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From High School to College: Mental Health and Student Disability Resources

Katherine: As Danielle said, I'm Katherine Donahue, and I am a clinical social worker and I am also the case manager at University Counseling Service. For my portion here, I'd like to talk to you about all of the on campus mental health resources that you see there. So I do want to talk about University Counseling Service, which is the agency that I work at. It is the primary counseling service agency on campus for students. Second on the list will be Student Health and Wellness, and then our Seashore Clinic, and finally, the Women's Resource and Action Center.

I am going to begin with University Counseling Service. We offer a variety of services at our agency. We solely see currently enrolled students. Some of the other agencies that I will talk about actually serve members of the community in addition to students at the University of Iowa. But University Counseling Service is totally focused on serving students. So the range of services that we provide: we offer consultation. So anyone just wanting to come in for one or two or three appointments, they can do that at any time they feel the need. Then we offer, also, individual counseling, that is probably the core of the services we offer. We offer brief therapy only, and that way, we can serve a larger number of students. We also offer couples counseling where both partners are currently enrolled at the University of Iowa. We have a number of therapy groups that occur each semester. We do a lot of outreach across campus, so just programs going all the time. We are a training agency for future psychologists, so we do offer training. We also have a student advisory board. So I will have you advance the next slide.

I want to talk about our group therapy. Here we have a list of some of the groups that are typically offered. So we've got the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy group which is really wonderful for things like anxiety, it takes kind of a mindfulness approach. Eating issues, body image group, and then just a general therapy group, men's group, women's group, again another mindfulness group for anxiety and depression. Our Social Skills 101 is really designed for students on the Autism spectrum, and Doctor Kathy Staley is the contact person. So that is the variety of groups that we typically do offer.

Here we are. UCS is comprised of 12 licensed psychologists, and one independent licensed social worker, myself. We have three graduate student interns and practicum students. We do have staff profiles on our website, so you are welcome to check those out on our website, and certainly each staff really has an area of special interest in areas that they specialize in.

We are located on the West Side of campus across the river, actually across from the Iowa Memorial Union. I wanted to talk with you about appointments. We do require that students make their own appointments. We view this as an invitation for students to begin to take a role in their own self-care and so we do require students make their own appointments. Others can assist the student, but the student actually has to speak on the phone and make their own appointment.

I did want to talk about referrals and this is really kind of the area that I work mostly in. When a student's mental health needs extend outside the "brief therapy" format or brief therapy scope of our agency, or if a student might require a higher level of treatment, then often I am involved in that. And that can include if a student needs to get to the emergency room, then we assist with that. Also I can assist students with an intensive outpatient treatment program. Often times students look at that option between semesters. Also a good number of students really want or need, or looking for counseling working with an individual counselor for ongoing or longer term counseling with a community based therapist, so I assist them with that. Also, I help with finding a psychiatrist off campus if a student wishes to do that, and then also assisting students with finding a psychologist in the community for finding psychological and learning disability testing. When I meet with students individually, I take a look at their insurance, we contact insurance together to look at the level of coverage and what the student will be responsible for financially so that there are no surprises to them and to assure that they can afford this. Also, we ask for a list of in network providers in Iowa City. A portion of my job is to note our therapists in our community. We have well over 100 therapists in private practice in this community. We've got a really fantastic land of psychologists, clinical social workers, licensed mental health counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists. I also really work with students to find the best therapist match for them, so that is a large part of my role. I just want to note that all enrolled students at the University of Iowa are required to have health insurance that can be used in the state of Iowa. And just note, if that is an issue, the university does offer a student health insurance plan, it's called SHIP, it's a wonderful Blue Cross Blue Shield policy, the premium is \$140 a month. And in terms of mental health counseling, students would just pay a \$10 copay per session with no limit on the number of sessions.

I did want to talk about our Student Health and Wellness and they are located in the same building as University Counseling Service, but they are a separate agency. In student health, there are two psychiatrists there, Dr. Joy Hudson and Dr. Paul Natvig. If a student is enrolled and has paid their health fee, then they really can access those psychiatry services free of charge. It's a wonderful service for students who come to college already on some sort of psychiatric medication and if they would like to have those medications managed here locally while they are a student. Student Health also has an eating disorder specialists there, Dr. Kathy Widdich. Also you can see the link for How are you feeling? And so student health has an online self- assessment where students can really do a mental health self-assessment and then seek care appropriately.

I did want to talk about Seashore Clinic. This is an awesome place on campus and also another place where students can get mental health counseling. It is run by the psychology department here, and so for any students that would be interested in seeking mental health counseling there, they would be working with a supervised graduate level psychology student, and they offer services both to students and anyone in the community on a sliding scale fee. They do not accept insurance, so it is a very nominal fee of \$10 to \$15 per session.

And then finally, Women's Resource and Action Center, it is an institution on this campus, and I also wanted to let you know about them. They also typically have three graduate level psychology students that offer counseling, again under a brief therapy format. That is free of charge to University of Iowa students. I also think that the WRAC has some really awesome and incredible support and discussion groups, so just going to their website each semester, and so I've got some listed there on the groups that are going on this semester. Even if you note the second one there, "Getting There: a guide to surviving your first year." So they really have some wonderful groups there.

And then I just wanted to give this final resource to you, this transitionyear.org is a really wonderful resource for both parents and students. You just click on the appropriate little name tag there and there is wealth of information in terms of transitioning to college, and if you already have been diagnosed with mental health issues, how to successfully make that transition. Or even looking at the symptoms that may even arise during college and how to seek out help. And I think that is it for me.

Mark: Thanks Katherine, I wanted to talk a little bit about Student Disability Services (SDS) on campus, and we are the primary unit that makes sure that students who need academic accommodations because of a disability are able to receive those accommodations on campus. We create a level playing field in the classroom, so we are about access at the post-secondary level, so that is a little bit different than the K-12 system, where the emphasis is on success and making sure everyone succeeds, once the student graduates from high school and goes to college, the emphasis on providing access so that the student can rise or fall based on their own ability and effort. So we provide reasonable accommodations to students who currently demonstrate a condition producing functional limitation in one or more live activities, usually related to maybe cognitive issues. The biggest group of students that we work with would have learning disabilities or have attention deficit disorders. The second largest would be student who have a chronic health issue. The third largest would be students who have a psychiatric or mental health condition. We have six staff members, including an exam services specialists and two accommodations coordinators and an assistant director and myself.

Very often, students will receive additional time for their exams because of processing speed, and we are able to proctor those for most of the faculty here, so a lot of times, students will take their exams here with us, and then we will send the exam right back over once the student is finished. Required Readings in Alternative Format is basically the same thing as books on tape. We take the textbook from the student and make it an electronic copy, which allows the student to have their textbook read to them. This is really helpful; we use a program called Read and Write Gold, and that is the conduit for having the textbooks read. And what it looks like to the student, it looks like a word document where they are actually reading visually, but they are also hearing what is happening at the same time. So being able to encode information in two different ways actually makes learning more effective. The program also allows the student to stop if they don't understand a word or a concept. They click on that word, and it'll pull through a dictionary definition and a picture. In addition to that, it allows students to create study lists for their exams, to highlight and move different things around to write papers. It is a great program. We believe in it so much, that the university purchased the site license for Read and Write Gold, so everyone who is a university student gets that free of charge. Class notes is another effective accommodation; for our students, they can either listen in class or take notes, if they try to do both at the same time, then they don't do either particularly well. And so having a copy of the notes provided after the lecture allows the students to relax, pay attention to what is going on, and to learn an interact with the instructor. Because disabilities impact students differentially, how you schedule your courses during the day is very important for our students. For example, a student who might have attention deficit disorder, would not do well in a class that meets once a week for 2.5 hours. Similarly, if a student had chronic fatigue issues, that would also be the case. We recommend our students not schedule courses back to back because there are advantages for using the time in between courses to study, to get the notes out, to see what is going on in your next class, what you've been reading, and to orient yourself into paying attention in that class. For students that are heard of hearing, we can provide sign language interpreters, FM systems, which work with a hearing aid, having the instructor wear a microphone, and the student would have the ability to have the instructors voice clicked right into their hearing aid. For students who don't use sign language, we also have FM systems. An FM system broadcasts a lecture, there are cart providers, and cart providers are essentially the same thing as a courtstonographer, that in real time, they will take captions of what is being said in the class. This is helpful for a deaf student who doesn't know American Sign Language, and of course we will provide sign language interpreters as well. I want to talk a little bit about attendance. Attendance can be problematic especially if our students have chronic health issues. The attendance statement accommodation does not allow the student to miss any more classes that is already indicated on the syllabus. So we can't overrule the syllabus. But what that statement provides to the instructor is that we have information on file that a student has a medical condition that could impact their attendance and we want them to take that into consideration when they deal with any absences, and that prompts the student and the instructor to have a conversation about what are the instructors expectations if a student is not able to attend class on a particular day. For students who have learning disabilities, we are able to not have them graded on spelling or grammar on in class writing

assignments. And then finally I want to talk about the world language substitution. If a disability prevents a student from learning a second language, and this could be for a variety of reasons, primarily learning disabilities, but also if a student has a hearing impairment, perhaps a student with cerebral palsy, we look at those individually and we are able to recommend to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Tippie College of Business, substitution classes or the world language requirement.

So high school and college are two very different worlds when it comes to disability. In high school, it is the responsibility of the school system to identify a student with a disability, provide accommodations, and evaluate the student at no cost to the family. Because the legislation changes in the post-secondary world, the student in college is responsible for identifying themselves to our office and requesting accommodations and to provide documentation and evaluation at no cost to the institution. Our documentation guidelines are available on our webpage. For the majority of the disability categories, we need something from an appropriately credentialed medical provider on their letterhead with a signature. For a learning disability, we do need a comprehensive testing battery that is no more than five years old, or has been completed with adult norms, and in that case, ages 16 and a half or older that will never expire. So on our webpage there is a two-page application basically asking you to identify who you are, and then if you know something about your disability or accommodations that you have used in the past that have been successful, to let us know those as well. And once we receive that and the appropriate documentation, we will go ahead and send the student a letter asking them to come in for an intake appointment, and at that point they will be assigned to one of our accommodation specialists. They will meet with that person at the beginning of each semester. And with that staff member, they will complete an accommodation form for every class, and that is how the student communicates to the instructor that they are a person with a disability and will need accommodations. We work with the students to make that process happen smoothly. The students are sometimes anxious the first semester they use the forms since it is all new to them, and we tell them that the faculty members have seen these forms each semester, and we will generally make an announcement on the first day of class what to do if you have an SDS form. This part is helpful, the form is something that the instructor and the student are designed to have a conversation. And we do that intentionally. There are universities that will actually send the form to the instructor on the student's behalf. I think what those universities have found is that very often the student and the instructor will never sit down and discuss the accommodations and the student may not actually receive the accommodation. We want the student and the instructor to have a personal relationship and the form is a conduit for them having a conversation about how to be successful in that particular class. Parents often ask me, what are the attitudes about the accommodations from the instructors? And I'd have to say that the instructors have a really positive attitude about that. The average response from an instructor is, "This is great, we'll make this happen, is there anything else I can do to help you be successful in my class?" And then we ask that students keep in contact with our office if any problems happen with accommodations. We won't know if that is a concern unless a student tell us, and we're going to assume that no news is good news if we don't hear from the student.

And Final Thoughts. It's important for the student to follow through. I can tell you that every fall semester, we have students who are qualified for accommodations, we work with them at orientation, we have everything in place, and we don't see them. They don't come in for the intake appointment. And when we talk to the student later, they tell us they just wanted to try it without accommodations and see how it goes. And how it goes is typically quite badly. Very often we will see these students in the second semester in the spring where they will come in and they are on academic probation, and they want to use their accommodations now, and they've dug themselves into a pretty deep hole. So what we suggest and in talking to parents and their students is to use every accommodation in every class for at least the first year or two, and if after that you want to try it without and you come in with a solid GPA and an understanding of how college works, maybe we'll have that discussion. But don't dig yourself into a hole because you don't have accommodations that you are legally entitled to. Accommodations do not replace the need to study hard in college. They don't take the place of effort. And for a campus our size, a student must be able to self-advocate, and that very simply means that the student

can talk to the instructors about their needs and that the student will let us know if there is anything that is a barrier to their succeeding.

Nikki: So in thinking towards that realm of success, and the awesome resources we have on campus, like Student Disability Service and University Counseling Service, we do have students sometimes who are just not sure about being able to gain access to that. Sometimes there are a lot of resources and figuring out which ones make the most sense or that they're even there is needed, and so that is where the Office of the Dean of Students Student Care and Assistance can really come into play to help provide that access. And that knowledge really is an important piece.

So as I mentioned, we do work to provide that support. Whenever students are experiencing situations that are really impacting their ability to fully engage here on campus and that can be in the classroom or outside of the classroom. We are here to provide that support. A lot of times this may look like emergency and crisis situations and you can see a list of different examples of what we work with. It's an unfortunate reality that a lot of times when we come to college whether its just out of high school or returning after some time away, that life still happens. Trying to navigate the campus while managing life is a lot, especially if we are doing it away from home for the first time. And so that is where our office comes in to provide that support piece. We definitely don't replace the role of family, which is a very important role. But again, just navigating that larger campus, from being here physically with them, and connecting them to different office that might be of help. So like I said, those are some of the examples in ways that we work with students and why we see them come into our office.

We are consultation and care, and that is the realm that we work for. We know that we are not here to take over for counseling or take over in the realm of student disability, but it is just that friendly space to talk and provide that support piece. So that is important to note. We also review and consult on different incident reports and concerns. Sometimes this may look like a phone call from a concerned family member. You might be picking up and noticing that something is going on. Maybe unfortunately there was a loss in the family and you wanted to make us aware of that. We are able to talk with you about different resources to share with your student or we can reach out to your student too. We work together to kind of navigate what that looks like in that sense. We also take reports from faculty, staff, friends of the students, others that they come in contact with that when they notice that something might be off, they might be struggling, we might hear about that, and we will outreach to the student to see if they want to meet, how can we assist you, are there ways that we can help support you better to be successful here. That is really the ultimate goal. And we do have a reporting form on our website so you can see the link listed. That form does have an anonymous option and sometimes we do have folks who chose to do that. Again, we will do the outreach based on that, and hopefully the student will want to partner with us because ultimately, we are there for them. Another program that we have created is the On Call Dean Program. So what we have found is, there are times that students will go to the emergency room. Maybe their appendix burst, and that can be a really scary situation. I know I personally don't like going to the emergency room alone, and I can't imagine potentially being an 18 year old and trying to navigate that system. So we have an on call dean, which is a full-time staff member and colleagues of ours, who has been trained in responding to students and providing that assistance piece that will respond to the hospital and check in with the student if that is what they prefer. Those can be on a variety of concerns. So when a student is transported from one of the residence halls on campus, or the University of Iowa police respond and have received a call from their dispatch, our on call dean is notifying, so 3 a.m. on a Saturday potentially, and they will go to the hospital. These are for more emergency situations that are not related to choices surrounding chemicals like alcohol for example. So this would be more so the medical side, like I mentioned the emergency surgery, maybe it's a mental health concern that needs to be considered more immediately. They are going to be there to provide that support piece and let them know that we will be in touch when you return, how we can help you. Finally then, we also coordinate efforts with on campus partners. One being the threat assessment and care team. They

work collaboratively with our office whenever there is a greater concern for safety for the campus community or for a student to really again provide that support piece. The second effort then, would be the early intervention team.

The Early Intervention Team is co-chaired by members from the Office of the Dean of Students and Academic Support and Retention. It is a really great resource because it is a cross-disciplinary team that really focuses on student support and what that looks like. We know that often when students are experiencing those situations that are impacting them, it's not just in one arena. It feeds into the other aspects of their life too. So if they are ill and are recovering from a disease, like a really bad cold for example or probably worse than that, we know that can affect their ability in the classroom. It can maybe even make their roommate situation difficult. Different things can come up with that. So that is the team that works together. On your screen you can see listed at the bottom, different members that we have represented on the team to help and have that holistic approach. And we also coordinate our efforts too. So the students not necessarily receiving ten emails about the same thing, which can become overwhelming, we are going to look to see who would be the most appropriate contact that could reach out and really help to assist that student. We are on the fourth year of the early intervention team and have served 389 students in that in the past year. As I mentioned, we do deal with a variety of concerns, so that does include mental health as well. College is a very stressful time, the transition here, and just really kind of navigating that new experience and that more independent ways of life can be difficult. We also know that some of students come to campus with some concerns that may already be existing. And again this is an opportunity for that team to help provide that support piece. So it can be mental health, medical, and academic concerns are different things that we address on our team.

Danielle: Thank you so much, Katherine, Mark and Nikki for the great information. We are now going to move into the question and answer portion of the presentation. And so please remember, for folks who are attending this webinar, our presenters are unable to answer questions about the specifics of your student's experience, but can provide information that might be helpful in guiding your student. So if you have a question, please type it into the question box, and then we will read the question out loud so all participants can hear and then the presenters can respond. If you are unable to type your question and need to use the mic function, please use the "Raise your hand" function so we can unmute your mic. If we are unable to get to your question during the webinar, we will follow up with you via email to make sure that we answer your question. So let's go ahead and get started if there are any questions.

Q&A

Danielle: Looks like we have one. So for some of the folks who came in a little bit late, can we talk a little bit about what Katherine was talking about in the beginning surrounding some mental health resources.

Katherine: Yes, and so I did speak first and so really what I spoke about was really the mental health resources here on campus. So that would include University Counseling Service, where I am the clinical case manager, and we offer a number of mental health services to students free of charge. There is no charge for our services. And then also spoke about Student Health and Wellness, where they offer psychiatric services, where students can see a psychiatrist. They also have an eating disorder specialist on staff. And then there is Seashore Clinic on campus, and they also offer counseling to really both students and anyone in the public. That is different than University Counseling Service. UCS only provides services to enrolled University of Iowa students. But Seashore Clinic, students can seek counseling there if they would like. They would work with a supervised graduate level psychology student and they offer services at a nominal fee of \$10 to \$15 per session. And then there is also the Women's Resource and Action Center on campus that offers individual counseling by three graduate level PhD students. And then they also have a wonderful array of support and discussion groups there. The Women's Resource and Action Center serves all students, so I think that is important to note.

Danielle: So just as a reminder, we will post a recording of the webinar, as well as a full transcript on our website, and so if anybody missed any portion of it, you can always refer back, and we have them on all year long and so if you can't remember what you heard in November and it's March, you can always go back, which is nice.

So we have a question, if a student is in need of assistance, but don't know who to talk to and is not always comfortable asking for help, is there a contact name and number that she can call to use for assistance?

Nikki: Yeah, I can jump in with that. This is Nikki Hodous from Student Care and Assistance. I think that is a natural role that our office plays with that because sometimes it is hard to ask for help and assistance and to recognize that and to feel comfortable to utilize it. That is where we can come into play. We often meet with students who finally are kind of admitting, "I might need some help, I'm not sure where to go and where to go for that." So for contacting us, our email is listed in the screen right now (dos-assistance@uiowa.edu) and that is checked often in our office. A phone call to us would work as well, which is 319-335-1162. Either myself or my colleague, Angie Reams, who is the director for student care and assistance can provide help. Maybe just understanding a little bit more about some circumstances, and we can even outreach to your student, which is something that is a bit more unique that we are able to offer. It is up to your student to seek out that assistance piece, but we can definitely try to connect with her, so please feel free to contact us.

Danielle: If incoming students were made aware of the transition year resources at the time that they started, so knowing what sort of information is given during orientation and On Iowa and things like that. I might be able to help answer this question. So part of the orientation process over summer, is students work through a portion called Explore Iowa and they go through each part of the Iowa Challenge, and they talk through how to excel as a student, and how to choose and make healthy choices, and so my office, Academic Support and Retention, we facilitate the Excel portion, and we talk a lot about the differences in care from high school to college. We do a large portion of that around continuing care, so if they have seen a counselor or a doctor at home, what resources are available for them here. Same if they have received an academic accommodation in high school and how that looks different. I know that the Dean of Students and University Counseling Service and our office are at all of those sort of fairs, and Student Disability Services takes walk-ins during that time and so we are all sort of available there. There is an additional piece during the Success at Iowa course, which is a course that all new students have to take that talks about campus resources and each one of our offices is covered in that. But if students are having a hard time referring back or recalling, sometimes there is information overload. I always say that Google is a friend, and sometimes University of Iowa stress will come up with both Student Health and Wellness and University Counseling Service. Disability will come up with SDS and so talking about how do we recall those things, because they are given the information starting from orientation through Week 6, but we that sometimes it might not always stick. The more that we can address it with students, the better.

Nikki: That, I think, is the important role when we partner with you all as family members to the students too. For example, if you come to a traditional orientation session here, you received, but may not remember, a very handy yellow bag and in that handy yellow bag were some of these resources. Because we know that students have information overload just as much as we do going through that process. And so for you all to be aware of that too and to kind of help chime in with that, it is kind of that partnering piece, that assistance side of things.

Danielle: Mark, here a question for you, if a student uses an SDS form, is it noted on their transcript?

Mark: Great question. It is not noted on the transcript that the student used an accommodation form, nor is the information that the student is registered at our office on any university wide database. The only time a student would be identified as a person with a disability is if they self-identified with a faculty member in order to get the accommodation. It's not part of any kind of permanent record here either within the University database or in terms of the transcript.

Danielle: That is all the time we have today for questions. Thank you so much for joining us. Please note that all of our webinars are posted online at uc.uiowa.edu/family-resources. Our next one will be the first Friday in December talking about Managing the Winter Break Transition, so when students come home for winter break, they might look and feel a little different than when they left. And so talking about how we can support them through that transition and support you all. If we were unable to get your question answered during the webinar, we will follow up with you via email, and if you have an additional question, please feel free to send it to us at uc-retention@uiowa.edu for a response from a University of Iowa staff member. We thank you so much for joining us, and thank you to Katherine, Nikki, and Mark, and we hope you have a great rest of your Friday. On Iowa, Go Hawks!