

1 | Background

Mental health issues and threat assessment have been at the forefront of discussions of higher education across the country with increasing attention following the Virginia Tech tragedy in 2008. While helping a "student of concern", "student at risk", or "student in distress" is not a new concept for Student Affairs and/or other University personnel, in recent years, more attention has been paid to the needs of students experiencing difficulty or demonstrated behavioral concerns.

As a result, Duke University created a case manager position in the Dean of Students Office in the Spring of 2008 to identify, assess and follow students identified as high-risk or in need of outreach and/or support.

The primary responsibilities of this position include; outreach, assessment, referral, planning, support, follow-up and tracking for students with complex psychosocial needs.

An integral component of case management services involves collaboration and consultation with University and community members, including academic deans, residence life and housing services, mental health and health care providers, and parents.

"There wasn't anyone who would listen to the problems that I was having... who could also direct & facilitate steps that I should take academically." -Student Quote

2 | Conceptual Framework

In order to understand how the Case Management position within the Dean of Students Office has met needs related to overall wellness among students and faculty concerns since it was created, we developed an assessment plan. The first step was to develop some sort of benchmark for any changes created by the office.

We wanted to measure the impact of the office as well as some of the effectiveness of operational functions of the office (i.e. how it collaborates with other campus entities)

Students and faculty who currently work and have worked with the Assistant Dean of Students/Case Manager over the last 3 years were surveyed. Participants were asked questions concerning:

- The increased aid and centralized connectivity available through the Assistant Dean/Case Manager position,
- How helpful involvement with the Assistant Dean/Case Manager has been, and
- Suggestions for improvements for CM's current role and work.

"I think that there should be more mandatory face-to-face meetings, because sometimes when I feel as if I'm falling through the cracks it's hard to convey that through e-mail and mustering up the courage to engage someone directly can be daunting at points." -Student Quote

3 | Methods

2 surveys were developed and administered using Qualtrics, an online survey tool and emailed to students and faculty who have worked with the Case Management office since its inception in 2008. They included Likert-scale, multiple choice and text entry items.

STUDENT SURVEY

Emailed to 165 students and alumni
40 started; 38 completed
Response Rate: 23%

FACULTY SURVEY

Emailed to 53 Duke faculty and staff
37 started; 33 completed
Response Rate: 62.3%

4 | Findings

STUDENT SURVEY

Interactions were beneficial to my well-being (1:5 Scale Not at all True: Very True) =4.00 (n=32)

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

- Face-to-face meetings were most helpful (3.94) followed by email (3.84)
- Phone follow-up scored lowest (3.28)

OVERALL OUTCOMES OF INTERACTIONS WITH CASE MANAGEMENT

- (Positive/Negative Changes Composite Score- 7 items) = 3.69 (Somewhat to A lot)
- Items that scored the lowest were in reference to whether students would seek and receive help on their own.

IN ABSENCE OF CASE MANAGEMENT

- Respondents reported that if they did not have Case Management, they would seek help on campus most frequently from CAPS (n=22)
- Students identified other Student Affairs offices they would seek help from (n=1 each)
- Respondents reported that they would seek help from private health care professionals, family, friends, professors, church, and/or residence life staff in the absence of Case Management.

SERVICES NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

When asked about services that were unhelpful or could be improved, responses were coded and revealed themes of **Communication** and **Trust**.

COMMUNICATION

- Need for more Face-to-Face Meetings
- Desire for Increased Contact with Academic Deans

TRUST

- A few respondents indicated a lack of trust (in the Case Management Process) through their responses. A correlation was run and those responses were those whom began meeting with the Case Management office during the Spring of 2011.
- Overall quantitative scores and qualitative responses of students who began treatment in prior semesters were much higher. 37 of the 38 respondents reported that they began seeing Case Management under some type of university mandate.
- This may indicate that continued interactions and/or time may improve students' sense of trust and the helpfulness of Case Management.

"There isn't anyone else who is a real liaison between official business and counseling. CAPS doesn't get involved in academics and academic advisors & deans don't want to hear about what issues are causing problems in your life; as someone who needed to take a MLOA, I don't know who else could've helped me make the decision if Amy Powell hadn't been there to advise me." -Student Quote

FACULTY SURVEY

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Email follow-up was most helpful (Mean = 4.85)

Phone Follow-up is helpful (4.71)

Face-to-Face follow-up is helpful (4.53)

OVERALL OUTCOMES OF INTERACTIONS WITH CASE MANAGEMENT

- CM connected students with appropriate resources that benefited their overall wellbeing (4.79)
- Student involvement with the case manager has typically led to a positive outcome for the student (91%) (9% both positive and negative)
- Confidence that Case Management will help the overall well-being of students (4.53)

IN ABSENCE OF CASE MANAGEMENT

- Faculty indicated that they would seek help for students elsewhere without CM
- However, they did not believe that "there are other resources at Duke or in the Durham community, that (they) believe are equally or more beneficial to students' well-being." (2.38 : Not very true)
- 40% indicated that CM connects them with those other resources

OTHER RESOURCES

- CAPS
- Residence Life
- Academic Deans
- Other Student Affairs Staff
- The Women's Center
- Academic Advisors/ Other Faculty
- Dean of Students

SERVICES NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

10 of 19 responses to "what other services and resources could be offered by case manager to better support you and students during their time at Duke" mention limited capacity of one Case Manager and call for additional positions in Case Management.

There is a need for "a clear protocol for dealing with student issues and crisis... Her role is that process." -Faculty Quote

5 | Discussion

- This position has allowed for increased communication regarding student needs/concerns, consistent follow-up procedures, and higher level of on-going oversight and support for students in distress. The case manager is the primary gatekeeper of information and concerns regarding students and manages the communication and follow-up with student's as well as University staff.
- The small size of the office and the increased demand for services may indicate a need for the office to expand.

"I came back from a medical leave of absence in the Spring 2011 and Amy Powell helped me balance my academics and extra curriculars (particular sorority involvement) upon my return. She was extremely helpful in helping find a therapist and find funding to pay for my medical bills." -Student Quote