Access to Mental Health
A Model for College Counseling Centers

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**OUR PROBLEM**

The volume of students seen at college mental health counseling centers is increasing steadily year by year. From 2012–2021 we saw a 39 percent increase in visits. This rise in demand presents a challenge to screening, triaging, and scheduling initial appointments which are accomplished in a variety of ways.

**OUR SOLUTION**

We present a home-grown model, Access, that leverages a team-based approach and third-party software to process and track student referrals for mental health treatment. This model incorporates elements that facilitate collaboration, hybrid work schedules, and data analysis.

**GOALS**

- Triage all new appointments
- Staff walk-in hours
- Handle off-campus referral coordination
- Communicate and coordinate with other campus support offices

**HOW WE DO IT**

**WORKFLOW**

**ON-campus referral**

Student calls or walks in to request an appointment — Access clinician speaks to the student in person (or returns a call) — Clinical information is added to the Smartsheet entry — Smartsheet updated with triage plan — Treatment plan created (scheduled intake appointment, walk-in visit, or off-campus referral) — Triage information scanned into the medical record

**OFF-campus referral**

Student or clinician requests a community referral — Resource Coordinator updates Smartsheet with referral information — Referral information scanned into the medical record

**RESULTs**

- The power of using Smartsheet — allows all communication related to triage and referral to be recorded and consolidated in one location. Work can easily be shared by multiple team members, searched for historical data, and analyzed to help determine trends.
- Our model is scalable and can be utilized by as many people as needed by each counseling center.
- Smartsheet is cloud-based which facilitates our collaboration across the team and allows simple access when working remotely through a web browser.
- Smartsheet’s data analysis functions allow us to extract information about our student population that helps us with strategic planning, education and outreach, and staffing.

**Resources**

- Tracking spreadsheet software (we use Smartsheets)
  - 5 Full-time clinicians
  - 5 Part-time psychiatrists
  - 1 Referral coordinator