to come to the counseling center, they are at the point of their own crisis. When we would put them in a queue it was problematic because they **didn't know how to manage their own manifesting behaviors**.”

*John Austin
Interim Vice-Provost, Students
Ryerson University*

Waitlists Are Just the Tip of the Iceberg

What Increased Demand Looks Like on Campus

Waitlists Are the Most Visible Metric...

"After the first week, students have to wait weeks for an appointment. I know that there are **students on the waitlist that we just won't get to** this semester."

"Our waitlist just won't go away. We have hired additional staff and increased clinical hours offered to students, but **they just keep piling up.**"

...But There's More Below the Surface

- ✘ **Decreased frequency** of appointments to accommodate more clients
- ✘ **Staff burnout** because of long hours and overwhelming caseloads
- ✘ Delayed treatment leads **students' concerns to escalate**
- ✘ **Student dissatisfaction** about service availability
- ✘ **Lack of physical space** to accommodate new hires and increased clinical hours
- ✘ **Less time and resources** for outreach, early interventions, and other priorities

An Unsustainable Cycle

Hiring More Staff Is Not the Answer

Ongoing Investments in Counseling Center Staff...

42%

Of institutions **gained FTE clinical or professional staff** in 2015-16

6.3 FTE

Number of FTE staff counseling centers gained for every 1 lost in 2015-16, up from 3.9 in 2014-15

...Have 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*

The Capacity Catch-22

You Can't Resource Your Way Out of the Current Situation

No Matter Your Size, Staffing Alone Is Not a Long-Term Solution

	Davidson College	Brown University	Cornell University	University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign
Total Undergraduates	1,784	6,652	14,315	33,368
Total Mental Health Providers	4	15	32	26
Ratio of Undergraduates to Providers	446:1	443:1	447:1	1,283:1
Wait Time	Up to 1 week	Up to 2.5 weeks	Up to 2 weeks	Up to 12 days

“Institutions with **well-resourced counseling centers** are still seeing extreme demand and significant challenges in meeting the demand, which means that the solution is not more counselors. It may be a short term answer, but it's not a long term solution.”

Vice Provost of Students, Public Canadian University

Going Beyond “More” to Meet Demand

Restructured Interventions Are Not Enough to Keep Pace With Demand

“

More Services Just Aren't Enough

“We've added staff. We've added services. But at some point, we maxed out on both staff and services. Now we are asking harder questions about our organizational structure and hiring practices to determine if there's a more effective way to build out our reach.”

*Counseling Center Director
Public Master's University*

”

“

We Need Long-Term Solutions

“The way we staff our counseling unit hasn't really changed in decades. Sure, we have added a few new positions but we still hire the same types of people. Contrast that with today's students, who are in no way the same as they were even a decade ago. We've been static but we need an approach that's more flexible and gives us room to respond to changing circumstances in higher ed.”

*Vice Provost for Student Affairs
Private Research University*

”

Exploring a New Model

Maximize Clinical Efficiency with Existing Resources

Dynamic Staffing Models

Maximize clinical staff time and expertise through creative models that map to student needs



Outsourced
After-Hours Care



Seasonally
Contracted Staff



Hybrid Staffing

24/7 Support Is Hard to Do

After-Hours Crisis Care Strains Staff and Resources

The Impact of Providing After-Hours Care In-House...

...Is Prompting Counseling Centers to Consider Outsourcing



Staff Burnout

Expanded hours and responsibilities lead to exhaustion among staff



"We outsourced our weekend on-call services just to give our overworked staff some relief."



Strained Clinical Resources

Reduces availability of staff to provide direct service during standard operating hours



"When we have staff cover our on-call services, they're coming in late or leaving early the next day which leaves us short-handed for the daily rush of students."



Capped Utilization

Sparingly advertised to campus to maintain a manageable call load



"We know that there's a need for late night support, but we just don't have the resources to manage more callers right now."

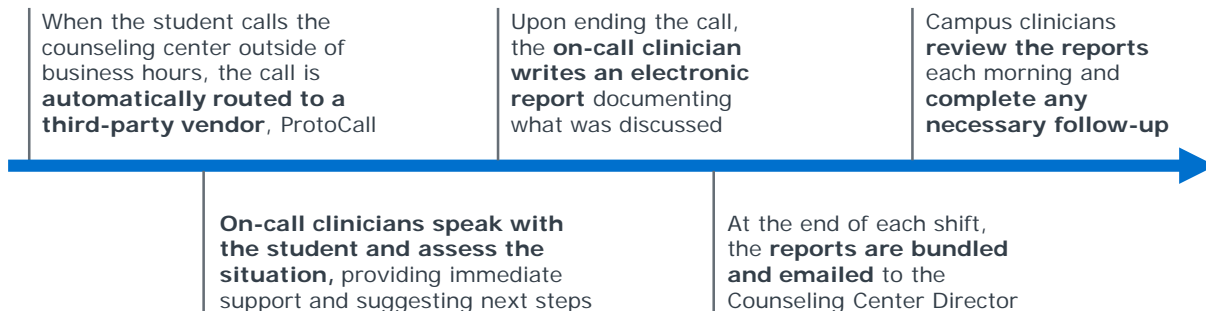
A Growing Trend?

28% Of counseling centers **contract with an after-hours call service**

Outsourcing After-Hours Care

Wesleyan University Partners with ProtoCall to Offer After-Hours Support

Seamless Care Transition for Students and the Institution



Freeing Up Time and Resources

190 After-hours calls routed to ProtoCall between September 2016 and May 2017

100 Estimated hours of direct contact saved by contracting with ProtoCall



ProtoCall connects callers to clinicians 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. **85%** of institutions that outsource after-hours care use ProtoCall.

Investing In Seasonally Contracted Staff

Dynamic Staffing Structure Addresses Two Key Challenges

CHALLENGE 1: Stagnant Budgets

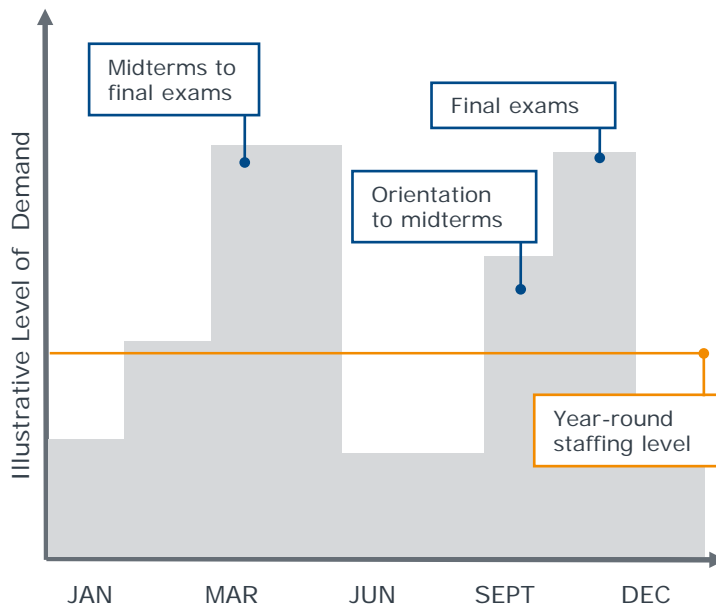
76%

Of counseling center **operating budgets** remained **unchanged** or **decreased** from 2015 to 2016

45%

Of counseling center **salary budgets** remained **unchanged** or **decreased** from 2015 to 2016

CHALLENGE 2: Fluctuating Demand Across the Year



Preparing for the Busiest Times of Year

University of Maryland's Seasonal Contracting Model

A Data-Informed Approach to Maximizing Clinical Resources

Isolate Peak Periods

- Analyze utilization trends across the year to determine when staff time is most strained
- Analysis revealed that demand was **highest from October to May**



Find Local Clinicians

- Identify clinicians who are prepared to work with students and work part-time on campus
- Over time, **build a bench of clinicians who can return each year**



Increase Capacity at Peak Times

- Local clinicians support full-time staff during stressful, high-demand periods
- Increase capacity of counseling services to see more students more quickly



University of Maryland's Approach: By the Numbers

3-4 Local clinicians are contracted each year

33 Weeks is the length of the contract, which covers the busiest times of year

14 Clinical hours per week from each contracted clinician

1,400-1,900

Estimated number of additional clinical hours each year, about **42-56 clinical hours per week**

Revolutionizing Counseling Center Staffing



Georgia State University Develops Innovative Hybrid Staffing Model

Challenging Questions Require Innovation



The **Traditional Model** of Campus Counseling Services



Stagnant staffing and hours of service, despite changing levels of need



Limited ability to evolve with students' changing demographics and needs



Students are increasingly dissatisfied with pace and quality of care



How do we match the **fluctuating demand** for services across the year?



How do we keep pace with **rapidly shifting student demographics**?



How do we ensure that our **students are getting what they need**?



Georgia State's **Hybrid Staffing Model**



Annually hire clinicians on flexible contracts to match shifting need



Hire clinicians based on diversity, expertise, and growing demand



Analyze clinician performance to ensure student satisfaction

Matching Resources with Demand

How Georgia State Hires Clinical Staff Every Year

Hybrid Model Logistics

- Small core staff of 5 in-house clinicians with key campus responsibilities
- Bulk of the workforce are contracted staff; 15-20 multidisciplinary clinicians and 4 psychiatrists
- Contracted staff work on campus for 16-32 hours each week, primarily providing direct care to students
- Contracts can be terminated with 30 days notice, based on need and student satisfaction



Outstanding Results

Dramatically Improved Center Efficiency and Care for Students

228%

Increase in total students seen (2012-2016)

\$0

Additional budget allocation (2012-2016)

2x

Of students now return for follow-up care (80% in 2016, up from 40% in 2010)

75%

Of contracted staff time is spent directly providing therapy to students

“

I am most proud of the increased access to services that we can now provide to our students without getting a budget increase. Our circumstances forced us to innovate and stretch our resources.”

*Jill Lee Barber
Senior Director of Psychological and Health Services
Georgia State University*

Making It Work on Your Campus

Three Dynamic Staffing Models

Model	Discussion Questions	Considerations
Outsourced After-Hours Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do students, faculty, and staff have 24/7 access to support? Do your staff handle after-hours and weekend emergencies? Is burnout affecting staff retention? Have you previously explored partnering with a third-party for 24/7 service? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relieves burnout by providing cover for weekend and evening hours Does not require local clinicians Can be relatively costly
Seasonally Contracted Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you unable to hire additional year-round clinical staff? Do you have an unmanageable waitlist during busy times of year? Do you have access to a small talent pool of local clinicians? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures appropriate staffing levels during peak periods of demand Prioritizes direct clinical time with students Reduces staffing costs by rightsizing staff during slow times
Hybrid Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is your campus keeping up with changing concerns and demographics? Do you have access to a talent pool of local clinicians? Can you support a broad shift in staffing structure for your counseling center? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible staff matches evolving needs Maintains staffing costs and allows for more clinical hours during peak times Requires significant reconfiguration of staffing and access to a labor pool

Additional Support from EAB

Current and Forthcoming Resources from the Student Affairs Forum

Executive Briefing

Ready-to-go resource for senior leaders that explains the current state of affairs on campus and what institutions are doing to meet students' demand



Webinar Series

Each section spotlighted in 30-minute webinar sessions; perfect for team meetings and brown-bag workshops



Book-Length Publication

Every best practice from the study compiled in a bound publication, featuring guidance and worksheets for your team



Implementation Toolkit

Templates and examples from profiled institutions help student affairs leaders avoid "reinventing the wheel" and streamline new initiatives





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