Incorporating Mental Health and Coaching Services into the Disability Services Delivery Model

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Role of DRES

- Federally mandated services (ADAAA, ADA, Rehab Act)
  - To provide academic adjustments, services, and supports to Illinois students with disabilities.
  - To maintain confidential documentation and determine reasonable accommodations for disability.
  - Equal access/to level the playing field

- DRES also provides additional mental-health services:
  - Academic Coaching (Executive Functioning Coaching)
  - Psychological Assessments
  - Individual Psychotherapy

Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) - by the Numbers

- Number of students served increased over 100% in six years (1,492 in FY14 to 2,998 in FY20).
- Current number of students registered with DRES is 3,705.
- Percentage of undergraduate campus enrollment supported through DRES has increased from 3.0% in FY14 to 8.4% in FY20.
- Support undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in every college within the university. LAS (29%), Graduate College (18%), and Engineering (17%).
- Underrepresented groups are 33.5% of the students we support.
- DRES graduation rates are 91% at the 6-year mark.
- While we are known for physical disabilities, over 74% of students registered with us have nonvisible disabilities.
Psychological Assessments at DRES

Psychological Assessments at DRES - Why do we do it?

- Psychological assessments aim to identify students who may be eligible to register with DRES, who otherwise may not have the means or access to receive an appropriate diagnosis.
- Cost of psychological assessments from private provider can range from $5,000-10,000.
- Lack of providers in the area to provide full neuropsychological assessments.
- Insurance often does not cover full cost of an assessment.
- U of I student insurance covers 80% of assessment. Students would have to pay $300-$700.
- By providing free assessments for eligible U of I students, able to reach students who lack resources.

Psychological Assessments at DRES - How do we do it?

- DRES is a training site for graduate practicum students in counseling and clinical psychology, and APA-approved predoctoral internship site through the Illinois School Psychology Internship Consortium (ISPIC).
- Recruit 5-8 practicum students every year who will administer psychological assessments as part of their training, and 1-2 predoctoral interns.
- Requirement for a DRES practicum training is to take an Adult Assessment Course for credit in the summer before starting practicum. Taught by DRES psychologist.
- With supervision, each practicum student completes approximately 10-15 full assessments during their training year.
- Funds for assessment come from donors and corporations who provide funds to pay for assessment supplies.
Psychological Assessments at DRES - Overview
- Used to measure and observe behavior/symptoms to make a diagnosis and recommend appropriate treatment.
- Approximately 200+ referrals for assessments every year. Referrals come from community providers, McKinley Student Health Center, Student Counseling Center.
- Approximately 100-150 assessments completed every year. 85% of students meet criteria for a psychiatric or cognitive diagnosis.
- Screening used to determine if student is eligible for an assessment:
  - Not currently DRES registered
  - No current mental health diagnosis
  - No significant substance use
  - Must be referred by a medical or mental health provider

Psychotherapy at DRES

Psychotherapy at DRES – why we do it
- Every year, students across campus consistently request more mental health services
- Campus resources for mental health services are limited
  - Counseling Center - has a session limit
  - McKinley Mental Health Services - also has a session limit
- If problems persist after using campus mental health resources, students are referred to providers in the community.
- Students are required to have health insurance, and the student insurance does cover therapy in the community, but students report there are barriers
  - Physical location for students who do not have reliable transportation
  - Students often report they don’t know how insurance works
  - Students report they can’t afford repeated copays
  - Students are afraid that parents will find out about therapy sessions
Psychotherapy at DRES – Who we are

- A number of providers with different backgrounds provide therapy at DRES:
  - Practicum students, including those who are doing assessments
  - Predoctoral interns
  - Master’s level Counseling Psych students
  - Two MSW interns
  - DRES has one full-time, masters-level Clinical Counselor, and their primary job role is to see students for therapy.
  - DRES has 3 Licensed psychologists who see students for therapy
  - Two Access Specialists (LPC and MSW) see students for therapy
  - From June 2021 through Mid-May 2022, DRES received 165 requests. During that time, 100 students received a match.
  - Waitlist is currently at 41 students.

Psychotherapy at DRES – How we do it

- Students fill out a request for therapy online, describing what they are looking for.
  - Our online request system is a way for us to track requests
  - Requests are managed by Mandi Carey, a mental health access specialist.
  - Primary focus on trying to make the best match between clinician and student based on clinical information.
  - Secondary consideration is schedule availability.
  - Students generally stay with the same clinician for an entire semester, academic year, or until the student terminates.
  - No charge for therapy sessions, but:
    - No show fee for cancellations less than 24 hours in advance.
    - Students are terminated if they no-show for more than two sessions.
    - No Session limit

Academic Coaching at DRES
Academic Coaching – why we do it

- Often times, skills strategies learned in high school no longer effective in college
- Disorganization, distractibility, anxiety leads to academic difficulties that can result in incompletes, failing grades, or academic probation
- Coaching provides an outlet to address student concerns and provide them with strategies to change their approach to school

Academic Coaching – who we are

- Initially began with one Access Specialist working with a small caseload of students. Through data collection (Weekly attendance and semester GPA), data showed benefit of service for students registered with DRES
- Recruit 8-12 Graduate students in Speech and Hearing Science or EdPsych to serve as academic coaches.
  - Requirement for an academic coach is that they need to have some knowledge or experience working with disability.
- Coaches have flexible schedule, most have 6-12 students on their caseload.
- Coaches receive training and supervision from Learning Disabilities Specialist

Academic Coaching – how we do it

- Coaches quickly learn how the student works best. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to coaching, but sessions might fairly be said to generally breakdown into three sections:
  - Review: The student will talk about what has happened since the last meeting: progress on goals, results of different strategies, issues in courses, etc.
  - Problem solving: This is where the coach and the student collaborate to decide what worked, what did not work, and how they might proceed in the future. The coach might suggest resources, or help the student to refocus on goals.
  - Wrap-up and Goal Setting: In the last ten or so minutes, the coach will summarize what was talked about, and remind the student of goals/tasks for the coming week. This is the time that goals for the coming week are set.
How to get started at your institution

- Start small.
- Focus on offering a specific, well-defined service and expand as you gain confidence.
- Think like an administrator if you need financial support or new positions—improved GPAs, retention, increased graduation rates, recruit incoming freshman.
- Partner with others—Counseling Centers, Health Centers, Academic Departments.
- Think about resources you already have—practicum students, graduate student workers, employees with clinical degrees. Consider volunteers as well.
- Utilize group modalities and workshops.

Questions?

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