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Exploring Student and Faculty Perceptions Regarding the Availability of On-Campus  
Counseling Services

by

Stephen Wade Baker

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

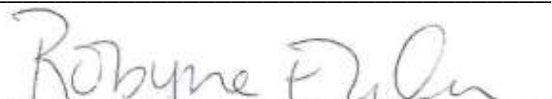
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Dr. Robyne Elder, Dissertation Chair

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12/6/19  
Date

  
Dr. Roger "Mitch" Nasser Jr., Committee Member

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12/6/2019  
Date

  
Dr. Laura Metcalfe, Committee Member

---

12-6-19  
Date

## Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Stephen Wade Baker

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

12-09-2019

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Abstract**

This study sought to explore undergraduate and faculty perceptions about on-campus counseling services. On-campus counseling services for clarification purposes, could be understood as a behavioral health service used by undergraduate students to discuss and address identified personal issues during a semester-based academic school year. The data was collected via a written response survey and it was administered at a private Midwestern university throughout the spring, summer, and fall traditional undergraduate semesters of 2018. The study looked to understand students' perceptions on the overall need and functionality of the current counseling services promoted at their university. Furthermore, faculty interviews were conducted to collect data on perceptions about the overall need and functionality of counseling services. The research focused on the concern that both student and faculty perceptions can be representative of how counseling services are promoted and utilized on a university campus. The qualitative research instruments used for the study included a 10-question, written response survey for students to complete in a controlled classroom setting; and a five-question interview administered to faculty members. The researcher included both open-ended survey and interview instrumentation to have two forms of qualitative measurement within the study focusing on the similarities of participant responses from different data-measurements. Data responses were then separated into primary, secondary and shared responses for classification purposes. Primary responses were defined as student and faculty responses, which addressed the research questions directly. Secondary responses were answers that added value to the study but did not directly address the content of the research questions. The secondary responses helped to generate additional awareness of concerns by both

faculty and students, but were not a focus of the initial research questions. The shared responses were recurrent answers that both faculty and students reported in their answers. Results of the study showed a growing need for on-campus behavioral health services and they were accessible, however, participants did not know where counseling services could be located on campus, despite a highly visible campus awareness campaign. The study's further results (location, qualifications, and counselor's role) indicated that a joint approach of counseling awareness initiatives (online campus self-referrals, tv-monitor advertising) in collaboration with yearly data collection (student behavioral health concerns, faculty input on services offered) could allow for students and faculty to have a more in-depth understanding of on-campus counseling services and accessibility of counseling-services offered. With a greater understanding of both faculty and students, each group would be able to determine if applicable referrals should be made on behalf of students in addition to having instantaneous knowledge of what counseling services are best used for when in need.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Universities and colleges are tasked with the demand to address student behavioral health needs during the academic school year (Parcover, Mays, & McCarthy, 2015). With data indicating that close to 90% of counseling centers are reporting increased demands for services from their students (Parcover et al., 2015) it is pertinent to understand how students feel about the usefulness and need for counseling services. The researcher outlined in this dissertation how student and faculty perceptions about the availability of on-campus counseling services could provide new insight for academic administrators who attempt to make services more accessible. Data generated from each college semester indicated there was needed counseling services which would allow for college administrations to create and promote specific services to students with needs. Additionally, undergraduate students depicted concerns in how to access counseling services they reported as being important for their college to have. The research looked for and called attention to how faculty and students perceived counseling services in its application, functionality and promotion, at a private Midwestern university. The research aimed to specify how undergraduate students and actively employed faculty members of the study university viewed the relevance and overall purpose of counseling services on campus and how its importance could lead to the ability for the students to receive counseling services more routinely while they attend college courses.

Behavioral health on post-secondary campuses is a not a new topic in educational research (Center for Collegiate Mental Health, 2016). This topic is of importance, is in need of review, and will be expanded upon to include student and faculty concerns. Additional research focusing on the new challenges within this unique sub-category of

student-service could help administrators provide better services for students seeking counseling services. With the continuing need to promote student engagement with behavioral health services, it is important to identify flaws within educational administrative systems that deter undergraduate students from receiving counseling services (Iarussi & Shaw, 2016). This study explored both college faculty and students' perspectives on the importance, functionality, and availability of on-campus counseling services.

### **Background of the Study**

Today's college students have been reporting the increment of emotional concerns during the course of an academic college year to include interpersonal relationship difficulties, anxiety, depression, and stress (Conley, Shapiro, Kirsch, & Durlak, 2017). College students have reported to their counselors as being more aware of their behavioral health needs while attending college and as a result are attending counseling services more often than in previous years (Koltz, Smith, Tarabochia, & Wathen, 2017). With the shift of college attendance focusing on millennial students or today's students, college counselors are making more efforts to assist this increasing college demographic (Koltz et al., 2017). According to Locke, Wallace, and Brunner (2016), millennial generation college student counseling needs may be vastly different than prior generation's identified counseling needs. Today's millennial students are well aware of what concerns they identify as challenging, which have been reported as having symptoms associated with a depressive disorder, symptoms associated with an anxiety disorder, personal motivation, understanding personal limitations, over-achievement, diversity, entitlement awareness and identity concerns (Sharp & Theiler, 2018). It

should be notated that millennial students are generally students who have been born between 1980 and 2004 (Emeagwali, 2011).

Another challenging issue for administrators is that current counseling services provided to students are of a preventative and reactionary paradigm of student care (Iausti & Shaw, 2014). This format of student care derived from the military and medical form of crisis assessment known as a triage assessment. The triage form of assessment has proved effective in allowing for the administrators of this format, to have the students receive counseling or mental health services with that university or with another provider. Success with the triage system empirically points to the model's ability to address high need and heightened student behavioral concerns, i.e. at-risk students (Iarussi & Shaw, 2014). Short-term models of counseling incorporating triage models of need assessment and counseling referral are effective at affirming a student's needs (Hardy, Weatherford, Locke, DePalma, & D'Iuso, 2011). With the triage method, not only are student's initial crisis concerns addressed, but college counselors are allowed to focus on brief counseling methods reducing the potential wait-time for services (Hardy et al., 2011). It should be noted that the two primary student needs for counseling services are reported as being depression and anxiety (Locke et al., 2016). Moreover, the annual College Center for Mental Health (CCMH) reported an increase from one in five students to one in four students saying they have an identified mental health issue. With this record number of high school graduates attending college, 67% as of 2017 (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2019) administrative channels are challenged to continue to develop on-campus counseling programs to meet the increasing need for services.

**Rationale of the Study**

Behavioral counseling for students is currently an underserved issue on college campuses, which makes it a trending research topic according to Marsh and Wilcoxin (2013). Lack of behavioral counseling availability could be primarily due to the fluctuating fiscal budgets of college and universities in combination with the increasing need to address students' behavioral health needs (Marsh & Wilcoxin, 2013). With the limited availability of counseling services, the challenge is increasing for administrative and faculty personnel to appropriately assess what a student's counseling needs may be when students request information about such services (Shaw, Remley, & Ward, 2012). The important differences between the assessment of student needs by a trained counseling professional and a quick questioning-format designed and formulated by a student's academic advisor is a concern for administrators (Blau et al., 2015). Additionally, it has been reported that increased wait-times can lead to stigmatizing views on behalf of the student towards their college of attendance (Blau et al., 2015). Lucas (2012) pointed out that student and university faculty beliefs about available counseling resources, whether negative or positive, could be the result of budgetary constraints on behalf of the college or university to provide students with exact counseling support or off-campus counseling resources.

As universities struggle to manage the increase in student counseling needs, most are unable to fulfill this concern due to faculty constraints (Locke et al., 2016). Due to the increase in need for student counseling services, it is easy to empathize with counselors struggling to fulfill the service requirement with the limited resources that they may have. According to Shelesky, Weathford, and Silbert (2016) there are three



models of case management that colleges currently utilize to address the increased need for counseling. The three models of care proposed are the administrative model, the behavioral intervention/threat assessment team model, and the counseling center model. With the administrative model, resources are provided to students, collaboration with other academic departments, and discussions are potentially had between administrative channels to help link the student in need with counseling services. The behavioral intervention/threat assessment team model assists students in determining what actions they need to immediately take to receive counseling services and is best suited for students experiencing a crisis. The counseling center model is the model most commonly used at universities and colleges which focuses on the initial assessment, treatment planning, counseling services facilitated and referral placement if necessary, for the students who receive counseling services (Shelesky et al., 2016).

If current data is indicative of future trends, there will be a growing need for readily available counseling services provided by well-trained professionals on all college-campuses during all hours of university operations (Meilman, 2016). The ability for colleges and universities to build and sustain a successful awareness of their college services is dependent upon the colleges' and universities' faculty and faculty beliefs and commitment to the viability of their institution's counseling services (Blau, DiMino, DeMaria, Beverly, & Chessler, 2016). If inadequate awareness of both student and faculty alike continues from inaction or disinterest, inaccessibility to counseling services will continue to be a prominent concern (Meilman, 2016).

The benefits of this study looked to bring a new awareness of student and faculty perceptions about university counseling services. Student perceptions about counseling

services may lead to improved college or university administrative decisions to assist higher education administrators to better understand how undergraduate student perceptions can lead to useful administrative decisions. Faculty perceptions may lead to an increase in innovative and promotionally aggressive, counseling awareness campaigns, which increase service visibility. Table 1 displays the participants for the study.

Table 1

*Participant Listing*

| Participants                      | Demographics  | Sample Size |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------|
| University Faculty                | Teaching Faculty, Administrator in Supervisory Role, Vice President, Director | $n = 4$     |
| University Undergraduate Students | Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors.                                       | $n = 20$    |

**Instruments and Study Protocol**

The participant total of the research study was 24; 20 of the participants were undergraduate students and four of the participants were employed faculty members of the university. Identities of participants have been protected to ensure confidentiality purposes, and all of the participants were made aware of the effort to protect their identities prior to administration of the surveys or interviews. All participants involved with the study were provided a brief overview of the study to help assist with any preliminary concerns they may have regarding the study's focus. All the participants

involved with the study were provided with an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved consent form, which addressed any potential risks that were associated with the study's focus or reporting of findings. The instruments used for the study were two sets of qualitative questions. Both sets of questions were developed in an open-ended, response format, which helped to reduce error of reporting to promote consistency and quality of response. To promote an awareness of the study, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved flyers and emails were distributed to academic departments highlighting the study's focus. To additionally promote awareness of the study, a professionally designed poster board identical to flyers was placed outside surveying locations. The professionally designed poster board was also approved by the university's Institutional Review Board.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for the study were inspired by a study conducted by Blau et al. (2015), which highlighted the concern that 26% of undergraduate students reported they were attending counseling services on college campuses due to depression and 40% of undergraduate students were attending college counseling services due to anxiety (Blau et al., 2015). The study addressed the impact that a referral system utilized by a college will not necessarily have on undergraduate students choosing to receive counseling services. The research conducted by Blau et al. (2015), was unique in that it identified symptoms, student populations, and barriers to receiving treatment. The researcher wanted to explore students' and employed faculty's perceptions on counseling services to include, access of services, understanding of services and promotion of services to better discern if any of these factors were preventing the student's from

utilizing the services on campus. The research questions focused on what faculty and students perceived as important issues involving the overall functionality of their university's counseling program.

**Research Question 1:** What are students' perceptions of counseling services?

**Research Question 2:** What are faculty perceptions of counseling services?

**Research Question 3:** What qualifications should a university counselor have from a student and faculty perspective?

**Research Question 4:** What is a counselor's role from a student and faculty perspective?

**Research Question 5:** What stereotypes, if any, are associated with students who receive counseling services?

**Research Question 6:** What does the researched data collected show about the perceived availability of counseling services on campus?

**Research Question 7:** What is the need for counseling services, and is this need met by the university?

**Definition of Terms:**

**Counseling:** "Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals" (Field, 2017, p. 368).

**Counseling Services:** According to the study university website, the mission of their counseling services "assists students in addressing psychological and adjustment issues (i.e. depression, anxiety and relationships) that can negatively impact academic

performance, retention, graduation rates, and quality of life” (Study university website, n.d., para. 3).

**Empirically Supported Therapies:** “Psychosocial interventions that have been deemed empirically supported in working with clients with specific mental disorders or clinical conditions” (Hatchet, 2017, p. 105).

**Faculty:** for the purposes of this study, faculty are defined as university employees, specifically educators, administrators, vice presidents, and directors.

**Students:** For the purposes of this study, students are defined as university undergraduate freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

### **Summary**

This study evaluated how students and faculty members perceive the usefulness of counseling services on their respective campus and how identified perceptions can affect the ability for the services to be used by student populations in need. The study sought to generate new avenues of thought which could allow for counseling services to become readily accessed and understood from a data derived, promotional perspective. The ability for students and faculty members to verbalize their opinion when the opinion involves the behavioral health needs of their associated college or university is paramount as to how an institution can successfully address issues and concerns of students allowing for the students to have a higher successful attempt at program completion and graduation. Different behavioral health issues facing undergraduate students addressed during the study will include a wide range of student and faculty counseling concerns. The primary focus-points of the study consisted of accessibility of counseling, students and faculty’s pre-existing knowledge of counseling practice, barriers to counseling,

stigma surrounding counseling services, reported behavioral health symptoms, and the perception of diversity.

## Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The researcher looked to gain a functional understanding of how university and college student populations and faculty members viewed the importance of counseling services on their associated institution's campus. The researcher determined that as an initial focus of the study, a review of literature allowed for a conceptualization of the counseling professional in higher education which focused on the evolution of the art of counseling as well as how its etiology came into modern practice within the university structure. The review of the literature presented by the researcher served to highlight how the field of college counseling came into prominence and how the field is continuing to change in its current academic climate. Additionally, the literature reviewed attempted to notate newer trends and avenues of current administrative efforts, which helps to increase the viability of the college counseling profession.

Throughout the literature review, the researcher was able to locate the following literature topics: Rise of Behavioral Health Challenges in Higher Education, Student Counseling Concerns, Initial Counseling Data Resources, First Generation College Students, On-Campus Counseling Referral, Students as Clients, Evidenced Based Strategies. The researcher focused on the need, importance, uniqueness and practice of the profession, highlighting areas of clinical counseling practice that have shown to increase the ability for the profession to be successful at some universities and colleges while addressing areas of potential improvement. Research was conducted using the journal database EBSCOHost and major academic journals used for the literature review to include: *The American Psychological Association*, *New Directions for Student Services*, *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *Journal of Multicultural Counseling*,

*Best Practices in Mental Health, Frontiers in Psychology, College Student Journal, International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, Journal of College Counseling Rehabilitation Psychology, Journal of Counseling Psychology, Journal of Counseling Preparation and Supervision, and the Journal of Student Psychotherapy.* Furthermore, articles were reviewed online and compared to a rubric of publication date within five years, with a focus on counseling services in higher education, student engagement in counseling services, student responses to counseling services, reported mental health symptoms routinely being reported by students, and diversity concerns being reported by students.

Additional data pertaining to students and faculty perceptions involving college counseling was discovered through the review of the academic resources: University Business, and the Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH) annual reports of 2016 and 2017. The literature review highlighted students and college faculty awareness of reported student issues involving mental health as well as the issues related to multiple aspects of student's lifestyles and concerns with acclimation to college life. The study and the literature review addressed the gap in the research in that students and faculty perceptions on the functionality and accessibility of on-campus counseling services are not being addressed in an effective or routine manner by colleges and universities. Furthermore, the study addressed the gap in the research, in that generated student and faculty data on counseling services could help in the effective promotion of counseling services on college campuses highlighting reported counseling needs by students and faculty members.



**Rise of Behavioral Health Challenges in Higher Education**

In 1861, Amherst College set up the first student support center, known at the time of professional practice, as a student-health service center. The goal during the creation of the center was to help address the behavioral issues of enrolled students (Clauss-Ehlers & Parham, 2014). In 1901, The University of California, Berkley developed and later offered the first comprehensive health service for students to include mental health screenings, counseling services, and any potential medication needs (Clauss-Ehlers & Parham, 2014). In 1911 and following the University of Berkley Health Service successful initiation, there seemed to be a transformative period of college behavioral health, which would coincide with the birth of modern psychiatry. According to Clauss-Ehlers and Parham (2014), Princeton University would eventually become the first college to place into practice, the first mental health service for students, leading the way for more universities and colleges to follow the important model of student care. The health services at this period of transformational practice did not necessarily expand further than having a licensed psychiatrist at the time provide a diagnosis on a college student showing behavioral concerns (Clauss-Ehlers & Parham, 2014). The diagnosis at the time of rendering, would in-turn, lead to the suspension or expulsion of the student(s) who was identified as impaired from a behavioral perspective.

Modern psychiatry during the early 20th century, focused on impaired behavior as being irrational and inconsistent with societal norms as well as in non-alignment with college hygienic standards (Clauss-Ehlers & Parham, 2014). The primary focus of treatment at that period in college behavioral health history was to separate the suspected impaired student from the suspected well-functioning students, as the behavior was

potentially contagious. According to Clauss-Ehlers and Parham (2014), the standard treatment approach used by the college's faculty psychiatrists was to place the students with questionable behavioral health concerns in a mental health facility, separate from the general student population. Following the successful discharge of the student from the relegated facilitated stay, the ability for the student to return to their previously attended college was not a guarantee and dependent upon the college's decision to allow for the re-admittance of the student to continue in their course of study (Clauss-Ehlers & Parham, 2014).

### **Student Counseling Concerns**

In the 2018 National College Health Assessment of Students organized and conducted by the American College Health Association (ACHA, 2018), 53.4% of students surveyed reported feeling that things were hopeless, 41.9% reported feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function during the past 12 months, and 63.4% of the college students surveyed reported feeling anxious. Additionally, 62.8% percent of the participating college students reported feeling very lonely, and 68.7% of the college students enrolled in the survey felt they were very sad. The 2018 ACHA survey also noted 12.1% of students had seriously considered suicide, and 1.7 % had attempted suicide (American Psychological Association, 2019, p. 14).

Additionally, Marsh and Wilcoxin (2015) reported traditional college enrollment increased by 11% from 2001 to 2011. Marsh and Wilcoxin (2015) suggested that with the increased enrollment of college students, there is also the potential for an increased prevalence of behavioral health issues. Marsh and Wilcoxin (2015) estimated that 30 to 45% of traditional college students experience mental health concerns of some form, a

belief that is now prevalent within modern student demographics. With this reported data, one implication to consider is the administrative role and duties of college personnel. The role of college administrators can become confusing, as much of the skillset revolves around the ability to refer the service of mental health counseling to outside sources. Additionally, the data also points to the inability of an academic support faculty to supply a required counseling or behavioral health service at a time of reported need (Marsh & Wilcoxin, 2015).

With the increasing challenge of effectively providing counseling services to a rapidly changing college student population, the ability for the profession to continue to stretch its focus and ability to reach different populations of individuals in need can be met with significant barriers. In some instances, graduate degree-seeking counselor trainees have never attended counseling services and have a limited understanding of what the profession entails on a first introductory basis (Drew, Stauffer, & Barkley, 2017). Drew et al.'s (2017) study addressed that students who never attended counseling sessions reported that receiving such services personally impacted them negatively as they were unprepared for what the counseling relationship between client and counselor entailed. Drew et al. (2017) discovered that many of the students, although competent in their understanding of different theories of counseling, had a limited need or desire to take part in the experience themselves. Additionally, the authors concluded the counselor trainees who saw no reason to take part in counseling services had a limited insight as to the value counseling services could provide.

The knowledge that on-campus counseling is a growing profession and a much-needed service for college students, poses unique challenges for universities and colleges

in meeting the need for services. In some instances, college counselor trainees can even have confusing feelings about the counseling profession while even in routine and consistent practice (Wyatt & Oswalt, 2013). With more attention given to behavioral-health counseling on college campuses, counselors must be prepared to decide what their own competency levels are when aiding diverse student populations (Koltz et al., 2017). With the focus on promoting awareness of the accessibility of college behavioral health services, there is concern that colleges and universities may be losing focus on what a student perceives as the primary importance of counseling (Walther, Abelson, & Malmon, 2014). This is a concern college administrative bodies must take into consideration (Wyatt & Oswalt, 2013) and bring into focus the concern that universities need to develop a standard student-needs measurement.

Howard (2015) evaluated the concern that students face increasing stress and unknown pressures of college life, which can lead to behaviors such as social isolation, irritable moods, and threatening behavior. Building upon the understanding of Howard (2015), this complex population requires a form of counseling care that needs risk-evaluation and preventative measures. Furthermore, Luca et al. (2016) explored how student suicidal ideation and student behavioral health could directly affect a student's ability to maintain their academic performance and eligibility to remain in college courses. The research conducted by the authors reported that students whom reported with suicidal ideation over a 12-month period had a lower grade point average than the students that reported not having suicidal ideation over a twelve-month period.

Furthermore, Luca et al. (2016) concluded:

To improve students' success, higher education must continue to improve student

engagement and connectedness, counseling and mental health resources. These priorities not only aid in students' mental health recovery, but also have the potential to improve students' GPA and 4-year graduation rates. Creating campus integrated health care systems may offer an upstream prevention approach to address the needs of students who may also enter college with co-morbid behavioral health conditions. (p. 540)

Building upon this identified issues, Goodwin (2016) reported evaluating the level of threat a student is experiencing, is direly important for any practitioner as it allows what form of behavioral health, administrative, and legal intervention to allow for that client to succeed in their higher academic studies. Goodwin (2016) allowed for college administrators and counselors alike to be able to prepare themselves for heightened behavioral health issues that may be affecting students collectively. Wyatt and Oswalt (2013) also called attention to the importance of recognizing reportable mental health concerns within the higher education arena as mentioned in their research. Directors involved with mental health services for college students stated that a reported 37.4% of students who seek counseling services have severe psychological problems (Wyatt & Oswalt, 2013). Wyatt and Oswalt (2013) reported 5.9% of the students in the study reported the perceived distress of the psychological problem is enough to prevent them from remaining in school. Additionally, Wyatt and Oswalt (2013) reported the following concern.

Elevated levels of psychological distress are also significantly related to academic performance, with higher levels of distress associated with increased text anxiety, lower academic self-efficacy, less effective

The example of the intricacy about misuse and advancement of modern digital awareness could advance the argument and need to understand the importance of student and faculty perceptions. The advent of smart phone technology has not only produced and promoted more accessibility in life's day-to-day operations, but also led to now classified mental health diagnosable conditions. From a behavioral health standpoint, students who experience low self-esteem may be depressed, and that the depression can lead to loneliness (Varghese & Pistole, 2017). Combine the depression and loneliness with instances of cyberbullying and students are challenged with having a modern-day concern(s) in the counseling setting.

Primarily, research has depicted that students who perceive their ability to engage in counseling services, have the ability to focus more intently on their higher education course of study in addition to being able to bring the concerns of their behavioral health to the arena of student care and mental health (Schwartz, 2017). With the growing need for accessible counseling services, many college universities are beginning to model their services off triage systems and community mental health service organizations (Shaffer et al., 2017) to help support the higher need of mental counseling services reported by students, faculty and faculty alike. The triage system allows for a trained mental health provider to facilitate a brief assessment determining what behavioral health services the client may need prior to enrolling a client in counseling services (Shaffer et al., 2017). This form of immediate assessment decreases wait time in linking services and allows for clients to establish services without needing a scheduled appointment. With many students depicting that there is a perceived increase in competition, anxiety and depression, more universities are trying to equip and

effectively help their student populations with more counseling services to address their behavioral health needs than in in years past (Bhujade, 2017). This new focus and clinical re-direction to allow for students and faculty to recognize across academic departments that there is a need for not only more data on newer challenges facing students and faculty alike, but also to understand how to implement new programs to assist the students with skills to help address their behavioral health concerns (White-Gaughf, Smith, & Williams, 2013).

In a study conducted by Giamos, Young Soo Lee, Suleiman, Stuart, and Shu-Ping Chen (2017), the focus of trying to understand campus culture and the ability for students to cope with their mental health concerns was evaluated between five Canadian colleges. The study found the following results:

The lack of awareness surrounding mental illness has called for an increase in mental health services initiatives to correct negative feelings of mental illness and, more importantly, to provide services to treat mental illness. It is well established that universities are not ignorant of mental health problems among their students, and many student associations execute a variety of projects to promote mental health on campus. However, according to our findings in this project, resources are still insufficient, whether the resources in question are financial (lack of funds to invest in projects) or human (lack of counsellors or psychologists). While available services exist, they are not promoting efficiently and openly, and accessibility to these services is are limited. For example, participants mentioned that campus mental health services supply few compatible timeslots or have long wait lists. The stigma attached to mental illness, and even to mental stress, is to

blame for the dearth of attention this problem receives on campuses. (Giamos et al., 2017, p. 130)

The first decade of the 21st century called into focus the need for increased student care services, specifically attuned to the now more identifiable mental health needs of university, college students (Spenciner-Rosenthal & Wilson, 2016). Given there is now a general understanding that many student's do in-fact recognize that they are experiencing negative emotions and/or diagnosable conditions; the concern of availability and or functionality now comes more into administrative focus.

If the first decade of the 21st century, evaluated what student's behavioral needs are, the second decade was more attuned to helping student services develop to those behavioral needs. One aspect that has improved is increased faculty awareness amidst the inability of students to access or formulate their opinions on seeking out their identified counseling needs (Bhujade, 2017). If administrators assist more with providing students with the ability to seek counseling services then those students can conceptualize their potential for academic success (Protivnak & Yensel, 2017). The same students have a more measurable means to thrive in their higher educational endeavors, but also those students might one day be able to contribute to the field of professional counseling, in addition to even someday becoming a college-based, behavioral health counselor (Protivnak & Yensel, 2017).

Students may perceive themselves as accepting of diverse cultures by attending ethnic festivals or having close friends from diverse cultures. Counseling educators may notice students making generalities or grouping diverse cultures together rather than examining their assumptions, reactions, and biases. As a result, counseling students may



not notice or address differences in others and may neglect to seek understanding of why the clients chose to find themselves as they do. Concurrently, students may fail to address dynamics between themselves and their clients (Koltz et al., 2017, p. 13). Furthermore, if counselors and administrators do not readily address the changes of the students from new evidenced-based strategies or fail to contribute to the awareness of the student's perceptions regarding counseling services, then that student's ability to thrive within the higher academic arena could and may be affected in a negative manner (Koltz et al., 2017). The research reviewed calls into clinical focus an accepted understanding of the necessity to have available behavioral health resources as perceptibly viewed by college faculty, faculty, and students as a proactive approach is not enough in understanding student's diversity needs. Without a concrete awareness of student's perceptions, those student's feelings about the need for counseling services will continue to be misunderstood from an administrative perspective. With all evidence in applicable and current research pointing to the concern there is this current status quo of student's receiving counseling services, with no real organization or awareness of their needs, one could conclude that current trends with behavioral health counseling is

The study conducted by Blau et al. (2015), showed student needs are complex and can span over a multitude of mental-health specialties. The same study reported the following data, 102 undergraduate students enrolled in the study allowed for counselling services and initial triage service screenings were to occur as part of the study. The study's facilitated counselling services showed, that students reported the following areas of concern: When asked what reason brought the students into counselling, 40% of the students reported that anxiety was the primary reason; 26% reported that depression was

the primary reason for sought counselling services. The research findings are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

*Blau et al. (2015) Research Findings*

| Undergraduate Students | Percent        |
|------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Anxiety</b>         | <i>n = 40%</i> |
| <b>Depression</b>      | <i>n = 26%</i> |

Other issues of major mental health concern appeared inadequately addressed in the data collection as there was no mention of advanced mental health issues. Advanced mental health issues as an example could include, schizophrenia, personality disorders, substance abuse issues and severe mood disorders. Students were asked what reasons there were for referrals to counselling services in addition to asked how the students rated the importance of such referrals. Students showed that with the answers provided, such referral sources as significant other, administrative recommendation, doctor recommendation and or faculty recommendation as being important in the decision making of receiving the provided counseling services. A student's belief on counseling could be a product of their cultural values or individual identity (Ashby, Collins, Helms, & Manlove, 2018). In the research completed by Ashby et al. (2018), it was noticed that when colleges and universities engaged their students in discussions about diversity, then more productive dialogue and reduction of aggressive behavior was evidenced (Ashby et al., 2018). The need to feel accepted and understood from a clinical perspective has issues (Blau et al., 2015). More importantly, universities and colleges alike are setting up institutional awareness with diversity which allows for their respective schools to create new research and ethical administrative practice (Clauss-Ehlers & Parham, 2014).

The issues with diversity translate into proper counseling practices on college campuses. The research developed by Clauss-Ehlers and Parham (2014) made the point, that there needs to be more of a national awareness on the implications of diversity on college counseling, and there is still a growing need for applicable in-depth training as it relates to physical practice. “It is important to note that increased diversity on universities and colleges nationwide does not necessary translate to increased harmony and less discordant interactions within and across faculty, students, and faculty” (Clauss-Ehlers & Parham, 2014, p. 70). Taking note of this statement, the need for increased counseling competence is important as it fosters a sense of welcome, understanding of complex student issues, and overall more proper student care. What Clauss-Ehlers and Parham (2014) showed, is that although diversity can pose a challenging task for many academic administrators and student counselors, with a challenging task comes the ability for new advancement in training and counselor awareness. Data showed between the years 1976 and 2005 there was an increase in diverse student populations and during this time-period, an increase of only 7% White men, and an increase of 49% of White women was found in the increases of populations. Additionally, during these years an increase of 62% Black men, 145% increase of Black Women, 275% for Latino men, 530% of Latina Women, 392% for Asian American/Pacific Islander men and 570% for Asian American/Pacific Islander Women, 79% for American Indian/Alaska Native men, 181% for American Indian/Alaska Native women, and 57% for international men and 248% for international women (Clauss-Ehlers & Parham, 2014, p. 71).

This data is reflective of diversity as a relevant issue of American society and American Higher Education. The data offered by Clauss-Ehlers and Parham (2014)

reflects the suggestions detailing better practice for academic counselors. The authors reported that faculty support programs well trained in diversity-counseling competence are imperative as they allow for up-to-date counseling practices that foster a sense of acceptance and identity promotion. Clauss-Ehlers and Parham (2014) also reported having unique partnerships with outside departments in academic leadership allow for faculty-support in counseling initiatives and referral facilitation. The data also showed having a well-rounded focus on demographic data by the school and or university will better equip college counselors with the proper clinical tools. The clinical tools could involve assessment facilitation, effective referral placement, initial diagnosis rendering and productive talk-therapy to help students in working through diversity issues as they relate to student-care and integrative campus counselor training. If universities and or colleges support the ability for faculty members and educators to engage in routine and continuous training that support diversity and unique student identity, then there could be an increase in overall student awareness on diversity counseling. Student engagement in mental health services is dependent on a student's ability to feel connected to, as well as a part of the university to which they attend (Lucas, 2012). If a student can feel as if they are part of the unique culture of their educational institution, there is a sense of personal development that occurs as a part of the progress.

The landscape of mental health services, as it relates to the current social climate, is both interesting and intimidating. Newly identified populations of students have expanded the need for counselors to effectively facilitate diverse-counseling services and require the steady promotion of advanced counseling practice (Turner, Camarillo, Daniel, Otero, & Parker, 2017). Such current issues as identity, diversity, Lesbian, Gay,

Bisexual, Transsexual, Questioning (LGBTQ) support and overall show acculturation are major talking points and means for clinical skill-development for counseling professionals. Turner et al. (2017) concluded out of a population study pool of 248 undergraduate students, that ethnicity and gender do in-fact affect the ability for students to use counseling services. Additionally, the researchers were able to discern that diverse students experience traditional and readily reported behavioral health concerns to include, anxiety, depression, stress, and social stigma (Turner et al., 2017).

McKenzie, Murray, Murray, and Richelieu (2015) called to attention the issue that academic life is becoming more challenging for students concerning reported pressures documented by the students while in counseling sessions. Students depicted as struggling with issues such as high, personal, and unrealistic expectations from their program of study, health concerns and the ongoing problem of students wanting to complete their program of study within a given time period. These issues can lead to failing grades and or behavioral concerns because of unhealthy coping and limited understanding. McKenzie et al. (2017) found that students who seek counseling services are more likely to receive help from those services. McKenzie et al. (2017) additionally made the discussion point that students referred to counseling services because of behavioral concerns or academic concerns are also more likely to receive help from counseling services as it relates to their reported challenge(s).

A concern of administrators and students alike is the personal adjustment into the college environment. The transitioning stage causes students to have academic issues as reported by Devi, Devaki, Madhayan, and Saikumar (2013). The study evaluated how counseling could have an impact on the ability for the college student to succeed at the

academic level. The study looked to determine if there was a relationship between academic performance and counseling. Outcomes of the study showed students who took part in counseling understood its value and the services provided in counseling was a major determining factor in their success in college throughout the process. “The constructive support, which was received from individual counselling seemed to have a positive influence on the academic performance and the number of sessions correlated positively with the academic performance” (Devi et al., 2013, p. 1087). The study outlined counseling can have results on aspects of student life and if students have developed an awareness or belief on counseling prior to receiving the service, then the result may support their willingness to engage in counseling services as well as potentially improve their academic performance.

Marsh and Wilcoxin (2015) understood there could be a relationship between the increase in academic enrollment and the increase with college mental health concerns of traditional campus students. Traditional college students could be understood as students who live on campus and enroll in full-time college course schedules, every 16-week semester. The research, by the referenced authors, discovered issues such as perceived affordability of services, perceived access of services and the student’s ability to understand or accept the services in need, as potential barriers for students who could benefit from this form of assistive care (Marsh & Wilcoxin, 2015).

### **Initial Data Resources**

Recent data reflective of behavioral health trends depicted increased numbers of students are seeking counseling services at rates to which administrators and facilitators of such services are ill-prepared to accommodate (Conley et al., 2017). Furthermore,

Conley et al. (2017) reported that up to 40% of undergraduate students report as having a diagnosable mental health condition (p. 121). Additionally, Conley et al. (2017) reported the following information:

One large national survey of over 95,761 respondents found that over the past year, 36.7% of students reported experiencing levels of depression so severe that it was difficult for them to function. 58.4 % had overwhelming anxiety, and 39.6% had experienced overwhelming anger (American College Health Association [ACHA], 2016, as referenced by Conley et al. 2017). This could be a mark in applicable and current research records of multiple trends, to include student personal acceptance of counseling services (Lockard, Hayes, Neff, & Locke, 2014) or that simply increasingly psychosocial and environmental factors recognized by college students at a more, intrinsic and interpersonal level. (p. 1087)

The research initially depicted that within the higher education arena, there are unique and assessment-determinable environmental as well as social factors involving this unique sub-population which may be contributing to extreme feelings of stress, anxiety, depression, diversity and identity-concerns (Biasi, Cerutti, Mallia, Menozzi, & Violani, 2017). The traditional undergraduate student who attends undergraduate studies in the second decade of the 21st century has been identified as having rapidly changing academic and interpersonal needs (Hartley, 2012). This newer demographic of traditional, undergraduate student is being identified as noticeably different in their personal academic high expectation-setting, their view on traditional western-societal

viewpoints, their commitment to diversity acceptance and their high-adaptability to the consistently changing and advancing digital world (Koltz et al., 2017).

The newer traditional student is depicted as being motivated, over-achieving, receptive to different viewpoints and self-descriptive with their mental-health needs (Koltz et al., 2017). These students are viewed as more of challenging student demographic by researchers and college administrators to assist in counseling setting than the traditional undergraduate student who attended undergraduate studies in the early 2000's as the reported increase in behavioral health conditions is rising (Shaffer et al., 2017). The students are depicted as being more challenging as they are more aware of their mental-health needs, their desire to want to succeed and their perceived barriers to wanting to succeed in their academic program of study (Shaffer et al., 2017).

Spenciner-Rosenthal and Wilson (2016) reported little research on the use of mental health counseling at the beginning of the 21st century is comprehensive. The authors move forward with the implication that the reasoning for this service was due to the limited understanding and reasoning of the perceived student need for this form of service. Spenciner-Rosenthal and Wilson (2016), at the time of the research, discovered that around 13% of undergraduate students that they surveyed, reported low levels of mental health counseling service usages (p. 195). Additionally, the authors addressed the concern that although only 13% of the students reported that the usage of the counseling service had occurred, 50 to 75% students enrolled in university studies reported elevated levels of anxiety and depression (Spenciner-Rosenthal & Wilson,

The results of the study conducted by Spenciner-Rosenthal and Wilson (2016) reflected the primary data findings, with 847, 18-year-old and 19-year-old first year



college students, who were enrolled at an identified public and urban college. Spenciner-Rosenthal and Wilson determined 87% of the participants involved in the study reported there was no use of counseling services during the past six months of the time they were enrolled in college studies (p. 195). Ten percent of the surveyed students reported there had been in fact a visit to a counselor between one or three times; 3% of the participants reported that they had seen a counselor more than three times during the last six months of their currently enrolled semester of studies (Spenciner-Rosenthal & Wilson, 2016, p. 195). Additionally, the authors discovered individuals who had reported higher levels of distress symptoms during their attendance in college courses were, in fact more likely to have visited a counselor in the past 6 months. The authors were able to identify that of the participants, 28% of the students seeking support who did attend counseling services within the past 6 months did present with clinically, significant symptoms. The authors additionally found that 17% of the counseling clients reported moderate clinical symptoms and that 1% of the student clients who identified as having minimal or no identified symptoms had also, seen a counselor (Spenciner-Rosenthal & Wilson, 2016, p. 195).

Understanding the value of student beliefs aids administrators with conducting routine policy updates (Kopta et al., 2014). These policy updates best attuned to help students with the ability to seek and attend counseling services should they identify as possessing clinical symptoms of some measurable variation. Kopta et al. (2014) was able to determine using instruments which measure how a student is progressing in their behavioral health treatment could lead to significant success in that student addressing their areas of concern. Student behavioral health management and student mental

health management is the ability for a student to manage their emotional health effectively throughout the duration of their college experience. The term “clinical” refers to administration of professional counseling services delivered in a safe and controlled environment. The concern of helping international students effectively and appropriately is more a facet of academic counseling versus a need to systematically adapt or adjust to (Perron, Tollerud, & Teresa, 2016). The more readily trained, as well as accepting of unique difference and awareness of culture concerns a counselor is, the more effective they will be in being able to recognize a student’s reported perception on counseling services.

Behavioral health symptoms could be considered a barrier to a student receiving counseling services on college campuses. Furthermore, behavioral health symptoms are becoming more identifiable to practitioners and students alike during traditional college semesters. More importantly, the awareness and feelings of how the symptoms affect a student’s ability to successfully complete their college course of study is imperative as to how a student and counselor perceive counseling practices on a college campus. Locke et al. (2016) pointed to the following statistics involving current trends with student-identified behavioral health symptoms. It was found 51% of students involved in the study felt overwhelming anxiety, 44.8% felt as if things in their personal life or challenging situations they were facing were helpless, 36.3% disclosed that they felt overwhelming anger; 31.1% of student felt as if they were so depressed, it was difficult for them to function; 7.4% reported they had seriously considered suicide; 6.0% of the student’s studied reported they had intentionally cut, burned, bruised or otherwise injured themselves. Finally, 9.25% of the student’s involved in Locke et al.’s (2016) study felt as

if they were in an emotionally abusive, intimate relationship. The focus the Locke et al.'s (2016) study was rooted in the conceptualization that a university and its availability of counseling center(s) must essentially join in partnerships with other administrative and faculty offices to help address the reported concerns of reported student symptoms of impairment. Locke et al. (2016) reported:

Effective counseling centers must also join with campus partners to advance mental health initiatives at the level of the institution's strategic plan. Strategies that support resilience, build mental health gatekeeper skills, promote help-seeking, and develop overall well-being can be infused into existing campus classes, learning communities, student organizations, and leadership structures. The leadership of the counseling center, coupled with the skills of involved campus partners, can find and remove impediments to mental health while strengthening efforts of supporting student success and well-being. In this context, a comprehensive counseling center is much more than a mental health clinic; it is engaged in partnerships with students, faculty, and faculty across the institution to advance mental health throughout the campus environment. (p. 27)

More students with reported disabilities are also attending college and universities at higher rates than previously documented (Coduti, Hayes, Locke, & Young, 2016) as showed by student reporting and student identification of having disabilities. Coduti et al. (2016) reported the following:

Among college students with disabilities, the most common types of disabilities are specific learning disabilities (31%), attention deficit disorder or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (18%), psychiatric or psychological conditions

(15%), and health impairments, including chronic illness (11%). Les frequent disabilities include mobility limitations and orthopedic impairments (7%); and traumatic brain injuries (2%). (p. 288)

With more readily identifiable concerns and conditions expressed by college students regarding unique disabilities, counselors are faced with not only understanding what the reported specific conditions are, how the conditions effect the ability for the student to engage in the counseling environment and social-learning atmosphere, but also how the specific disabilities may affect the student's needs and perceptions regarding counseling services offered through or outsourced by the college campus to which they attend.

### **First Generation College Students**

First generation college students are attending college in more rapid and increasing numbers adding to the complexity and uniqueness of the college culture. Research shows that first generation college students report a higher level of distress and a lower use of counseling and or psychological services on their campuses (Garriot, Raque-Bogdan, Yalango, Schaefer-Ziemer, & Utley, 2017). First generation college students are concerned with not only the adjustment concerns to a new academic environment but are also reported as feeling more pressured to have to succeed because of their ability to attend college (Garriot et al., 2017). The concern with stigma and not fitting in is a concern by this increasing population of college students. Understanding the beliefs that first generation have about behavioral health concerns and behavioral health resources is imperative in allowing for counselors to formulate a treatment plan or facilitate counseling services, should the need arise.

Further debate could call to attention a traditional undergraduate student who is entering into their first college year of study and who is concerned with understanding their own sensitivities and perceived academic goals and or adjustment issues (Tirpak & Schlosser, 2015). Compound the issue with understanding new dynamics of educational study, the complexities of new stressors and the development of a new academic and social identity; students who may come into a new college atmosphere feel isolated and unable to discuss their concerns with a behavioral health counselor (Tirpak & Schlosser, 2015). Looking at this unique first year student population, Tirpak and Schlosser (2015) were able to determine during a study they completed that first-year students who lack a basic self-confidence in the ability for them to actually complete their studies and career tasks associated with their academic degrees of pursuit. First generation college students also lack confidence in the ability to engage in the use of positive coping skills to help them face new life challenges (Tirpak & Schlosser, 2015). Rice et al., (2017) in a study they conducted, reported,

First-generation students with limited experiences interacting with peers from different backgrounds might be helped to connect socially with other first-generation students who may share values and experiences. Such students might also be encouraged to connect with students from different backgrounds, as this may enhance their understanding of class issues, and facilitate their connection with college as a whole. Promoting points of commonality among students from different backgrounds might be beneficial in some cases. To achieve some of these goals, college counselors might facilitate cross-cultural dialogues in many

forms (e.g. university counseling center groups, student organizations, coursework. (Rice et al., 2017, p. 435)

This is another area of focus for higher education administration in that of aiding non-traditional undergraduate students into the environment of the four-year college environment. The ability for a student to re-engage in the academic community through non-traditional routes, such a community college or part-time college enrollment is an area of importance that four-year colleges and universities would be best to address as part of their academic-retention model (Tirpak & Schlosser, 2015). Counseling if implemented appropriately at this transitioning period for non-traditional students, could also serve to help improve and sustain a facility's retention numbers.

### **On-Campus Counseling Referral**

Colleges and universities will casually implement the resource of counseling services into orientation courses and into other general areas of the campus to supply more of a substantial awareness of the services. The concern is that many schools are challenged with walking a fine line between acknowledging their student's behavioral health needs while at the same time, being mindful and aware of their student's needs in a way that does not assume the student will attend the counseling service if promoted in a more visual and attainable manner. The field of counseling is a private affair in a sense and due to this, the privacy of the student's and their needs must address in a way that advertising the service of counseling may impair if not intended to do so. The general thought of practice is that improperly diagnosed and mishandled student needs and concerns, if not recognized and treated could lead to potential harmful circumstances

Hawley et al., (2016). This is an unclear trend and non-definitive in scope of practice as the model of student care is running on assumption

Counseling is a form of service, and it is the service that helps the student who are clients, come to an individual understanding about the practice as whole in addition to guiding the student in allowing for future beliefs to become developed. Schwartz (2013) spoke to the importance of higher educational administrators and the later importance of their role in helping college students understand the importance of university support. The researcher said that the role of the higher education administrator can stretch beyond that of administrative duties when involving the care of their student body. The intricacies that lie with academic counselors exist somewhere in between the general framework and theory-based concepts outlined in psychology, social work, and counseling (Schwartz, 2013). This is due to college mental health being its own subsection of counseling. Schwartz (2013) believed that due to the financial constraints that many colleges and universities experience with their restrictive budgets; academic counseling is unable to sustain a definitive model of student care and or professional practice. Schwartz (2013) continued to make the argument that students are unable to receive a definitive model of client care because there has not been enough development brought into this specific area of counseling practice. Schwartz (2013) further postulated that because the academic counselor feels as if they are an isolated group of professionals without a complete financial backing from their university or college; there can be a development of poor personal self-efficacy. The viewpoint brought into focus the issue that students need in-depth and client-centred, case-management services. The level of care allows the student to be both appreciated from a counseling perspective and from a

client perspective. The stigma associated with counseling revolves around the student being able to find core issues that may be causing personal impairment (Blau et al., 2019). Additionally, students who may attend counseling services may be afraid to address their concerns with a counselor who is associated with their institution of higher learning (Blau et al., 2019). Due to this concern, it may be important for university faculty members to engage in newer and innovative counseling practices that in their essence support confidentiality and proper student care (Oppawsky, 2016). Online counseling is becoming more prevalent in modern behavioral health treatment; however, this form of counseling does not build upon the personable-connection of in-person counseling facilitation (Oppawsky, 2016). Additionally, evaluating the purpose of online counseling services as researched by Oppawsky (2016) depicted that barriers between older generations of students and younger students. Academic institutions may not address the increase in the need for readily available counseling services if the students in need of the service do not attend. One specific reason students do not want to engage in counseling services is that students may have a feeling of alienation (Lewis, Coursol, Bremer, & Komarenko, 2015). Negative connotation or experiences of a student possibly feeling alienated may be attributed to counseling. To compound a student has newly understood feelings with issues involving stress, disorientation, depression, identity-conflict, diversity, drug abuse and anxiety; counseling in person, may not necessarily be the proper avenue of student-support.

Lewis et al. (2015) conducted a study measuring whether students preferred online counseling services versus in-person counseling services. The results of the study depicted most participants had an overall ambivalent attitude towards counseling services



and that the students involved with the study determined that there was no clear need for the service on campuses. The study additionally drew attention to the concern that participants who were male were more hesitant to engage in counseling services versus students who identified as female, given that the female participants involved, reported having a more appreciative value of the practice. The study drew attention to the concern students felt a general discomfort with the practice of in-person

Academic health centers are a designated area of educational institutions that employ a broad implementation of resources, academic-support (i.e. tutoring) physical health activities, and counseling services. In a study conducted by White-Gaughf et al. (2013) the feelings associated with academic counseling services offered through an academic health science center evaluated the efficacy of counseling services. Students, as depicted throughout this research paper were shown as being a subculture of individuals who need a unique counseling approach that both addresses their academic needs in association or conjunction with their personal needs. Due to a student being a very selective form of academic client, a needs-based assessment is important in determining if the student needs counseling services. Students may be able to perceive an academic health science center as just that, a needs-specific designation for a complete model of student care (White-Gaughf et al., 2013).

Research supported university students have a negative preconception about the purpose or functionality of counseling services (Lannin, Vogel, Brenner, Abraham, & Heath, 2016). This is clear by the reported data students report as being unaware of what self-stigmatizing behaviour might be attributing to the student using counseling services or what the purpose of counseling even entails (Lanin et al., 2016). With the mentioned

data understood, most students report as having a basic understanding of the necessity for counseling services when faced with challenging situations and or academic problems (White-Gaughf et al., 2013). This is a confusing issue for academic faculty to come to navigate administratively, as there is a growing national awareness as well as social understanding of the value and need for counseling services, yet a general practical awareness that these services are not accessible in general.

The ability for a student to become actively engaged academically, psychologically, and socially with their academic institution of choice involves their unique understanding of their own personal belief. Helping students who are hesitant about receiving counseling and/or therapy support should be some of the primary goals of a college counselor or university therapist. Due to the recent rise and need for increased student counseling services, more consistent administrative initiatives and new avenues of student care are now under new development (Moore & Owen, 2014). Utilizing multiple theories of counseling practice to help support a student's ability to achieve educational and interpersonal stability as they move through their decision to pursue advanced degrees is imperative to not only proper student care but also to a university or college's ability to graduate successful degree recipients. A student's true presenting situation when faced with the challenges of academic life may not be the originally reported situation and this could be due to their feeling of using added counseling resources.

Many issues can be a contributing factor to a student's unique belief, either positive or negative, about that student wanting to receive counseling support. Such issues can be gender related, culturally relevant and or identity specific (Lucas, 2012).

Determining what course of action needed to help a student achieve and after becoming individually successful in the higher educational setting is where the importance of counseling comes into effect. A skilled counselor who is proficient in their facilitation of services is a significant asset to any college or university. Research showed the focus of most colleges and universities are making a determined effort on helping well trained, student-success oriented counseling to help improve student assimilation, confidence, and to overall keep their enrollment (McKenzie et al., 2015). There is evidence of a need for supported research that takes into consideration the non-traditional, comprehensive approach to student engagement (Wells, Jones, & Jones, 2014). Non-traditional student engagement is the application of effective, clinical-focused assessment and diagnosis, strategy formation about student degree completion, mental health counseling for complicated behavioral issues and unique evidenced-based therapeutic methods and or philosophies to address unique student distress levels (Wells et al., 2014). Successful transition into higher education enrollment and the chosen institution's later ability to assess, prepare, diagnose, and support a student's transition, is that which allows for successful student graduation by that university. If a student needs additional support and does not know distinctly where to find that support, their feeling of university support may be negative.

A new and recent trend of interest within the area of behavior health counseling within higher education is that of helicopter parenting. Helicopter parenting is the over-involvement of a student's parents in their academic college life, to include the management of enrolled classes, degree-major decisions, and personal finance management (Darlow, Norvilitis, & Schuetze, 2017). Parents are now viewing the

success of their college child within the higher-educational arena and or successful college life, as directly important for that child to successfully complete their degree and/or program of choice. This new phenomenon is leading researchers to believe a university college path and choice of life prevents a student from being able to handle areas of concern with the ability to manage the stress and challenges of life and the new awareness of their new identity as college students (Darlow et al., 2017).

### **Students as Clients**

Professional counselors are provided practical training through their graduate-degree programs at a college or university in outcome assessment and monitoring (Hatchett, 2017). This allows the practitioner to be able to find current student needs, any identified treatment planning or continuation of counseling services. This form of complete client care is rooted in the ability for a counselor in collaboration with the student to be able to understand the student's beliefs on not only the counseling services offered, but also to understand the student's feelings on the functionality of the sought counseling services provided (Hatchett, 2017). Student feelings regarding their understanding of personalized emotional concerns, educational goals and needs is a complex set of issues that needs to be supported by post-secondary administrators, faculty, and counselors alike. Undiagnosed student behavioral health concerns can not only lead to the inability to successfully move forward with the goals of students academically but can lead to students not having proper mental health care be set up if there is a concern. There is a growing concern not enough mental health counseling is available on college campuses, and the quality of the mental health services supplied is not well provided (Roy & Braider, 2016). There is an added unseen concern with this

above-mentioned statement, if students do not feel they helped from a comprehensive and professional approach that addresses mental health concerns, then their ability to remove themselves from academic study is at risk (Roy & Braider, 2016). The focus of college universities and institutions to address student mental health needs will not only produce successful scholars, but also, successful individuals more self-aware of their issues with mental health and academic drive (Hartley, 2012).

Effective counseling allows for students to not only balance the stress of academic workload, but to grow into confident and productive members of their unique academic community (Cunningham et al., 2017). Understanding the important concern that counseling resources be readily available for student and the student's ability to feel cared for by their education institution is paramount to student success academically and emotionally (Cunningham et al., 2017). The importance of implementing effective counseling into a student care model can help promote a sense of general resource availability (Cunningham et al., 2017). Additionally, universities and colleges should be aware of student-to-student referral for counseling services and how this referral system does promote utilization of services (Cunningham et al., 2017). A professional counseling approach, which is subject to individualized belief, could be determined to be a more therapeutic approach versus an academic counseling approach (Pearson, 2012). The ability for a student to connect with on-campus faculty members is an important aspect of their academic life, personal stability, and assimilation into their new role as higher-education student. Hartley (2012) pointed out that resilience and the ability for a student to achieve emotional stability under the stress of severe higher educational standards can depend on the student's ability to understand that there is support available.

Hartley (2012) additionally repeated the psychological concerns of students must be adhered to in proper manners as to offer the necessary support when asked; this applies to both the undergraduate, graduate and pre-professional levels. The ongoing stress of academic life in a changing social climate creates a unique environment for students looking to create their new academic identity. With newly enrolled students, more prevalent academic issues with the new acculturation into a new society is both apart of and separate from a sense of normalcy (Hartley, 2012).

Students have two standards to meet such as living on campus and living in general society and they have to abide by rules and regulations in both areas. College students need to make a transition into their new academic environments through multiple steps. These steps that students take, especially undergraduate students include moving from their comfortable high school ways of learning and living to graduate students who move from an undergraduate pace to one of more academic rigor. Both levels of student enter new stages of life to include new jobs, marriage and family additions, choices to not include marriage, and other elements of maturing that are prevalent with age. There are other subcategories of college education and degree pursuit, which are important for counselors to understand and appreciate from a supportive-role perspective. The increase in non-traditional students adjusting to their academic environment is becoming a new issue to address for academic counselors as the stress of academic life and non-academic life intertwine and affect one another.

### **Motivational Interviewing**

The value in understanding a new and research-supported model of client care helps to advocate for newer academic models of student care and behavioral change. The

value of change is what students hope to get, academically, emotionally, or financially. These changes can cause stress for students. Students who are facing legal issues or problematic consequences of decisions that were made in the past may partake in Motivational Interviewing, a type of counseling which allows student to re-focus on internal motivation to change behavior. This model of counseling technique can also help someone refocus and understand his or her motivations for wanting to pursue a challenging life direction. A counseling approach that uses multiple theories in helping a student remain engaged in their academic pursuits, will help them as they are moving through their own stages of ambivalence and personal reconstruction. Motivational interviewing can achieve this if implemented in the correct fashion. Authors Wells et al.'s (2014) work discussed the importance of the facilitation of Motivational Interviewing (MI) and its positive effects.

MI is a model of psychotherapy designing around facilitating change. MI, however, makes no assumptions as to why the person has developed the attitude, but accepts the current situation and efforts are oriented in terms of negotiating a constructive approach. This is important for education as no claim is made that the student is dysfunctional. In a formal learning situation, there is a set of relatively fixed constraints – timetables, deadlines, prerequisites, the needs of other students. The student and teacher must both navigate a path through these constraints, acknowledging they cannot (easily) be changed. (p. 177)

Looking at Wells et al., (2016) research, it is important to understand basic counseling principles when addressing academic and student concerns. Students are clients of university counseling departments and their needs are of the utmost importance.

If a student feels commitment by counselors to their needs, their feelings of acceptance and ongoing academic pursuits will be validated. One factor that is important with understanding the value of Motivational Interviewing is that of its cross-discipline use. Although as mentioned above, MI addresses problematic behavioral change most commonly reserved for correctional facilities and treatment programs, it can be additionally effective in promoting a general sense of positive change with individuals struggling with personal acceptance and or a new direction in their life. Research showed that the use of this unique counseling approach can have long withstanding benefits that help to transition an individual to a more productive and desirable area in their life; both emotional and personal (Iarussi et al., 2016).

This style and method of counseling can be significant for individuals who are looking to understand their true motivations and feelings about where they want to move forward with their goals and life. The understanding that this could be an invaluable research for students, both undergraduate and graduate, as students can understand exactly what they want to receive out of college, the same as they would receive out of an individual counseling session. Motivational Interviewing is a form a treatment that challenges a patient or client struggling with the feelings of ambivalence to guide them to a measurable stage of addiction acceptance (Iarussi et al., 2016).

Although most student issues have parallel similarities and many counseling approaches can be successful in addressing those similarities, it is the distinct student-focused strategy, which will help to build confidence, resilience and allow for elevated levels of retention at educational facilities. The implementation of Motivational Interviewing into academic advising can have important, positive effects on students as



the basic principles help to move the student or client to a level of understanding about their true potential for academic growth (Iarussi et al., 2016).

Students may feel counseling resources that are beneficial and supportive are necessary to access as they transition into new roles in post-secondary education. Counselors are to administer the data collecting instruments that allow the students to give correct and appropriate, well thought out responses that will help the college to completely understand the value of their needs and or problematic circumstances.

Significant progress on data standardization has been made in recent years, allowing institutions to compare the wellness of their student body to other universities and nationally representative samples. Despite these important advancements, several limitations still exist. First, many of the assessments (e.g.; National College Health Assessment; American College Health, Association, 2015) are prohibitory in cost, particularly for small campuses with relatively low budgets, forcing some institutions to administer them frequently or not at all. (Winterrowd, Priniski, Achter & Abhold, 2015, p. 289)

Data showed that students, in addition to faculty members, are unaware of where to find counseling resources when needed. A study conducted by Blau et al. (2015) showed the following research about referrals for students being a cause of specific feeling development. The article made the distinctive point that the very meaning of the word “referral” can have at times had a negative connotation when the word is associated with the practice of counseling. The authors stated that an actual referral can be about referring a student to a university counseling center, not necessary an outside counseling agency or resource (Blau et al., 2015).

The article showed that there was a perceived stigma associated with the need to seek counseling services. The focus of the study revealed if students would be receptive to referred or available counseling (Blau et al., 2015). The research notated that for a student to possibly pursue counseling services, that the action of “seeking-out” be a measurable first step in allowing the student to perceive the counseling service as being potentially valuable (Blau et al., 2015). Further, students who first perceived counseling as having a personalized value might have had a receptive viewpoint of the counseling service (Blau et al., 2015). The study supported that the first beliefs could lead to significant referral sources, which could lead to more on-campus awareness.

Higher education administrators need to design counseling services for students in need and then communicate to the student body that such services exist. Administrators focused on students seeking counseling services must work through proper chains of referral before any concrete decisions are made about the student’s welfare. What could happen to make the issue of accessibility is to have either a well-developed counseling center available on campus, which students can attend in a comfortable and non-stigmatizing manner or a form of partnership between inter-departments to best link the student with proper services. “Off-campus mental health services are often expensive. In general, there is a lack of affordable mental health care in the United States” (Stewart, Moffat, Travers, & Cummins, 2015, p. 45). Furthermore, with funding and allotment of fees for services, many students must wait for long periods on waiting lists to receive services. Stewart et al. (2015) called to attention the concern with this form of resource especially as it relates to community colleges. Research from Stewart et al. (2015) stated that if colleges are able to formulate partnerships between other colleges, such as with the

allocation and utilization of counseling services, that counseling provided by a more established university or local college will reduce the need for the students seeking this form of help. Additionally, students may be able to receive a higher level of care.

Stewart et al. (2015) determined that if students can have mental health services readily available then there will be a greater ability for the students to succeed in their rigorous program of study. Students challenged with transitional difficulties into the higher education setting, such as diversity concerns, and undiagnosed symptomology with depression and anxiety, legal issues, financial issues, substance abuse as well as identity issues may benefit greatly from participating in a single counseling session (Britt, Mendiola, Schink, Tibbetts, & Jonese, 2016).

If students, counselors, and administrators can develop an internal structure of accessibility and awareness that allows the students to receive the care that they need, then the issue of non-utilization of counseling and its limited availability is a very fixable issue.

### **Evidenced Based Strategies**

Research is beginning to reflect that college and university students need a full model of care that helps to support the enrolled student's academic, physical, social, and perceived emotional needs. This statement revolves around the ability that students can perceive their college campus counseling services as generally altruistic towards their identified needs for seeking services (Swank, Ohrt, & Robinson, 2013). The relationship between that of a client and a counselor is a unique and change-oriented relationship that looks to allow the client to make the proper changes in their lives to see a more positive change in their stated problems. If an altruistic model is not fully set into place, a

student's feeling may be even non-existent if they are unsure as to where to find these need-specific resources (Marsh & Wilcoxon, 2015). Student belief of counseling and therapy concerning feelings of stigma and academic fitness, involves the importance of proper administrative assessment and referral (Stewart et al., 2015). What this data reflected is there must be a form of administrative focus that appreciates students' feeling and concerns.

For example, the more often students met with their counselors and the more helpful these meetings were the more students felt that they belonged and were connected to their schools. Frequent and more helpful interactions with counselors served as a protective factor, assisting students to feel safer at school, and attenuated some of the negative influence of powerful risk factors (e.g., poverty) associated with difficulties in school other, frequency and helpfulness ratings each demonstrated incremental validity in explaining unique portions of the variance in student outcomes. (Lapan, Poynton, Marcotte, Marland, & Milam, 2017, p. 78)

### **Summary**

The ability for a student to engage in counseling services is contingent upon a multitude of factors. Having a well-established feeling of the positive value of counseling services is paramount to a student seeking out counseling services as shown by the research depicted in the literature review. Dispelling personal stigma and beliefs about the profession as whole could help ease the ability for a student to gain and grasp a firmer foundational understanding of counseling services. Having a concrete understanding of the educational requirements, discipline, and facilitation of services are

key areas that the research depicted as being necessary for a student to understand to have a stronger inclination to receive such services from their university.

Faculty and students' feedback are equally important to note about perceptions and awareness about the counseling profession as whole. With the involvement of students involving their behavioral health, students can learn more readily how to attend counseling services if they are knowledgeable about the process of receiving counseling services. Partnerships used between and among colleges and that involve faculty and faculty members, may be able to focus on student mental health needs so they may continue in their academic endeavors. These partnerships will also allow the college to sustain its ability to service students in their time of need. A quote following a comprehensive study by Mahon, Laux, Ritchie, Piazza, and Tihamiyu (2015) depicted a concrete summarization of how college counselors must adjust to the modern era of on-campus counseling.

Counselors should expect, identify, and amplify the changes they see in their clients presenting features, particularly because the clients may not be as sensitive to their change as is the counselor. College counselors have the benefit of an objective and normative-based perspective on clients' change in the counseling process. Clients' perspectives are informed by their changes in the counseling process. Clients' perspectives are informed by their subjective, idiographic experiences. Clients' points of view on the change process may be important determinants of their decision to persist in the counseling relationship. (p. 240)

Evidence-based strategies in counseling services assist students in need of these services while they are attending college. The research additionally depicted that

undergraduate students who received assistance from college counseling services may choose this profession as well. Through the applicable use of such services, students can come to terms with their concerns in addition to wanting to work through advanced career options while moving through the process. The challenge facing all employees within the higher education arena and students alike, is the concern that their ability to receive the resources using professional counseling services as being facilitated on campus, is not necessarily promoted and or facilitated in a way that deepens an awareness of the field. Counselors are part of a multi-disciplined profession most commonly known or casually referred to as therapy. Counselors not only address the student's needs but also the college university's personnel needs, and in ethical practice and theory, their own needs. One aspect of being a counselor was outlined in an opinion editorial featured in *The Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*. The authors stated, "Therapists who are sensitive to differences in race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation are prepared, when clinically indicated to raise the topic: What's it like for you to talk to someone like me?" (Greyson & Meilman, 2013, p. 1). This statement summarized why faculty and student's beliefs matter when it comes to understanding, looking for and subsequently seeing counseling services as being facilitated on their respective college campus of attendance. Paying close attention to the importance of the ability for the college counselor to have the ability and resources to conduct effective data gathering during the counseling setting allows for the client, in this case the student, to make their wishes known (Hatchett, 2015).

### **Chapter Three: Research Method and Design**

In Chapter Three, the researcher wanted to format the qualitative survey and interview questions in a manner which gave concrete and substantial responses to the research questions proposed, and also allowed for additional responses to be derived from the content reviewed. Interview questions were created in assessment format to generate both primary and secondary responses for data analysis. The interview questions were asked by the researcher and the responses were notated by the researcher. The researcher conducted and transcribed the interviews from faculty, notating all applicable responses as they related to answering the research questions as to avoid any confusion. The researcher selected the interview instrument versus the questionnaire instrument to provide a less invasive manner for faculty to answer the questions. The researcher wanted to provide a welcoming and reduced stress environment and determined that asking questions would relieve the assumed pressure faculty may experience in answering questions about a counseling service associated with their place of employment.

The second questionnaire designed for the student participants, allowed for measurable responses using 10 open-ended questions. The questionnaires were developed in the hope questions would prevent the student participants from supplying short yes or no questions. With the 10 open-ended questions, students were prompted to provide three to four sentence answers per question determined by the researcher. The students were able to notate their responses on paper using provided pencils and paper. With the students being able to write their own responses on the paper,

This study's student questionnaire focused on the concept the higher educational setting is a unique sub-population of students, including teaching faculty and administrative faculty who may need counseling services for personal needs or offer referrals to students, as needed. Additionally, the academic community of a university seems to be challenged to identify needed counseling services located on campus for undergraduate students who demonstrate behavioral health concerns.

### **Initial Research Design**

The research questions were designed to clarify what students and faculty members felt was important about counseling and to create future discussion about how to make the service more easily to accessible and used. The intended effect from the study was to bring about new and innovative administrative practices that could result in more effective student care involving counseling practices. The literature review brought about several identified responses. These identified responses included administrative changes that could be separated into student understandings of counseling. The design of the study was to provide a cognitive snapshot of the students' and faculty perspectives of the counseling services. The faculty interview aspect of the study aimed to demonstrate understood qualifications of counselors, including level of education, the need for counseling services, and where to direct students if they should need counseling services.

It should be noted both student and faculty members primarily revealed in the data collected, an increased number of students report as requiring counseling services. This data was cause enough for the researcher to determine that both the interview questions and the questionnaires were highly effective instruments in highlighting important, research responses from the participants recruited. The research questions



came from information gathered within the literature review in conjunction with what the researcher felt was important to promote by way of academic discussion.

### **Research Questions**

#### **Research Question 1: What are student's perceptions of counseling services?**

Research pointed to the notion that many college students are developing their own sense of what behavioral health services include and how the humanistic qualities of perceived helpers can aid students with emotional concerns as they transition into their role of college students (Swank, Ohrt, & Robinson, 2011). Students are more readily able to understand their emotional concerns if they perceive their behavioral health counselor as someone who can understand the importance of their situation.

#### **Research Question 2: What are faculty perceptions of counseling services?**

Faculty at universities are tasked with increasing duties to help their students with the accessibility of counseling (Kopta et al., 2014). Colleges and academic institutions were not initially designed to offer long-term or detailed behavioral health care to their enrolled students, yet there has been a noticeable increase in the need to provide such services effectively (Meilman, 2016). Additionally, with legislation needing higher educational institutions to offer clinical counseling services as covered by the Americans with Disability Act (1990), it is now the responsibility of college campuses to ensure each one of its students receives effective clinical care.

There is also an increase in the reported number of diagnosable behavioral health conditions students report while enrolled in college counseling services. This challenges the college or university with finding licensed professionals who are well-trained and adept to aiding students with the complexities of their problems. Additionally, there is an

increase in unique populations attending college in record numbers than in previous years of enrollment, one population is that of military veterans (Albright, Fletcher, Pelts, & Taliaferro, 2017).

It was pertinent to determine what faculty members felt counseling services should consist of. Universities are consistently promoting the ability for students to have accessible and prompt access through counseling services. The strategy of quickly assessing and allocating counseling services is based off the military triage system and this system proves effective in setting up initial counseling services, but not necessarily sustaining the counseling services (Shaffer et al., 2017). With the focus of universities and colleges now assuming more of an active role with behavioral health and counseling facilitation, the use of faculty input could allow for better access of counseling services.

**Research Question 3: What qualifications should a university counselor have from a student and faculty perspective?**

The rationale for this research question came from the concern that most students and faculty may not necessarily know what requirements a Licensed Professional Counselor should have within the field of human services. Reflecting on the work of Field (2017), which addressed how people generally felt about the profession of counseling. It was imperative to not only draw data from his research and descriptions into the field of professional counseling, but to also formulate a research question which investigated what students and faculty members felt was important about the qualifications of a licensed professional counselor. The research supplied a point of reference to identify professional counselor qualifications that allowed these human service professionals to initiate and carry out counseling services.

**Research Question 4: What is a counselor's role from a student and faculty perspective?**

The role of the counselor is different in the educational environment versus the public mental health sector and viewpoints about mental health are additionally different about the two population demographics (Schwartz, 2013). Whereas general mental health services are rendered in a medical office, private practice office or community center. Most of the counseling for college students on campus is provided through a counseling center. As referenced by Schwartz (2013), "Counseling centers do not reside within academic departments of social work, psychology or psychiatry" (p. 96). This called into question the ability for faculty members and students to be able to discern what the unique role of a counselor is within a university or college setting. The research question addressed student and faculty views of what a counselor's job should be.

**Research Question 5: What stereotypes, if any, are associated with students who receive counseling services?**

The concern of barriers to seeking counseling services required a thorough evaluation. The researcher determined that questioning how students and faculty members felt about stereotypes could lead to a clear understanding of perceived barriers in addition to the perceived stereotypes. Holland (2016) focused on how college stress led to students determining that behavioral health services might be necessary, yet the students were unable to go ahead with the use of the services due to perceived stigmatization either by their peers or from themselves. Uncovering evidence in the research of reported stereotypes that students may experience in obtaining counseling was a motivation for this research question.

**Research Question 6: What does the researched data collected show about the perceived availability of counseling services on campus?**

Students who present with behavioral concerns may additionally have academic challenges with their ability to understand their college and academic goals (Goodwin, 2016). Students who identify concerns such as social isolation presented as dysregulated with their behavior either through being irritable, impulsive, and volatile (Goodwin, 2016). College students with depression, anxiety, substance abuse concerns or suicidal ideation are now a focus point for college campuses offices (Goodwin, 2016). Students with behavioral concerns are often unable to successfully complete a program of study (Lockard, 2016). Research question number six also encompassed whether students presenting with these issues knew where to find counseling services on their campus.

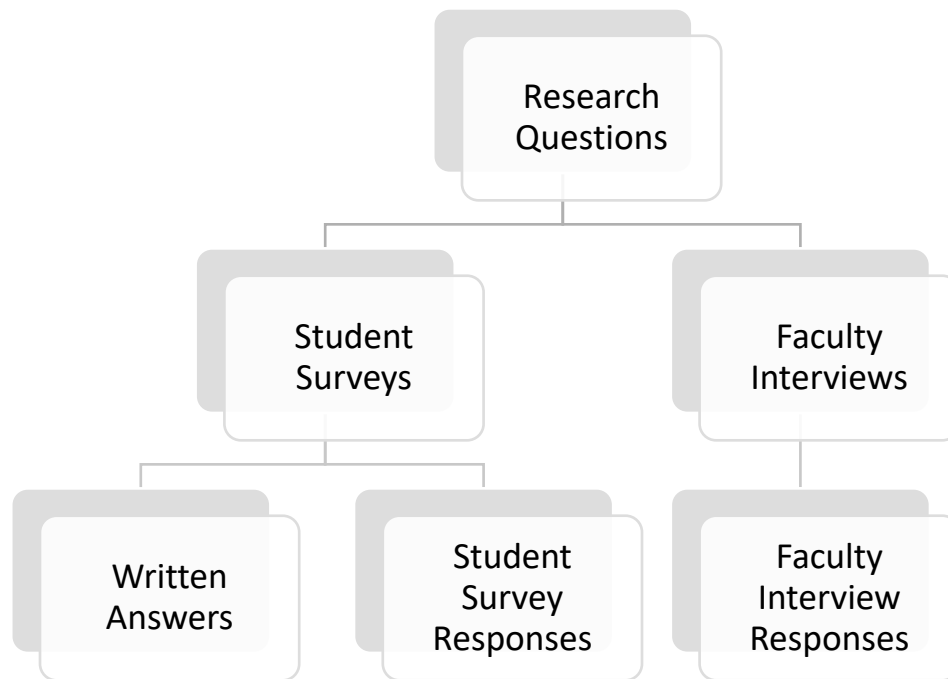
**Research Question 7: What is the need for counseling services, and is this need met by the university?**

As listed through the explanation of research question six, many students present with behaviors that could have them placed at a disadvantage socially, interpersonally and academically. As noted by Moore and Owen (2014), the number of college students seeking behavioral health aid through a university is on the rise. Universities and colleges are now being required to have comprehensive counseling and behavioral health programs in place should students seek services (Meilman, 2016). The researcher looked to understand how students felt this need was addressed by their university.

**Method**

The research questions did not answer current student behavioral health needs and or reported individual complexities of current issues facing students and faculty in an

ever-changing academic climate. Additionally, the research questions raised the need to prove what counselor qualifications and stereotypes students experience while receiving counseling services may have existed in the counseling profession, overall. Rather, the study's questions served as a baseline to accentuate the ability for faculty members and students to question exactly what on-campus resources exist, what the resource consists of, and where the resources are. The faculty member interview aspects served as a baseline for administrators acknowledging faculty member's feelings on resources that they believe to be important and helpful in aiding students with the ability to locate, utilize, and understand the importance of receiving counseling services.



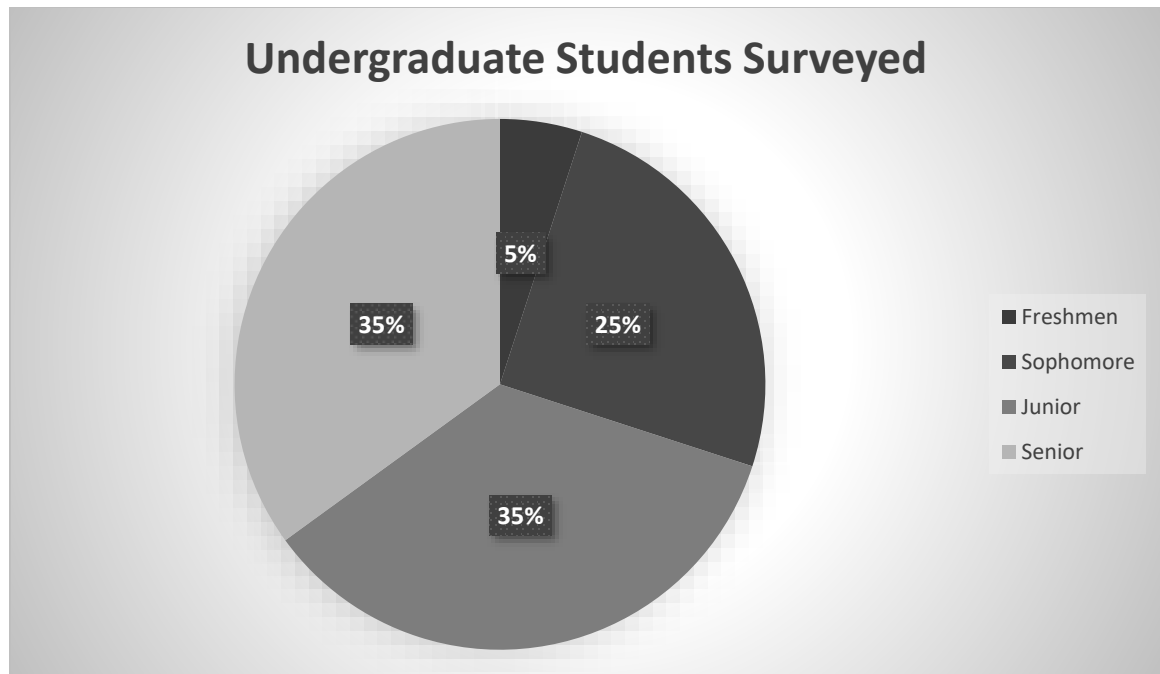
*Figure 1.* Qualitative research design.

The conceptualization of the study and its characteristics were rooted in determining which style of survey instrument would be most effective in detailing student and faculty responses to a pre-determined series of questions. The researcher wanted to have the reported responses of the participants with the content obtained viewed and

transcribed as dependable. Questions students completed were worded and their responses yielded succinct answers, as the written-down responses left minimal room for error and directly answered the survey questions. The format of a written response survey asked 10 questions in an open-ended format for students and five interview questions for student participants in an open-ended format for faculty participants. This instrumentation of questionnaires and surveys asked in this fashion was determined to be an effective tool for the use of gathering applicable reported data reducing simple yes or no answers. Additionally, the ability for the researcher to code the responses using the open-ended questions posed in the surveys helped the researcher to determine content-related answers more efficiently. Reviewing the models of measurement as shown in research outlined in the book, *Qualitative Research Design*, written by Maxwell (2013) was foundational in the construction of the open-ended research question design used in the study.

The four college grade levels were represented in the study included: freshmen, N=1, sophomores, N=5, juniors, N=7, seniors, N=7, for a total representative study sample of 20. Of the participants involved in the study, N=24 total; N=20 represented the undergraduate students and N=4 represented the faculty participants. Of the four faculty members, different branches of the university were represented, to include, N=1, educators, N=1, administrators in supervisory roles, N=1, vice presidents and N=1, directors of educational departments. The data collection procedure needed multiple revisions involving the recruitment of participants. Classroom presentations about the study were planned to recruit students to participate, but the presentations were unable to move forward due to scheduling conflicts on behalf of both the researcher and the faculty

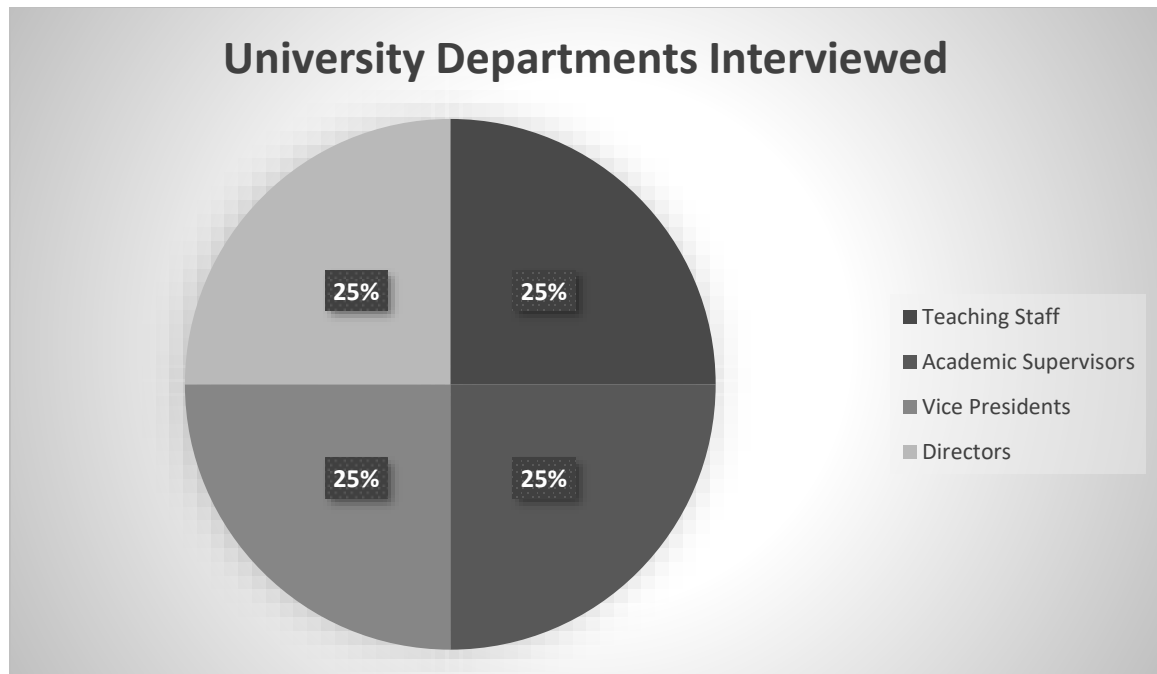
members teaching during the surveying periods. The researcher posted promotional flyers describing a brief overview of the study and Starbucks and Barnes and Noble gift cards benefit, but the flyers only generated limited interest. The recruitment strategy was most successful was a promotional poster board, displayed in front of the Starbucks at the university's library and academic research center on the dates of surveying. Emails were also delivered to perspective participants as approved by the Institutional Review Board, with attached flyers promoting the campus study. This form of recruitment also appeared to generate interest as reported by the student and faculty participants. Department provosts and leaders were emailed about the study and asked to relay the study's promotional email amongst their departments. Additionally, the supporting chair and two committee members relayed the informational emails about the study throughout their respective departments to help generate more awareness and interest. Faculty members interested in the study responded through the university's email and their interests were documented by the researcher. The researcher outlined how long the interview would take and scheduled the interviews per faculty availability. The faculty recruitment required less campus promotion versus the student recruitment as most of the participants emailed responded within a forty-eight-hour period. The data collection derived by both the student and faculty participation began in April of 2018 and completed by mid-October of 2018. This equated to a six-month period of open surveying and interviewing.



*Figure 2.* Student classes.

The pie graph illustrates the four grade classes surveyed over the period of April 2018 until October 2018. As shown, most of the participants were upper classman, this was interesting to notate as the participants of the freshman, sophomore, and junior classes were evenly distributed in their research responses. The first-year class of participants equated to 5%, which was only one participant. The sophomore class equated to 25% of the surveyed pool of participants that equated to four participants. The junior and senior class participants equated to 35% each, which represented six participants each.





*Figure 3.* University departments.

Faculty participants who expressed interest in the study were given priority in choice for the interview part of the study. The first four faculty participants who took part in the study were of the teaching community, the academic supervisor role, the vice president role, and the director of an academic program. It was a benefit of the study to collect data from a wide-ranging pool of participants in the faculty portion of the study. For confidentiality purposes, all the faculty names and titles were anonymous.

### **Surveys, Interviews and Incentives**

One 10 question, written response survey was developed in assessment format to generate self-reported answers to the research questions provided. The survey questions helped to allow students to give direct responses and from the research questions, the researcher was able to notate primary themes and then the discovered secondary themes for the data analysis portion of the study. For their participation in the study, each student received one \$5.00 gift card to Starbucks and one \$5.00 gift card to Barnes and

Noble Bookstores. The faculty participants were not provided an incentive for their participation in the study but were thanked by the researcher for their time spent in the research.

The first survey designed for the study was the student survey. The written response design format allowed students to answer the questions in a fashion which prevented a no or yes answer; this helped to increase the genuine reliability of the student response and additionally helped to reduce error with any guesstimating with the actual student responses. The student questionnaire is located in Appendix C of this study.

The faculty proportion of the study addressed perceptions that university employees might have pertaining to available counseling services on their campus of employment. The design of the faculty questionnaire was an interview format and the five questions that asked were open ended. Open-ended questioning was chosen for faculty interviews so their response errors would be minimized. Regarding the surveying of the students, if they felt they required additional clarification on one of the questions contents, they would approach the researcher to ask for clarification.

### **Summary**

In summary, faculty and student interviews were completed within a six-month period. Faculty interviews were less challenging to complete versus the student surveying as these surveys needed added incentives to generate interest in participation with the study. Had there not been a participation incentive, the student survey aspect of the study would not have been accomplished within the six-month allotted time. In Chapter Three, the conceptual design of the study was formulated to build upon the recognizable need for a more clear and concise understanding be successfully completed of how students

felt about counseling services as seen as being promoted and facilitated on their attended college campus. Additionally, the research design looked to determine faculty perceptions about counseling services as seen as being promoted and facilitated on their employed campus. The research generated hoped to prove an interest within the academic and student community about counseling in general, how to initially supply a general education to students and faculty members on counseling services, and how to effectively promote and draw more attentive direction to counseling services on a college or university campus.

## **Chapter Four: Results**

After the preliminary research was conducted, the reported answers of the participants were separated into notable responses for research consideration. Following the separation of responses, the study's results were reported in the findings of the study to highlight the consistency of the participants' responses indicating validity. Three sets of responses emerged from the data. The primary responses found by the researcher directly addressed the research questions. The secondary responses did not directly answer the research questions but highlighted new data findings to be addressed during the study's commencement. The shared responses directly and indirectly addressed the research questions and were present in most of the sets of participants' answers. The researcher felt the secondary and shared responses needed to be addressed in the study's results in an attempt to bring more of an awareness to additional counseling perceptions that faculty and students identified in an effort to promote new ideas for future research. The responses indicated a need to seek out additional research about on-campus counseling services outside of the proposed research questions.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ 1:** What are students' perceptions of counseling services?

**RQ 2:** What are faculty perceptions of counseling services?

**RQ3:** What qualifications should a university counselor have from a student and faculty perspective?

**RQ 4:** What is a counselor's role from a student and faculty perspective?

**RQ 5:** What stereotypes, if any, are associated with students who receive counseling services?

**RQ 6:** What does the researched data collected show about the perceived availability of counseling services on campus?

**RQ7:** What is the need for counseling services, and is this need met by the university?

### **Primary Responses & Aligning Research Questions**

Students taking part in the surveying were pleasant and receptive to the counseling questionnaire and were observed as enjoying the process of the data collection. Students expressed interest in the study after the description of the study was provided by the researcher; students discussed how they would be more aware to the promotion of counseling services around college campuses following the submissions of their survey questionnaires. The faculty who were interviewed seemed generally interested in the research study's design and expressed support towards the researcher in the process of generating data. The following primary responses were identified as being repetitious among most of the faculty and student participants.

**Qualifications and role.** Of the students surveyed, most felt as if college counselors should have a college degree. Ninety five percent of students surveyed felt as if a counselor should have an undergraduate degree. Of the student participants surveyed, only 35% of the participants felt as if the counselor should have a graduate degree in the field of counseling. It was also interesting to notate that 0.5% of the participants felt as if the counselor did not require a college degree. Another important aspect of the study's findings was 100% the students surveyed reported a college counselor does not need a form of licensure. Of the faculty members interviewed seventy 75% of the participants indicated that an on-campus, college counselor should have a master's degree in the field of counseling; 25% of the participants felt as if the counselor should have a doctoral

degree in the field of counseling. Twenty five percent of the participating faculty identified that the counselor required licensure under a licensing and credentialing agency, which involves counseling as a practice.

Student Participant One reported, “A counselor should have a master’s degree minimum.” Another student participant reported, “I believe that a counselor should have a degree in a related field with routine training.” Additionally, Student Participant Two reported, “I think that an undergraduate degree is fine for a counselor to have, as long as the counselor is seen as wanting to help others.” Of the faculty responses, it was important to report the following response by Faculty Participant One, “I feel that a counselor who is employed by the university hold a master’s degree and is licensed as Licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Missouri.” Faculty Participant Two reported, “A counselor should have a Ph.D., or a M.D. related to the field of counseling.” Student Participant Three felt as if a counselor’s role was to act as a guidance counselor. Student Participant Four felt as if a counselor’s role was to give referrals to other behavioral health providers and one student felt as if a counselor’s role was to help aid with a student’s transition into college life.

Of the faculty members interviewed, 50% percent of the faculty members interviewed felt as if a counselor’s role is to help with behavioral health needs. Twenty five percent of the faculty members interviewed felt as if a counselor’s role is that of an interventionist. One hundred percent of the faculty interviewed felt as if a counselor’s role was to refer students to behavioral health resources. Faculty Participant One gave the following response: “A college counselor should provide advice for students and resources for psychologists if students have serious concerns that the college counselor

cannot handle.” Faculty Participant Three reported, “I feel that a college counselor’s role is to help students with whatever issue or issues that they may be experiencing when they are attending college.” Additionally, Faculty Participant Four reported the following:

Students have unique needs than they had when I had attended college. There are many contemporary issues and it appears that more of these new issues need addressing with every new school year. We have issues with parents wanting to be overly involved in their student’s studies, we have students who are struggling with depression and stress, some students will even drop out for periods of time and then come back into college classes and wonder why they are failing. I believe that if a college counselor can address these concerns, then more students will be able to successfully manage their problems and graduate.

With the student and faculty participants highlighting views on counseling services of which are supportive in nature, and more an instructive and guidance form of service versus a behavioral health service; the argument could be made that the data depicts that faculty are in need of more information which helps to educate colleges on the intended purpose of counseling services. It was evident by the response of one student participant that the role of a counselor was used primarily as an additional support system. Student Participant Five reported, “A counselor’s role is that of being a good listener.” Student Participant Six reported, “A counselor should be someone who you can talk to when things are going poorly in your life.” Additionally, Faculty Participant One reported, I think that there is confusion as to what the difference is between an academic counselor and a mental health counselor. I am seeing a lot of my advisees come

to me with issues that I do not feel I am qualified to help with. I would like to be able to quickly provide a referral when these issues are presented to me as to not confuse roles.

**Resource.** Students described in their written responses that counseling services are a resource that addressed student's basic living concerns to include directions to events, classes, academic-buildings, parking passes, sports-events, and tutoring-services. Of the surveyed students, 100% of the students perceived that counseling services are designed to help students with stress while in college courses. Stress was representative of managing time, managing course loads, limited finances, lack of free time, and family issues as indicated by participant responses. Forty five percent of the students surveyed perceived the service was to help students who were experiencing anxiety while enrolled in college courses. Seventy five percent of the students surveyed felt that counseling was a resource to address depression. Of the students surveyed, 100% students felt as if a counselor's role was to be a support system for students in terms of day-to-day concerns of college living. Student Participant Seven reported, "From my knowledge, counseling services provide a safe place to talk with someone about mostly anything." Counseling helps give feedback to hopefully provide solutions to the problems students might be currently facing." Student Participant Eight reported, "College counseling should guide and help students through any questions they might have." Furthermore, Student Participant Nine mentioned, "I believe that counseling services are readily helpful for international freshman and sophomore students because it helps when to ask questions about college issues."



**Behavioral health.** Of the faculty interviewed, 100% of the faculty members interviewed felt as if the role of a college counselor was to support the behavioral health of undergraduate students enrolled on their campus. One hundred percent of the faculty members perceived counseling as a resource used to address student anxiety. One hundred percent of the faculty felt as if counseling services are a resource for treating student depression. Twenty five percent of the faculty participants interviewed felt as if counseling is a resource for students who may be having suicidal thoughts. Fifty percent of the faculty interviewed felt as if counseling was a resource for students to use when reporting relationship issues. Faculty Participant Two interviewed reported:

Counseling can help with identified student issues that might be happening early in the semester. The counselor could address patterns of the student's behavior with the student which not only can help students take corrective action with the behavior that they are struggling with; but it can also help administrators better do their job if they have this form of support from a different office on campus.

**Personal stigma.** Of the students surveyed, 100% of the participants perceived students who received counseling services on campus feeling individually and personally stigmatized. Student Participant 10, felt as if students who received counseling services were viewed as being "weak" in addition to Student Participant 11 reporting that the stereotype of being "mentally-ill" was associated with students who received counseling services. Twenty five percent of the students surveyed felt that one stigmatized view-involving counseling as being that of feeling suicidal. Student Participant 12 reported the following information.

I am not sure, I think there is a stigma of being labeled as ‘weird’ or ‘crazy,’ if you see a counselor, but at the same time, I think that the only people who think those things are the same people who are afraid to go to counseling themselves.

Of the faculty interviewed, 100% of the participants felt as if students who received counseling services as seen as being depressed by their peers. Additionally, 100% of the faculty felt students who received counseling services were experiencing stress caused by their peers. One hundred percent of the faculty members felt that students who receive counseling services felt stigmatized as being ashamed by their peers. Faculty Participant Three reported the following response:

Some students may feel vulnerable; they may feel like someone is not in their corner. There is a lot of new pressure or continued pressure that I feel students feel daily as they attend college. I feel that the pressure mixed with the feelings of vulnerability make the students feel ashamed to attend counseling services.

**Promotion of services.** One-hundred percent of the faculty interviewed and 90% of the students surveyed felt as if the services were actively promoted on their college campus. Fifty percent of the faculty participants and 80% of the students perceived the counseling services were easy to access on their college campus. Student Participant 13 reported the following, “I feel that counseling services on campus are pretty accessible, I use them often and refer other students to the services if they ask about them.” Faculty Participant Four reported the following, “I don’t think that students pay attention in general. So, if they need counseling services, I do not feel that they will know where to find the counseling center, at least initially.”

**Growing need.** Of the students surveyed, 75% of the students felt as if there is a need for counseling services on their college campus. Ninety percent of the students felt the university provided counseling services on their campus. Student Participant 14 felt if service was needed, it was to be referred by the university to an off-campus facility, such as a local hospital or public behavioral-health agency. Additionally, Student Participant 15 did not know where counseling services were located on campus. Student Participant 16 reported the following information, "Counseling is very much needed. I think it is important, so important for students to know where the counseling service is, and how to access the counseling service when they are having a challenging time with things." Student Participant 17 reported the following information,

I think that there is a growing need for counseling, and I think there is also a lack of knowledge that may even make the need for counseling seem like its declining. I would even say that the need for counseling could correlate to actual student drop-out rates.

Of the faculty members interviewed, 100% felt as if the need for counseling services should be available on the university campus. Fifty percent of the faculty members knew where to find the service at once. Faculty Participant Three who was interviewed did not know where to find counseling services but felt that they could receive direction within an unspecified, small amount of time. One hundred percent of the faculty members felt as if the need for counseling services was increasing on their campus. Faculty Participant Four reported the following information,

Yes, there is a growing need for awareness with counseling services on college campuses, there is not an institution out there who will say, we have done enough

with our student counseling services. There needs to be enough adequate resources dedicated to students, there needs to be more of a consistent attention with this issue.

Table 3 shows the research questions proposed in the study, and the aligning responses that corresponded with the research questions. With the responses of Student Resource and Behavioral Health, it was evident that the majority of the research questions and their content depicted these two responses as the most relevant regarding how students perceived the role and functionality of campus counseling services.

Table 3

*Primary Responses & Aligning Research Questions*

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Student Resource  | RQs: 6, 7  |
| Behavioral Health | RQs: 1,2,4 |
| Promotion         | RQ: 6      |
| Qualifications    | RQ: 3      |
| Personal Stigma   | RQ: 5      |

**Secondary Responses & Aligning Research Questions**

The secondary responses were not initially a focus of the research study or the research question content. It was determined by the researcher, to place the discerned secondary responses into the study’s reported findings as there was consistency and validity with the responses identified. Secondary data responses were derived from participants who did not answer the research questions directly. The secondary responses depicted important data to record as part of the study’s overall importance and after data analysis recorded to give an overview of the findings seemed appropriate to the study’s focus. The student secondary responses are listed in Table 4 as well as the research

questions they aligned to; all three of the identified responses should be noted, aligned to research questions one and four.

Table 4

*Student Secondary Responses & Aligning Research Questions*

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Self-Harming Behavior | RQs: 1, 4    |
| Diversity             | RQs: 1, 3, 4 |
| Relationships         | RQs: 1, 4    |

**Self-harming behaviors.** As found in the table, the following responses were of value to the student participants. Student Participant 18 felt that self-harming behavior should be a focus of on-campus counseling in addition to be a focus point of counseling practice by college counselors. Students listed self-harming behavior as that of “cutting” on areas of the body. Student Participant 19 reported, “The need for these services is growing. There are cases of students now, more than ever, who are practicing self-harming behaviors to deal with their stress, anxiety, and even their depression that is caused by their college lifestyle.” Student Participant 20 reported, “Counseling can help students with anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.”

**Diversity.** Faculty members interviewed reported that issues concerning diversity be at the forefront of college counseling programs. The faculty members reported that the increase in diverse student populations would require counselors to be well trained and better accustomed to working with this unique population of college life. Faculty Participant Three reported, “There is a going to be an increase in international students wanting to come to this university and I feel that if diverse groups of students require counseling; than we should have staff counselors well trained in diversity. “Twenty five

percent of the students surveyed additionally described in their results that the LGBTQ community was important to support in the counseling relationship between the student and the on-campus counselor. Twenty five percent of the student participants additionally reported diversity of that culture and felt that a counselor should be able to counsel different ethnic groups of students enrolled in college courses on campus. Student Participant Seven reported, “Maybe most of the students who go to counseling go because they have issues with their sexual orientation.” Student Participant 12 reported, “Certain students come from different backgrounds and sometimes those backgrounds involve a culture of not being able to see a counselor or not being able to talk to one, which is where counseling could be useful.” Twenty five percent of faculty members interviewed felt that counseling services were a necessary service to help address concerns with the LGBTQ community and to address general health concerns. Faculty Participant Two reported, “We as a university have to be more aware either using diversity week or in general of the needs of the LGBTQ community. This is a population of students which requires our attention when they need services.”

**Relationship difficulties.** Students felt that relationship concerns were an important aspect of a counseling regimen. Fifty percent of students felt that relationship concerns such as friendships, family relationships, and romantic relationships, be discussed throughout the duration of counseling. Student Participant Three reported: “Students need someone to guide them or to give an idea of what opportunities we have with the choices that we make with our relationships.”

### **Additional Findings**

In Table 5, it is noticeable themes of relationships, suicidal ideation, and diversity all align to research questions two and four. Table 5 highlighted what secondary responses faculty participants determined to be important with the study's content and focus. The majority of the secondary concerns appeared to address students' personal issues versus a college's ability to address barriers to receiving counseling services.

Table 5

#### *Faculty Secondary Responses & Aligning Research Questions*

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Relationships     | RQs: 2,4  |
| Suicidal Ideation | RQs: 2,4  |
| Accessibility     | RQs: 5, 6 |
| Diversity         | RQs: 2,4  |

The faculty members interviewed had a wide variety of concerns with their feelings of counseling services provided at their employing university that were not an original focal point of the study's research. Outlined are the secondary responses, which faculty members reported as being valuable information the researcher should know. Relationship difficulties were also reported by some of the faculty members during the interviews, as 50% of the interviewees reported that relationship issues were a needed concern to address in counseling services. Faculty Participant One member reported: "I feel that one of the roles of a counselor is to help students with their relationship issues, such as a break-up."

**Suicidal ideation.** Important to notate in the findings was 100% of the faculty participants mentioned college campus should include the treatment of suicidal ideation with attending undergraduate students. Suicidal ideations include the feelings of wanting

to end one's life and or engage in disruptive self-harming behaviors, which could contribute to the end of one's life. Suicidal actions could include taking abundant amounts of prescription medication or engaging in self-harming behavior such as cutting on one's area of their body to experience some form of emotional relief. Faculty

Participant One reported,

There is becoming a visible higher need to address student who have thoughts of wanting to harm themselves, there was an issue recently where I was tasked with facilitating a student to a mental health facility because they were having thoughts of wanting to harm themselves. I do not feel that this is a role of an academic counselor and should be addressed by mental health counselors who are on campus so that students are able to receive the help that they need.

**Access to services.** Additionally, it was imperative to understand that 100% of the faculty participants reported counseling services as being actively promoted on campus and that 100% of the faculty participants identified that there was a need on campus to provide behavioral health counseling. The research indicated only half of the participants found the service to be accessible. One hundred percent of the faculty members reported they felt as if students felt stereotyped for seeking or receiving counseling services, which was in line with what 100% of the students reported. Faculty Participant Four reported,

I feel that our services are accessible, but at the same time, I don't feel that students have a good understanding of where the services are located. I have seen the services promoted on TV-monitors in academic halls and in other buildings, which can help bring more attention to the service. I feel that we know what we



are doing with our offered counseling services, but that doesn't mean that students take advantage of the service when they need it.

The researcher noticed both students and faculty members felt there is a growing need for counseling services on college campus. Additionally noted, both faculty and students felt that there is personal stigma associated with college counseling. Faculty and students additionally felt there should be some form of qualification to be held by a college counselor and that the services should be accessible for all of the students who require the service during a traditional college semester.

### **Shared Responses**

There were identifiable shared responses in the answers reported by the both the faculty and student participants. The researcher, throughout the course of the data collection, determined a category outlining the shared responses be displayed. There were connecting threads of thought with what faculty members and undergraduate students felt was important to address in their responses about perceptions on available, on-campus counseling services. The section of the shared responses listed the responses, both primary and secondary, into an added data depiction of research results. In reference to the responses, that the researcher noticed that both students and faculty members felt that there is a growing need for counseling services on college campus. It was noted, that both faculty and students felt that there is personal stigma associated with college counseling. Faculty and students additionally felt that there should be some form of qualification to be held by a college counselor and that the services should be accessible for all of the students who require the service during a traditional college

semester. Table 6 highlights the shared responses of both the faculty and student participants in addition to the aligning research questions with the responses.

Table 6

*Shared Responses & Aligning Research Questions*

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| Growing Need    | RQs: 7 |
| Personal Stigma | RQs: 5 |
| Qualifications  | RQs: 3 |
| Accessibility   | RQs: 6 |

**Growing need.** An interesting find was that 100% participants revealed that the counseling service was a necessary service, both on their respective campus of association and across the United States. Student Participant Two reported, “I believe that the need is growing and that the need will only continue to grow.” Faculty Participant Three reported,

There is a growing need for more of a comprehensive mental health counseling service in the college setting. I feel that this need is going to continue to grow because of all of the student issues that we as a society are made to be aware of.

**Personal stigma.** The student and faculty participants highlighted in their responses the above-mentioned symptoms as well as additional symptoms as being the primary reasons why students felt stigmatized for attending counseling services. Student Participant Sixteen reported, “I feel that there is a stigma with going to counseling services that people perceive counseling services as for people who have psychological problems and have been through a traumatic experience.” Student Participant Ten reported: “Students who receive counseling services are viewed as weak or having a mental issue.” Additionally, Faculty Participant Four reported, “I feel that students who

receive counseling services are going to view themselves as being not stable or able to be up for the challenge of college life, but this is not the case.”

**Qualifications.** Both sets of participants identified the professional counselor needed a graduate degree. Student Participant Four reported, “A counselor should have a masters in a degree related to the field.” Student Participant Nine reported, “I would think that a master’s degree in psychology would be the requirement for a counselor.” Additionally, Faculty Participant Three reported, “A master’s degree would be the minimum requirement in psychology or counseling for a counselor.” Also, 100% of the faculty members believed that the counselor should have a minimum of graduate degree, yet only 25% percent of the faculty participants felt counseling licensure as being important.

**Accessibility.** Both groups of participants found the counseling service accessible and promoted on campus, but as mentioned, both groups did not know definitively where to find the service. The shared responses were especially important to share as it could allow for inferences with what different populations felt was important from similar perspectives. As mentioned, the shared study response identification allowed for the researcher to determine where common feelings were between that of the students and faculty participants. Student Participant 20 reported, “The counseling services are easily accessible. The offices are easy to locate as well as getting information to contact someone within the offices.” Student Participant 5 reported, “The university’s counseling services are pretty accessible, I use them often.” Faculty Participant Two reported, “The counseling services are very accessible, and I feel that there is an awareness of the

services on campus, I believe that the counselors know what they are doing, and that administration also knows what they are doing.”

### **Summary**

In conclusion, Chapter Four data generated by the participants and evaluated by the researcher increased the ability for new potential promotion of future research to assess the value of student and faculty perceptions regarding the availability of on-campus college counseling services. The data, served as a clear indicator, most students and faculty who participated in the study agreed there is a need for readily, available counseling services need to be promoted and available on their respective college campus, and that these services are viewed as being valuable and supportive of a students' ability to succeed in college as well as their personal life. The data also highlighted that the students and faculty members who took part in the study felt as if the counseling services were accessible to students and promoted on their respective college campus. Data also indicated responses of both the faculty and students described participants were unsure initially where to find the service. The results of the data also pointed to the students and faculty members not having a concise understanding of the education or licensure requirements of a college campus counselor. Additionally, the responses showed that there was not a clear understanding of a counselor's exact role. Furthermore, it was interesting to see in the findings that many students assumed the faculty members who were not in the counseling profession received training to help address students' interpersonal concerns. Most of the faculty members reported that students routinely discussed their personal relationships with them when discussing course enrollment or other important academic issues. Further, both students and faculty

members called attention the concern that most students experience forms of behavioral-health symptoms; the three most common symptoms described were stress, anxiety and depression. Other data generated from interviews with faculty and the surveys with students, illustrated that faculty members and students were both interested in diversity issues as they relate to the counseling setting. It was important to discover the students and the faculty members felt as if there is a growing need for counseling services on college campuses.

Additionally, participants involved with the study felt that there were benefits to receiving the service of counseling during a traditional and semester-based school year. Most of the participants who reported having used the service and whom may be taking part in the counseling services were doing so because of a self-identified emotional concern. Further discernment uncovered students and faculty members felt as if there were barriers to using the service because of either personal belief systems or a sense of personal stigma or lack of knowledge about the field of counseling in general.

### **Chapter Five: Discussion**

The results of the study generated interest where the participants placed value on specific areas of the student-counseling relationship. As the researcher discovered, students and faculty found depression, anxiety, and stress were all behavioral-health symptoms counselors should be prepared and trained to handle in practice. It was interesting to discern that students felt the role of a counselor should be able to aid with aspects of daily living. Furthermore, participant faculty members reported one of the roles of a counselor was to address relationship concerns. Both groups of participants observed counseling services may have been promoted on campus, but each group could not definitively identify where services were located on campus. It was important to notate all the faculty members felt a counselor needed a minimum of a graduate degree, yet a quarter of the faculty participants felt that licensure for the profession was necessary. It was also interesting to report most of the students felt a counselor should have a degree, yet none of the participants reporting that licensure be required. It was also interesting to find that one of the student participants reported that not having a college degree was also acceptable for a college counselor who addressed behavioral health concerns of student populations. With the research pointing to areas of needed improvement within the field of counseling on college and university campuses, potential administrative changes may need to be created or implemented to address the concerns discovered by the research outcomes.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions proposed by the study were answered given the responses and the data analysis of the participant responses. Each of the questions on the

instruments aligned with each posed research question. Interview responses also provided clear data aligned to each research question.

Table 7

*Faculty Interview Questions*

|  |
|--|
| Q:1 What is a counselor's role? What qualifications should a counselor possess?  |
| Q:2 How do students perceive counseling services here at the university? What is your perception of the counseling services you provide?               |
| Q:3 Do you feel students at this University know where to access counseling services? Is there a way to promote these services better? Please explain. |
| Q:4 Do you feel there is a growing need for counseling services at this university, If so, how does this campus address this need? Please explain.     |
| Q:5 Do you feel there is a growing need in general for more of an awareness of counseling services amongst college campuses? Please explain.           |

Table 8

*Student Questionnaires*

|  |
|--|
| Q:1 How accessible are this university's counseling services?  |
| Q:2 Where are the university's counseling services located?  |
| Q:3 Do you feel that most students enrolled in universities and colleges know where to access counseling services? Please explain.         |
| Q:4 Is the need for counseling services on colleges growing or declining? Please explain.  |
| Q:5 What do counseling services provide students at this university?   |
| Q:6 What level of education should a college counselor possess?  |
| Q:7 What is the role of a college counselor?   |
| Q:8 Do you feel most students enrolled at universities or colleges understand the educational requirements for counselors? Please explain. |
| Q:9 What stereotypes, if any, are associated with students who use counseling services?  |
| Q:10 How are counseling services promoted on this university's campus?   |

Research question number one asked about students' perceptions of counseling services. Research question number one was answered by the researcher through the evaluation of student survey questions one, five, and 10. Survey Question one asked students about their perceptions about the accessibility of counseling services on campus. Throughout the duration of the study it was clear some of the students felt services were accessible, and others did not. It was also evident some of the students who felt that the services were accessible were confused as to where the services were even located. Question five of the student surveys asked students what counseling services offer students while enrolled in college courses. Students reported throughout the study that counseling was a place to discuss issues related to symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress. Some students reported that the service was a place to discuss issues in their life that they may not feel comfortable sharing with people not trained as a counselor. Student survey question number 10 asked how counseling services were promoted on the student's campus of attendance. Most of the student participants reported that the services were promoted on their campus either through social media, television screens around campus, or through orientation efforts when the students first enrolled in college counseling courses. Research conducted by Swank et al. (2011) discussed how counselors are generally viewed as altruistic and that this quality helps to encourage engagement and interest in the counseling field and profession. In research conducted by East and Havard (2015), the discussion of using mobile technologies to help advance the use of mental health counseling services could in turn help the advancement of accessibility of services. Reif and Much (2017) pointed to the effect of social media and



how it is helping students' network and may help students locate counseling services more easily on their campus.

Research question number two asked about faculty perceptions of counseling services. The participant group consisting of school faculty answered this through the second interview question, which asked how students perceive counseling services at their university of attendance and what is the faculty member's perception of the counseling services that the university provides. In research conducted by McKenzie et al. (2015), the effect of counseling services on students challenged with academic and or behavioral health concerns was addressed and helped to additionally add support to the research questions being answered. The author's reported, "The effect of counseling in this group can be considered in a number of ways, including reduced psychological distress, increased psychological resilience and positive impact on academic issues, such as retention and academic performance" (McKenzie et al., 2015, p. 285). It was evident that many of the faculty members felt that the general purpose and or functionality of counseling services was to help address with students their emotional concerns. Faculty members identified through the interviews they felt students in present academia were faced with such symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress. Faculty members additionally reported they felt as if students were faced with challenging life circumstances, such as relationships ending, family concerns, self-harming behavior, challenges dealing with academic performance, acclimation to college-life, and orientation to services on campus. Meilman (2016) reported,

On college campuses around the country, many directors are seeing calls for counseling centers to enhance service, meaning immediate responsiveness when

needs are expressed, greater availability of routine initial appointments, and requests to handle in-house serious situations, such as severe eating disorders, borderline personality disorders, non-suicidal cutting, chronic suicidality, and pervasive developmental disorders. (p. 8)

With research question number three, the study addressed the question of what qualifications should a university counselor have from a student and faculty perspective? Research question three was answered through the responses discovered in student survey questions six and eight. The sixth student survey question asked students what level of education a counselor should have. The eighth student survey question asked students if they felt as if most students enrolled in universities or colleges understood the educational requirements of counselor. What was interesting to discover with this aspect of the research was how students and faculty members differed in their perceptions of what qualifications a counselor should possess while employed on college campuses. Most students felt as if a college counselor should have a level of college education, with some students reporting a bachelor's degree as being sufficient and others reporting a master's or doctorate degree. In one case, a student participant reported that no formal education be a requirement for a college counselor. Students were concerned with whether the counselor possessed attributes grounded in being relatable or easy to discuss complex concerns versus faculty members who felt that having significant graduate education and licensure as the primary qualifications for counseling services. Research question three was answered through faculty interview question number one. The first faculty interview question asked faculty members about the qualifications a counselor should have.

Research question four addressed what a counselor's role is from both a student and faculty perspective. Through this interview question, faculty members were encouraged to discuss what qualifications the counselor should have in addition as to what they felt a counselor's role was. Through the faculty-participant responses, the researcher was able to determine that most of the participants felt as if a college counselor should possess a minimum of a graduate degree. Some of the faculty participants felt as if licensure was necessary in addition to the graduate degree. Most of the faculty members felt as if a counselor's role was to provide guidance with student behavioral needs and to address any concerns that related to their academic studies. Some of the faculty participants additionally felt as if a counselor's role was to help in facilitating an allocation of counseling services, which could help with reported, advanced behavioral health concerns. Drawing support from research conducted by Hatchet (2012) in which the author reported,

Consequently, college counselors, and those who conduct research on college counseling, would benefit from an inventory specifically developed to assess the counseling preferences of this population. A better understanding of college student's' preferences for counseling not only would fill a gap in the counseling literature but also may assist college counselors in developing more effective counseling services. (p. 38)

Research question four was answered by the seventh student survey question and through the first faculty interview question. The seventh student survey question asked about the counselor's role from a student perspective. The first interview question from a faculty perspective directly asked what a counselor's role is.

Research question five asked what stereotypes are there, if any, associated with students who receive counseling services? Research question five was answered through analysis of the student responses to survey question number nine. With the ninth student survey question, students were asked about stereotypes they may be with the receiving of counseling services. Most of the faculty and student responses were aligned with the answering of this research question. Additionally, data indicated that all the student participants and all of the faculty participants felt that there was a form of stigma associated with the participation in counseling services. The faculty and students felt that diversity was a factor with the perceived stigma of receiving counseling services on a college campus. Reflecting on the work by Clauss-Ehlers and Parham (2014) the authors reported,

College counseling centers can play a critical role in partnering with administrators, admissions faculty, and faculty and faculty within various departments on campus to promote recruitment and retention efforts that support a diverse student body. Retention efforts can focus on financial need, stressors, and supports for students, as well as the needs of student veterans and transfer and international students. (p. 74)

Research question number six focused on what did students perceive as readily available professional counseling services provided for enrolled university students? This research question was addressed through the response analysis of student survey question three and faculty interview question three. The third student survey question asked if most students knew where to find the counseling services on campus. The third faculty interview question asked faculty members if they perceived undergraduate

students enrolled on their respective college campus as knowing where to find the counseling service and if there was a better way to effectively promote the service for visibility purposes. With the research collected, it was determined that most of the faculty and the student participants reported the service was readily accessible. Data also concluded through the analysis of the research the faculty and student participants did not know where to readily access the counseling services on their respective college campus. Most of the student participants reported they had observed marketing and promotional materials either through electronic media or through other observable outlets on their college campus. Most of the faculty members also conveyed having seen promotional materials and or other forms of visible programming efforts on television screens in academic halls and other college service buildings.

Research question seven addressed what is the need for counseling services and how is this need met by the university? Research question number seven was answered through the student responses to survey questions two and four and through the faculty responses to interview questions four and five. With the second student survey question, students were asked directly where the college counseling services are found. With question four of the student surveys, the student participants were asked directly what they felt the need for counseling services were on their campus and if they perceived the need as either growing or declining. Regarding the fourth faculty interview question, faculty members were asked if they felt there was a growing need for behavioral health counseling services on college campuses across the country. The faculty members were also asked to elaborate on how they perceive college campuses as addressing this need. Regarding the fifth faculty interview question, faculty members were asked if they felt

there was a need for more of an awareness of counseling services to be facilitated at college campuses across the country and to elaborate on their responses. It was discovered through the research both the students and the faculty members felt as if there is a significant need for counseling services on college campuses. This is an area of research where there is significant data pointing to not only an increasing need on college campuses but that most college campus administrators felt as if the need is underserved. Authors Spencer-Rosenthal and Wilson (2013) showed that,

Sixty-five percent of the participants believed that the logistics of securing help from mental health professionals would keep them from seeking help. Thirty-four percent did not understand what mental health professionals do when someone comes to them for help. Fifty-eight percent believed that there is a stigma attached to using mental health services. Thirteen percent of the students believed that seeing a mental health professional would not be helpful to someone who has psychological problems. (p. 199)

The researcher discovered that both the student and the faculty members felt as if the service of counseling was readily accessible but that most of the participants were unable to determine where exactly the service was located. Some of the faculty participants reported that they felt as if the college counseling efforts were very well-facilitated and easy to locate while others did not know definitively where the services were located but felt as if they could locate the services with a few additional administrative tasks. By 'well-facilitated' the faculty members interviewed felt as if the counselors employed at their university understood and knew how to practice counseling services, at the counseling center on campus. All the faculty and student participants felt

as if the need for counseling services is growing on all college campuses and that the need should be addressed on all college campuses.

### **Implications for Future Studies**

Research provides a compelling argument that colleges and universities alike have the ability to recognize there is a need to consistently monitor what undergraduate students and faculty perceptions are on available, on-campus, counseling services is pertinent to the overall success of that student graduating college. If a college or a university makes a focused attempt to determine outcomes through the development of new avenues of assessment and outcome management, then it applies to assume that the students' concerns for success and taken into significant consideration (Hatchett, 2015). The need for the increase in the availability of counseling services and counseling service referrals is poignantly, is not a large enough paradigm to assist undergraduate students in their ability to seek and in-turn utilize the counseling services (Meilman, 2016).

It is the author's conclusion from the study that students and faculty feel there is a need for counseling services to be understood and readily available when there is a perceived need and that awareness alone of services does not lead to a student accessing that support. Stewart et al. (2015) reflected upon the importance of increased college students in need of behavioral health counseling services to address the increasing complexities of their identified needs as they attend college life. Additionally, Meilman (2016) pointed to the concern more and more academic administrative offices are tasked with the concern of providing counseling services to identify student populations in need of behavioral health services on college campuses to allow the student the best possible outcome and degree attainment while enrolled in college courses. Lastly in review,

Giamos et al. (2017) found that there is an overall lack in effective counseling promotion on college campuses creating barriers which prevent students from adequately receiving the necessary service when in need. What can be deduced from the research notated, is new recommendations for effective counseling utilization must be made to allow for not only effective understanding of the value of on campus counseling services, but additionally to allow for students and faculty alike to be able to utilize the service when in need.

### **Observations and Limitations**

During the surveying period, students were confused about the definition of counseling for purposes of the study. Primarily, students were trying to differentiate the practice of counseling from that of academic counseling. Once the differentiation was explained, students were able to continue with the answering of the surveys. A second observation was made when multiple students were confused about the need to have to sign the consent form in order to participate in the survey. The confusion was addressed by the researcher and the student participants were inclined to sign the consent form after the researcher described the purpose of the consent to participate in the survey. The researcher relayed to the students that their reported information was kept confidential, after which, the students were willing to sign the consent for participation and proceed with the survey completion.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations of the researcher for the department in charge of facilitating counseling services, is to not only engage in effective promotion throughout the entire campus either through social media or general programming awareness efforts



such as seminars and speaker series, but additionally to gather every semester of a traditional school year, confidential surveying data which points to what faculty and students feel is important regarding their perceptions on available, on campus, counseling services.

The focus of the study was to pose the argument faculty and undergraduate student perceptions of counseling would help with the increased likelihood of counseling services being used rather than just made aware of. College and university administration should take a proactive stance to ensure that awareness of counseling services moves to use of the services when needed. To evaluate not only the student perceptions of the availability of counseling services, but also student perceptions on the requirements and functionality of counseling services provided on their respective college, could in fact make the ability for students to seek counseling services easier and attend counseling services in a more personified strengthened manner (Hartley, 2017). Reflecting through the beginning of the 21st century it is clear the modern traditional college student requires an active-listening approach in reference to counseling services (Harley, 2017). With the ability for administrative offices to take more substantial data-collecting measures of both student and faculty perceptions on counseling; the ability for student's views and needs to be addressed more effectively would be addressed more frequently. It would best serve Universities and Higher Educational Establishments to focus more on the reported perceptions of its undergraduate student establishments to focus more on the reported perceptions of its undergraduate student body and faculty members thus allowing for more programs, and counseling-focus initiatives to be made for students and faculty alike. Students and faculty members in developing their personal understanding of the

profession of counseling are more likely to feel comfortable seeking and using the service. If students can understand the profession in more detail, then the ability for students to pursue the profession as a career and life passion could be significant. A university and college practice of having counseling seminars available for faculty and students could help with a more in-depth understanding of the profession. Additionally, investing in and keeping up-to-date, hard copy journals within the college's library and resource center could help generate interest in learning more about the requirements of the profession of counseling. Such journals as *The Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *The Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *The Journal of Comparative Psychology*, *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, all could have immense value in allowing people to be more interested in learning about counseling services. Having these materials on display in entrance areas or in more visible and accessible areas of academic research facilities could potentially help generate more of a foundational understanding of the profession.

### **Study Limitations**

There were limitations identified within the study, most notably the inability to actively recruit willing participants over a six-month period. It was clear that beginning the surveying period in the late spring semester, in addition to carrying the surveying into the summer semesters did not promote the study effectively and generate enough student participation. With reference given to the faculty participation aspect of the study, participants were to be recruited and interviewed by the end of the traditional summer semester. The beginning of the fall semester and the increase in student presence on campus allowed for more interest to be generated in the study. Participants engaged in

the student aspect of the study and the bonus incentive of two promotional gift cards helped to allow for the study to be completed. The researcher determined that if the incentive had not been added, participants within the student population would not have been able to be recruited for the study within the six-month period of surveying. All the needed data was completed by the end of October 2018.

The primary data collection for the study began during the spring traditional semester of 2018. Faculty emails were sent to random potential faculty and teaching faculty departments and the emails were retrieved from the university's website, which is publicly accessible. The first faculty response was low and required multiple email attempts to generate substantial faculty interest. Each faculty email received an initial email, if any interest was generated and responses were generated, follow up emails were sent about the focus of the study. Four faculty participants were interested and available to take part in the study; all four interviews were scheduled and completed during the first week of a summer traditional semester. Additionally, it was determined that the study would not include surveyed graduate students who would be attending university courses over a period of a traditional graduate-study term of study. The rationale for this decision on behalf of the researcher was proper for the study's outlined research model as limited data is available or supports graduate student involvement in academic counseling services. Additionally, the time for a traditional graduate degree program of study fluctuates between different programs of study.

Students were recruited using multiple avenues of choice. Initial classroom presentations were planned but were unable to be accommodated due to scheduling conflicts on behalf of the primary researcher. An Institutional Review Board amendment

was created and approved, for a flyer and a promotion poster to be used by the researcher, but university policies and procedures prevented the flyer from being mass distributed throughout the campus and strategic placement as a promotion was used instead. A third attempt to recruit students via a location change to a more highly visible and routinely frequented area of the campus was approved through the Institutional Review Board as well as a promotional poster be placed in the location's premises; the second location for data collection was the library and academic resource center.

Participant samples collected took place over the final two months of a traditional spring semester, two traditional summer school semesters, and completed during the first two months of a traditional fall semester at a private Midwestern university. The total completion time of the surveying was 6 months.

## **Discussion**

As highlighted by the researcher, the field of college and university counseling is becoming more of a behavioral-health, specialty-service, versus the supplementary service college campuses once offered students as an added benefit of enrollment. With universities and colleges required to provide this service as per legal obligations in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, more universities and colleges are seeking to create, student-focused, clinical settings, specifically attuned to the college student's needs. The study was able to evaluate what students and faculty members felt was important about counseling services, with the goal of allowing for more research to be generated which focused on counseling service perceptions on campuses. The research additionally looked to bring into focus how student and faculty perceptions

could potentially help assist administrative bodies in better facilitating the counseling service.

The researcher then separated the participant's responses into three themed sections of data focus: primary themes, secondary themes and shared participant themes. The discovered themes in conjunction with the participant responses, tried to answer seven research questions, which investigated current student and faculty perceptions as being reported at a private Midwestern university. The main primary response identified student and faculty members indicated what the role of a counselor was, what qualifications a counselor should possess, the accessibility of counseling services, the location of counseling services, the promotions of counseling services and the growing need of counseling services on college and university campuses.

Participants surveyed reported the service was to help address symptoms associated with depression, anxiety and stress, yet no mentioning of treating relationship concerns, or suicidal ideation was mentioned in the responses to which the primary themes were derived from, this was considered a significant find. It was additionally important to discover that all the student participants found a personal sense of stigma was associated with the receiving of the counseling service, this could be addressed in future research as a significant barrier to investigate and was also considered promoted. The data showed that 20% of student participants and 25% of faculty participants did not know where counseling services were to be facilitated on their college campus and that this need should be actively promoted. The researcher found this to be an area of research that could allow for added data to be generating in reviewing counseling perceptions of students on college and university campuses. The study hoped to identify

that students acknowledge the symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress as primary indicators they may have faced on a regular basis while enrolled in college. Students also needed to understand that other aspect of their lives are important, and these ailments are behavioral health issues that should be addressed through counseling services.

The data generated from the study also focused on students reporting they felt as if counselors had multiple roles while in practice on university campuses, not just that of a mental health provider. The roles, such as academic advisor and someone to obtain behavioral health referrals were referenced in the student responses of the administered surveys. It was also important to consider the data collected showed most of the student participants felt as if a college behavioral health counselor should possess a college degree. This discovery could allow for undergraduate students to be able to view the profession as a career pathway.

What was also interesting to discover, was that the symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression were repeated as needing to be treated in counseling, on college campuses from both a student and faculty perspective. It was also important to note the faculty members felt students who were experiencing suicidal ideation as needing or needing counseling during the time span of a traditional college semester.

The faculty members who were interviewed felt the counseling services were accessible on their identified and associated university campus and there was a perceived social stigma experienced for students who attended counseling services. The faculty interviewed felt that a college behavioral health counselor holds a graduate degree and licensure. It was lastly to pertinent to find in table format that the faculty interviewed felt as if counseling services are necessary to have on their respective university campus but

also across the United States. Colleges and universities, as per the research outcomes, should continue to develop ongoing counseling initiatives and programs that are aligned to reported needs and perceptions of faculty and students. The use of social media and or the potential development of department-specific applications (apps) would be an area to explore for academic departments seeking more utilization and promotion of their counseling services. With college campuses now taking on the new role of serving as a permanent behavioral-health provider for their enrolled students, it is pertinent to appeal to the demographics that the students depict and report as being a facet of their everyday life. Appealing to the students and faculty members use of modern technology and social media in combination with routine semester data-gathering efforts could help to generate future beneficial outcomes for colleges and universities in response to the growing counseling need. The innovation that is occurring with the cellular phone applications (apps) could easily be integrated into colleges and universities with the permission provided by the enrolled students. This resource could be useful by the university to which this study was conducted at could assist with appointment scheduling, information about the university's counseling program and crisis-intervention services. Additionally, having an electronic television monitor in every classroom which promotes university counseling services in collaboration with upcoming other university events could heighten visibility of services considerably. It was clear that during the completed of the data research that the university had a well-staffed and visible counseling center with licensed professionals on staff. The counseling center did not highlight the counselor's experience or names. This could be an area of focus for improvement within the university's counseling program. Following the completion of this study it would be

appropriate for the study's results to be replicated taking into consideration the impact of the proposed modern technology and its potential impact on students and faculty perceptions involving available, on-campus counseling services.



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## Appendix A

### Student Consent Form:

# LINDENWOOD

## Research Study Consent Form

Assessment in Higher Education: A qualitative study exploring student perception regarding on-campus, certified counseling services

Before reading this consent form, please know:

- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:

- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available, if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

### *Basic information about this study:*

- *Basic information about this study:* We are interested in learning about what current undergraduate students and faculty perceptions are regarding the profession of professional counseling. In specific, how those perceptions depict the service as being readily available and professionally facilitated on a private Midwestern university campus.
- You will during your participation, complete a comprehensive survey that addresses your current perception involving your in-depth knowledge of professional counseling. In addition to how you view professional counseling as being professionally facilitated on the campus of Lindenwood University and what the profession entails in general as a professional practice.
- Risks of participation include: A potential negative, personal-association risk with professional counseling could occur if a past experience with professional counseling is determined as being adversely experienced by the participant involved. It should be noted that at any time during the study, any participant can withdraw from the study with all measures of confidentiality upheld to protect the identity of the participant.

# LINDENWOOD

## Research Study Consent Form

Assessment in Higher Education: A qualitative study exploring student perception regarding on-campus, certified counseling services.

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Stephen W. BAKER, M.A. Licensed Professional Counselor under the guidance of Dr. Robyne Elder, Ed.D at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time. Before you choose to participate, you are free to discuss this research study with family, friends, or a physician. Do not feel like you must join this study until all your questions or concerns are answered. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

### **Why is this research being conducted?**

We are doing this study to contribute to the current research and literature regarding how undergraduate students perceive the profession of professional counseling as attending college enrollees. We will be asking about 70 other people to answer these questions.

### **What am I being asked to do?**

As a participant enrolled in this study, you will be required to answer a fifteen-question survey which supports the study's focus involving student perception. The questionnaire should take between 20-30 minutes for the completion of the survey.

### **How long will I be in this study?**

The study will only take place during this survey period, 20-30 minutes.

**Who is supporting this study?** The researcher will be supporting the study in its entirety under the guidance of his chair, Dr. Robyne Elder, Ed.D.

### **What are the risks of this study?**

- Privacy and Confidentiality

We will not be collecting any information that will identify you.

We will be collecting data from you using the internet. We take every reasonable effort to maintain security. All data collected using the internet

will be used through the secure a secure email server. It is always possible that information during this research study may be captured and used by others not associated with this study.

**What are the benefits of this study?**

You will receive no direct benefits for completing this survey. We hope that what we learn may benefit other people in the future.

**Will I receive any compensation?** Participants who engage in the study will receive one gift card of their choosing to either Lindenwood University's on-campus Barnes and Noble Booksellers or Starbucks Café.

To thank you for taking part in our study, we will send you a \$5.00 gift card to your provided email address after you take the survey.

**What if****I do not choose to participate in this research?**

It is always your choice to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or perform tasks that make you uncomfortable. If you decided to withdraw, you will not receive any penalty or loss of benefits. If you would like to withdraw from a study, please use the contact information found at the end of this form.

**What if I am injured during this research?**

If you think you have been injured as a result of taking part in this research study, tell the person in charge of the research study as soon as possible. Please use the contact information at the end of this form.

Decisions to pay you or give you other compensation for the injury will be made by Lindenwood University. You do not give up your legal rights by signing this form.

**What if new information becomes available about the study?**

During the course of this study, we may find information that could be important to you and your decision to participate in this research. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

**How will you keep my information private?**



We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified faculty of Lindenwood University, and representatives of state or federal agencies.

**How can I withdraw from this study?**

Notify the research immediately if you would like to withdraw from this research study.

**Who can I contact with questions or concerns?**

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Director, Michael Leary, at (636) 949-4730 or [mleary@lindenwood.edu](mailto:mleary@lindenwood.edu). You can contact the researcher, Stephen W. Baker, M.A. LPC directly at [sbaker@lindenwood.edu](mailto:sbaker@lindenwood.edu).

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| _____<br><b>Participant's Signature</b>    | _____<br><b>Date</b> |
| _____<br><b>Participant's Printed Name</b> |                      |

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| _____<br><b>Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee</b> | _____<br><b>Date</b> |
| _____<br><b>Investigator or Designee Printed Name</b>           |                      |

**Appendix B****Faculty Consent Form:****LINDENWOOD****Research Study Consent Form**

Assessment in Higher Education: A qualitative study exploring student perception regarding on-campus, certified counseling services

Before reading this consent form, please know:

- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:

- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available, if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

*Basic information about this study:*

- *Basic information about this study:* We are interested in learning about what current undergraduate students and faculty perceptions are regarding the profession of professional counseling. In specific, how those perceptions depict the service as being readily available and professionally facilitated on a private Midwestern university campus.
- You will during your participation, complete a comprehensive survey that addresses your current perception involving your in-depth knowledge of professional counseling. In addition to how you view professional counseling as being professionally facilitated on the campus of Lindenwood University and what the profession entails in general as a professional practice.
- Risks of participation include: A potential negative, personal-association risk with professional counseling could occur if a past experience with professional counseling is determined as being adversely experienced by the participant involved. It should be noted that at any time during the study, any participant can withdraw from the study with all measures of confidentiality upheld to protect the identity of the participant.

# LINDENWOOD

## Research Study Consent Form

Assessment in Higher Education: A qualitative study exploring student perception regarding on-campus, certified counseling services.

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Stephen W. Baker, M.A. Licensed Professional Counselor under the guidance of Dr. Robyne Elder, Ed.D at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time. Before you choose to participate, you are free to discuss this research study with family, friends, or a physician. Do not feel like you must join this study until all of your questions or concerns are answered. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

### **Why is this research being conducted?**

We are doing this study to contribute to the current research and literature regarding how undergraduate students perceive the profession of professional counseling as attending college enrollees. We will be asking about 4 other faculty to take part in these interview questions.

### **What am I being asked to do?**

As a participant enrolled in this study, you will be required to answer interview questions which supports the study's focus involving counselor and student perception. The interview should take between 45 minutes to 1 hour.

### **How long will I be in this study?**

Your participation in the study will only be during the interview portion.

**Who is supporting this study?** The researcher will be supporting the study in its entirety under the guidance of his chair, Dr. Robyne Elder, Ed.D.

### **What are the risks of this study?**

- Privacy and Confidentiality

We will not be collecting any information that will identify you.

We will be collecting data from you using the internet. We take every reasonable effort to maintain security. All data collected using the internet will be used through the secure a secure email server. It is always

possible that information during this research study may be captured and used by others not associated with this study.

**What are the benefits of this study?**

You will receive no direct benefits for completing this survey. We hope that what we learn may benefit other people in the future.

**Will I receive any compensation?** Participants who engage in the study will receive one gift card of their choosing to either Lindenwood University's affiliated Barnes and Noble Booksellers or Starbucks Café.

To thank you for taking part in our study, we will send you a \$5.00 electronic gift card to your provided email address after you take the survey.

**What if****I do not choose to participate in this research?**

It is always your choice to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or perform tasks that make you uncomfortable. If you decided to withdraw, you will not receive any penalty or loss of benefits. If you would like to withdraw from a study, please use the contact information found at the end of this form.

**What if I am injured during this research?**

If you think you have been injured as a result of taking part in this research study, tell the person in charge of the research study as soon as possible. Please use the contact information at the end of this form.

Decisions to pay you or give you other compensation for the injury will be made by Lindenwood University. You do not give up your legal rights by signing this form.

**What if new information becomes available about the study?**

During the course of this study, we may find information that could be important to you and your decision to participate in this research. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

**How will you keep my information private?**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any

information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified faculty of Lindenwood University, and representatives of state or federal agencies.

### **How can I withdraw from this study?**

Notify the research immediately if you would like to withdraw from this research study.

### **Who can I contact with questions or concerns?**

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Director, Michael Leary, at (636) 949-4730 or [mleary@lindenwood.edu](mailto:mleary@lindenwood.edu). You can contact the researcher, Stephen W. Baker, M.A. LPC directly at [sbaker@lindenwood.edu](mailto:sbaker@lindenwood.edu).

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| _____<br><b>Participant's<br/>Signature</b> | _____<br><b>Date</b> |
| _____<br><b>Participant's Printed Name</b>  |                      |

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| _____<br><b>Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee</b> | _____<br><b>Date</b> |
| _____<br><b>Investigator or Designee Printed Name</b>           |                      |

**Appendix C****Student Survey Questionnaire:**

Student Assigned Research #

Student Grade Level:

For the listed questions, provide your response in two or three sentences.

1. How accessible are the university's counseling services?
2. Where are the university's counseling services located?
3. Do you feel that most students enrolled in universities and colleges know where to access potential available counseling services? Please explain.
4. Is the need for counseling services growing or declining on college campuses? Please explain.
5. What do counseling services provide students at this university?
6. What level of education should a college counselor possess?
7. What is the role of a college counselor?
8. Do you feel that most students enrolled in universities or colleges understand the educational requirements for counselors? Please explain.
9. What stereotypes, if any, are associated with students who use counseling services?
10. How are counseling services promoted on this university's campus?

**Appendix D****Faculty Interview Questions:**

Faculty Assigned Research #

Faculty Position:

For the listed questions, provide your response in two or three sentences.

1. What is the counselor's role? What qualifications should a counselor possess?
2. How do students perceive counseling services here at the university? What is your perception of the counseling services you provide?
3. Do you feel students at this university know where to access counseling services? Is there a way to promote these services better on campus, please explain?
4. Do you feel there is a growing need for behavioral health counseling at this university? If so, how should this campus address this need? Please explain.
5. Do you feel there is a growing need for more of an awareness of counseling services to be facilitated on college campuses across the country? Please explain.



## Appendix E

### Stephen W. Baker M.A. LPC, NCC

17998 Chesterfield Airport Rd. Suite: 216. Chesterfield, MO 63005 • (314) 224-9349  
• Sbakер.lpc.ncc@gmail.com

### Summary of Qualifications

Highly motivated, goal-oriented individual with experience in facilitating individual counseling, group therapy, trauma counseling, family counseling, military counseling, career counseling, supervision of counseling practicum students, substance abuse counseling and individualized assessment. Strengths include empathetic listening, time management and relationship building.

### Education

- Doctor of Education, Lindenwood University, Candidate for Graduation: Dec 2019
- Master of Arts in Professional Counseling, Lindenwood University, Graduation: May 2013
- Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Lindenwood University, Graduation: May 2008
- Associate of Arts, Saint Charles Community College, Graduation: August 2006

### Professional Experience

**Stephen W. Baker, LPC, NCC, L.L.C., Chesterfield, Missouri** **05/2019 – Present**  
*Licensed Professional Counselor*

- Provide individual counseling for established clients in the private practice setting
- Link established clients with potential behavioral health services, and or medical providers
- Supervise counseling student interns to increase clinical training and counseling techniques

**Lakeside Behavioral Health, Saint Louis, Missouri** **04/2019 – Present**  
*Licensed Professional Counselor*

- Conduct assessments to determine what mental health programs offered may be beneficial for incoming consumers
- Provide individual counseling, and intensive outpatient counseling for established clients
- Link consumers with potential behavioral health services, and or medical providers
- Supervise counseling student interns to increase clinical training and counseling techniques

**Compass Health Network, Warrenton, Missouri** **10/2017 – 04/2019**  
*Therapist*

- Provide individual therapy for clients
- Conduct clinical assessments to determine which level of care is appropriate for incoming clients
- Assist additional team members with clinical staffing support and clinical feedback
- Supervise counseling student interns to increase clinical training and counseling techniques

**New Seasons, Breckenridge Hills, Missouri** **09/2016 – 10/2017**  
*Substance Abuse Counselor*

- Provide individual counseling and group counseling services for clients
- Conduct clinical assessments to determine which level of care is appropriate for incoming patients

- Link consumers with potential detoxification medical providers in collaboration of care

**Bridgeway Behavioral Health, Chesterfield, Missouri**

**04/2015 – 09/2016**

***Substance Abuse Counselor***

- Conduct assessments to determine which mental health programs may be beneficial for incoming consumers
- Provide individual counseling, and intensive outpatient counseling for established clients
- Link consumers with potential behavioral health services, and or community support services
- Supervised counseling interns during group therapy sessions to promote facilitation awareness

**Internships**

**Centerstone Alton, Illinois**

**10/2012 – 03/2013**

***Practicum Counseling Graduate Student***

- Completed Assessments
- Engaged in Supervised Client Counseling
- Facilitated Group Therapy
- Facilitated Individual Counseling Sessions

**CenterPointe Hospital**

**05/2012 – 08/2012**

***Practicum Counseling Graduate Student***

- Completed Assessments
- Facilitated Group Therapy
- Reviewed insurance benefits
- Engaged in Supervised Client Counseling

**Awards and Certifications**

- Nationally Certified Counselor – 2018
- Chi Sigma Iota, Counseling Academic & Professional Honor Society – 2013