As a result of the implementation of a UW System-Wide effort to assess the impact of mental health services provided on each individual campus, this report identifies specific intrapersonal learning outcomes for Counseling Services that are different than those identified in our annual assessment plan where we were asked to identify learning outcomes for 2 signature programs offered through our department.

The learning outcomes specific to our Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) Education Class and our on-line workshop, 15 Ways to Get A’s, are being implemented during this calendar year with results to follow in May.

Previously, Counseling Services used the Effectiveness of Counseling Project (ECP) and the Client Satisfaction Survey (CSS) to measure student learning outcomes. During the 2011-2012 academic year Counseling Services participated in a UW System pilot project to develop and implement a Learning Outcome and Satisfaction Survey (LOSS) aimed at:

1. Establishing and collecting a standard set of data elements to track client trends, service delivery patterns and staffing needs and;
2. Researching the impact of counseling mental health services on student’s well-being and academic success.

This project sought to develop a core set of common data elements that can provide benchmarking for each campus and system-wide analysis of counseling impact. This was a direct result of concern that most utilization and outcome instruments in use among UW Counseling Centers had been developed “in-house” and could not be compared to national standards.

University Counseling Services participated in the pilot project (after receiving IRB approval) in the fall of 2011. As of May 2012 all UW Counseling Centers had entered into an agreement to utilize the LOSS full-time, replacing all internally created systems.

While University Counseling Services has identified independent program and service outcomes, our learning outcomes are now standardized.

Counseling Services Learning Outcomes:
- Started to live a healthier lifestyle in at least one area (e.g. sleep, diet, exercise, alcohol/drug use).
- Improve my ability to manage stress.
- Better able to recognize and express my emotions.
- Better prepared to work through future concerns and achieve my goals.
- Increased self-confidence and/or self-esteem.
- Increased understanding of cultural, family, ethnic, and/or community differences.
- Gained a greater understanding of myself or a clearer sense of identity.
• Learned how to engage in an effective decision making process.
• Increased my ability to think clearly and critically about my problems.
• Improved my communication skills.

1. What evidence do you have that students achieve your stated learning outcomes?

While our initial response rate of 15% was low, the data obtained from UW-Platteville students who had utilized counseling services suggested impacts were being made. The frequency of agree/strongly agree responses ranged from 49% (cultural, family, ethnic, and/or community differences) to 82% (better able to recognize and express my emotions). Of the students who participated in this project, 85% of them agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I made improvements on the specific issues for which I sought counseling”. Important to our counseling staff was the finding that our mean averages were comparable and occasionally higher than UW System mean averages.

Reported changes in personal well-being identified that 79% of students reported improvement.

2. What have you learned as a result?

As a result of this new assessment project we have been able to determine that positive change is made for students who utilize counseling services. This project allows us to evaluate the academic outcomes for students who utilize counseling services as well, and determine whether our services have any impact on retention. Since this tool incorporates learning outcomes, academic outcomes and satisfaction survey our department has been able to reduce multiple processes in to one project, thus reducing the number of surveys sent to students.

Not only will we be able to compare our data across the UW System, but we will also be able to compare our data with the national trends, allowing us information that can assist in development of new programs and improvement of existing ones. Obtaining data on mental health trends will also allow us the opportunity to respond to student needs in a more timely manner.

3. Document specific changes that have resulted from your assessment efforts.

The results of this pilot project were just finalized by the institutional researchers over the summer. While there have been changes in terms of processes in our department we are just beginning to recognize and identify changes as a result of the new assessment.

We are currently collecting a much more comprehensive core data set to describe the students who seek our services.