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April 15:

What to expect in crisis counseling: Part IV



[Ren Gennerman](#), Copy Editor

April 15, 2020

With the increase in the need for mental health support, Winona State University has taken measures to address increasing student needs. However, many students, faculty and community members are calling these measures into question, asking if they are fully addressing the needs of students.

During the 2019 fall semester, Winona State experienced a counselor shortage due to the rising demand for mental health help from students. To mitigate the long hours for counselors and the growing waitlist for appointments, Winona State University hired Serena Bohn as a permanent counselor and Nancy Miller as an emergency short-term counselor. With these new counselors, interim director of Counseling Services Kateri Johnson hopes this decision will increase the opportunities for Winona State to help more students in a shorter amount of time.

In the past, the counseling office had more crisis questions than just the risk of harm or sexual assault, including if there had been a recent death of a loved one.

However, according to Johnson, due to the high amount of walk-in appointments, the office had to reduce the number of questions.

“Last semester when we had four questions, we had a lot of walk-ins, Johnson said. “We can meet their immediate need, but to follow up and just becomes more difficult. When we took off two questions and focus more on suicidal or sexual assault, we still do have about three or four a week. For people experiencing those things, that’s quite a bit, and those are just the ones reaching out.”

If a student has a crisis outside of office business hours or on the weekends, Johnson recommends visiting an emergency room, like the one at Winona Health.

However, due to recent cuts to the services Winona Health offers, this may look very different from what students expect.

“[The hospital process] has changed recently,” Johnson said. “Winona Health did close their inpatient behavioral health unit. So, unfortunately, it’s a little uncertain.”

According to a press release on September 10, 2019, Winona Health no longer has a dedicated psychiatric unit, but has instead integrated their mental health services into the general inpatient care. According to the Winona Post, this decision came a year after Winona Health elected to de-license their behavioral health unit, which previously allowed them to do 72-hour holds for people at risk of hurting themselves or others. Winona Health does offer therapy or counseling sessions and has counselors available to take appointments.

According to its website, Gundersen Urgent Care Winona off Highway 61 does not offer long or short-term mental health services.

For those who attend Winona State University but have insurance which only works in another state, their options are even more limited. There are mental health clinics in La Crosse, WI, however, many students must find transportation to and from those clinics if they do not have cars.

If students have insurance in Winona, there may still be a delay in care. According to Johnson, the Valley Mental Health Center is well-known, but has a lengthy waiting

list. Other private practices in town report a shorter waiting list, often getting adults in within the week of making an appointment.

For students who are unwilling or unable to check themselves in to an emergency room or mental health clinic, there are limited options for those around them.

Johnson says she occasionally sees friends try to call the counseling office and have counselors check on students. However, the counseling office does not offer that service. The closest thing to it would involve welfare checks through the police.

“As a friend helping another friend, you can’t make them come to counseling if you’re really worried about their, their safety,” Johnson said. “Extreme measure is, you know, calling the police for welfare check or contacting security.”

However, many in the mental health activism community have questioned the safety of welfare checks by police. After a particular case in Texas involving the death of Atatania Jefferson, a Black, 28-year-old woman, during a police welfare check, many people, especially African Americans, on Twitter requested to their friends and family that if their safety was ever questioned, they would not want police welfare checks. In a 2019 article from CNN, a Black teacher offered his feedback about the welfare check system.

Achmat Akkad, a mental health first aid teacher in New York, told CNN he’s experienced wellness checks himself.

“Often officers respond as if the people they are checking on have done something wrong,’ Akkad said. ‘

Just their presence when you open your door, especially as a black male, that can be very frightening.’

For these Americans and others, it creates yet another layer of mistrust between law enforcement and the black community.”

For those who have requested no wellness checks, many students have asked that friends come over or for their families to be called.

According to Johnson, if a student does not want people to know about their mental health struggles but still need help, there are also options for them. Texting 741741 gets students in contact with a volunteer counselor who helps guide them through a crisis through text messaging.

“A lot of people have said really good things about that text line, and that’s 24 hours,” Johnson said. “I think is really important for people to be aware of, especially if they’re maybe not comfortable coming to counseling, which a lot of people aren’t.”

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Winona State University has cancelled many in-person services for the university, including all counseling. However, according to the university counseling website, the counseling team continues to work remotely on Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

“Beginning April 6, we’ll be offering counseling appointments via Zoom and Microsoft teams. You’ll be sent instructions and a meeting link prior to your scheduled appointment,” the counseling services website stated. “If you have any questions or want to schedule an appointment, please email counselingservices@winona.edu or call 507.457.5330. Counseling Services staff will respond within one business day.”

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website, mental health concerns can skyrocket during a pandemic, especially for those most vulnerable to become infected with the disease, as well as doctors, nurses and other health professionals.

The CDC recommends taking breaks from consuming news and social media, meditating, deep breathing, eating healthy and exercising, avoiding alcohol and drugs, and connecting with others through ways that follow the social distancing guidelines. They also say that if feelings of anxiety or depression persist and interfere with your day-to-day life, it may be time to seek online therapy.

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Health services move online



[McKenna Scherer](#), News Reporter

April 15, 2020

Winona State University continues to offer health and counseling appointments to students during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Winona State's Health and Wellness Services clinic, which offers services such as primary care and mental health support, now provides said services online.

March 18, Winona State's Health and Wellness Services began "Telehealth" appointments, but is still providing on-site appointments as needed.

Following an extended spring break, the university decided to shut down most of campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic and moved all in-person classes online, prompting health services to move online too.

Katie Jensen, health and wellness promotion coordinator, said that in-person appointments are now only available on Friday mornings with essential staff members.

In-person appointments require scheduling ahead of time to determine if meeting face-to-face is necessary.

Kateri Johnson, the director of counseling, said that students who were receiving mental health counseling prior to spring break have all been contacted about continuing through online means or phone call check-ins.

Johnson said that some students have decided they will no longer continue their counseling services, while others have begun using the virtual Telehealth platform to continue.

Students may still request telecounseling appointments online.

As was usual prior to the pandemic, appointments can be covered by insurance with remaining fees charged to the student's school account.

Students facing payment conflicts can discuss other options with Health and Wellness Services staff.

"Health and Wellness Services will continue to meet the student's health care needs as best we can to protect the health of our students and staff," Jensen said.

Winona State also offers an Ask-a-Nurse phone line for students, providing them an opportunity to ask questions and speak directly to a nurse on campus.

Joyce Peckover, registered nurse practitioner at the clinic, runs the phone line alongside seeing scheduled patients.

"The line is still being used but is not as busy as it is when students are on campus," Peckover said. "The calls have primarily been about health issues other than COVID-19 although there have been a few calls about COVID-19 specifically."

The Ask-a-Nurse line is still available Monday through Friday each week from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. as it was prior to most of campus closing.

However, Peckover said that the phone line will now always go straight to message as she works from home and will return phone calls as she receives them.

The 2019-20 school year was the last for Peckover after 11 years at Winona State, as she will retire on May 8.

Jensen also said that transitioning to Telehealth appointments has went well for staff members and students seem have responded well.

The Health and Wellness Services social media has begun posting more, especially on Facebook, as they aim to spread “good public health information” during this time.

“Although [we] miss the energy that being on campus provides, [we] also appreciate that services can be continued to support students from our homes,” Jensen said. Jensen said Health and Counseling Services will continue to be available to students through online methods as long as they are needed.

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Blooming Grounds offers free lunches to children out of school



[Kristin Kovalsky](#), News Reporter

April 15, 2020

Blooming Grounds Coffeehouse is providing free lunches for children while they are out of school due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Owner, Amy Jo Marks, first got the idea of providing lunches for children after the governor announced school closures.

“The idea came about after a yoga class I was at with friends,” Marks said. “The governor had just announced the school closures and one of the women I was sitting with is a teacher. She made the comment that so many kids get free lunch and she worries about them.”

She said she used resources she already had with her business.

“As the day went on I thought ‘well I have extra bread that accidentally got ordered and a case of peanut butter and chips. I can do some lunches each day next week!’” Marks said.

The news that Blooming Grounds would be providing lunches started on Facebook.

“There were so many likes and shares,” Marks said. “[My friend] saw on FB all the likes and shares and said ‘we better get to the shop and start making some PB and jelly sandwiches. That was Sunday night and we whipped out about 80. That first week we made and delivered about 100 a day.”

The community of Winona has contributed to the program with donations.

“The first week we received donations from local businesses,” Marks said. “Then people started calling and asking if they could donate, dropping money in a bucket and mailing it in. This is how the program has been able to support itself, through all of the local help.”

The Winona school district recently started delivering lunches to students in the district.

“The school district did set up bussing for lunches, so the need dropped on our end for kids’ lunches, so we connected with the senior friendship center to also help out the older population as I still had money left from donations,” Marks said.

Marks said that she will keep the program running as long as there are still donations, volunteers, and the community is still in need.

The community of Winona has been affected with the ongoing pandemic. The program is a way to bring the community together.

“I think the lunches have really brought the community together during a time that is so out of our control, and we are all feeling the same sense of being unsteady,” Marks said. “This has given us and our volunteers a way to feel like we are helping in some way, relieving some anxiety by giving, and having some sense that we have control over something right now.”

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Students react to alternative learning methods



[Hannah Hippensteel](#), Features Reporter

April 15, 2020

Coronavirus continues to change the world as people know it. For Winona State University, the biggest shift was the movement of all courses to remote and digital learning, effective March 30.

The past two weeks have been an adjustment period for all involved in higher education with the implementation of Zoom, a video conferencing software.

While the age of technology continues to update, students shared their thoughts on the update to their college learning.

Many students and staff alike did not anticipate leaving for spring break without a concrete “return-to-campus” date, so there was an upheaval of academic routine throughout both the campus and the country.

Many students see both pros and cons to their classes using alternative delivery methods.

Many students report the lack of face-to-face communication being a major barrier to effective learning.

For junior Clara Kuerschner, a secondary math and history education major, she expressed frustrations with Zoom's connectivity.

"I prefer the prerecorded lectures to zoom class," Kuerschner said. "I am sharing my Wi-Fi at home my college-age brother, 9th grade sister, 5th grade brother and distance teaching mom. It is hard for my computer to keep up with large Zoom meetings rather than a quick 20-minute video."

Kuerschner said she had become accustomed to lecture-heavy classes this spring semester, so distance learning has not felt "much different than being on campus".

Unlike physical lectures, Kuerschner claims the pre-recorded element of class helps her return to material she did not understand, which is something she could not do in a physical classroom.

For many, online learning does not promote equal opportunities for learning, as everyone comes from different homes and socio-economic backgrounds, which can often affect Internet connectivity. These opportunities can also be affected based on a student's major.

Students in science-dominated majors may no longer have access to essential equipment on campus and labs to complete their studies, and art students may have lost studio spaces to freely create.

Senior Abbey Johnson said she considers herself lucky to be an English major during this time, because she believes the transition has been easier in her field.

“English has been easy to switch over via discussion boards,” Johnson said. “Most of my classes are not using Zoom at all. The hardest part is missing out on fuller class discussions and historical contexts for novels, which often help me learn.”

Thinking ahead to her future, Johnson also said that she thought these unforeseen shifts in learning may better prepare her for professional online work.

Nursing major Rachel Huebert explained her hesitations with Zoom in a classroom setting.

“It is nice to see everyone’s faces that you wouldn’t really see in a classroom setting because you are staring at the professor the whole time. But it is awkward to a lot of students, and it’s hard to have discussions with 50 + students over Zoom,” Huebert said.

Hubert also said most of her Zoom meetings focus on outlining plans for the week instead of a day-to-day breakdown like she would have got in an in-person lecture. Huebert described this aspect of her new learning style as “annoying and a waste of time.”

For Ruby Kwallek, a third year environmental science and geology major, she said it is too early to tell if her time with Zoom will significantly impact her future learning.

“Online learning could either push me in making better study habits or influence me by not receiving the information the way I should,” Kwallek said.

Many students report being able to see people in their “natural environment” was the best part of using Zoom. Also mentioned was how students and staff love to see other’s pets in the webcam, as it often diffuses some stress associated with distance-learning.

Because Zoom is software, there is a risk of malfunctions and hacking.

The phrase coined recently was “Zoombombing,” and the threat has been increasing as users are upped.

This has involved incidents with hacking into Nazi propaganda websites, inappropriate language and gestures and even hijacking control of academic sessions from professors.

In an announcement made by Ken Graetz, director of Teaching, Learning and Technology Services, there are ways to help combat this unfortunate breach in the service.

He encourages Zoom hosts to give meetings IDs, which are required to enter online meeting rooms, to only essential members of classes.

According to Gaetz, there are other steps to help ensure technological security, like a required meeting password, screening meeting attendees for proper permissions and locking meetings while in-session.

As Winona State continues alternative modes of delivery for classes, most students and staff expect to learn and teach differently with the implementation of Zoom into higher education.

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Easter celebrations change during quarantine



[Kellen Brandt](#), Features Reporter

April 15, 2020

With the country in various stages of shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic, holidays like Easter are likely not celebrated quite how they usually are. However, many people are still finding ways to make the best of the holidays and celebrate in ways which support social distancing measures.

Katrina Pfaffenbach, a junior majoring in molecular biology and psychology, is still living in her apartment in Winona.

Pfaffenbach and her roommates were planning to celebrate together.

“My roommates and I are going to make a big feast of ham, mashed potatoes, roasted veggies and a whole key lime pie and then Zoom into our families’ Easters together,” Pfaffenbach said.

Many people are still working, causing them to have to stay away from their families and friends for the holiday.

Kayla Liestman, a junior majoring in communications in arts and literature teaching, works at a group home and is considered an essential worker for them.

Liestman worked over the Easter weekend, so she will be away from her family. Her original plan to be home for a large family Easter celebration will be replaced with her being in Winona instead.

“I plan to stay in Winona, go to work and maybe make myself some cheesy potatoes,” Liestman said.

Much like Liestman, Nina Lovekamp, senior human resource major and management minor, is also working through this time, leaving her to be unable to safely go home to her family.

“My fiancé and I will be staying home and spending time together this Easter,” Lovekamp said. “[That is] pretty much what we have been doing for every day since quarantine started.”

Typically, Lovekamp and her fiancé said they would go back to Lovekamp’s hometown to spend time with her family and nieces but this year, COVID-19 has forced the formation of a different plan.

Jillian Volk, sophomore social work major and WGSS minor, is Jewish and celebrates Passover with her family.

Volk explained how her family usually celebrates Passover.

“On the start of Passover, the first two nights we have a Seder, which includes a dinner and a small service/ceremony,” Volk said. “So, one night, my family and I will have a Seder with usually my dad’s side and the next night with my mom’s side.”

This year, due to COVID-19, the Volk family made a nice dinner and had a Zoom call with their extended family to have a service and be together as much as they could for Passover.

Megan Weilandt, mass communication advertising major, has a unique plan to celebrate the holiday.

“My family is doing a virtual egg decorating contest where we submit our egg photos anonymously and then a few set judges will select winners,” Weilandt said.

“We also are doing a guess how many jellybeans are in the jar virtually as well.”

To keep up with tradition, Weilandt’s grandma is still making a meal but wrapping each one up as a to-go meal with no-contact pick-ups for her family.

No matter how someone celebrates or what they celebrate this season, Pfaffenbach left one final message.

“We are all going to get through it together,” Pfaffenbach said.

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What to binge watch during quarantine



Noah Mruz, Film Reporter

April 15, 2020

I think it is safe to assume we are all staying inside. If you're not, what is wrong with you, save lives, break up with your boyfriend, you could be killing people.

If you are one of the smart and safe people staying safe in quarantine, then there is a lot of free time for you! You could map out your next few years of college, which is smart, or reconnect with some old friends through facetime time and text. Exciting! When I'm not watching films or doing creative activities, I like to have my window open and listen to my neighbors shout a conversation to each other from across the street because they're also staying safe and responsible. Movies take up a lot of my time though, and I would like to recommend some films you can watch while in quarantine. The films I will be talking about today won't be solo films, but are film series and franchises that you can get invested in and spend several nights watching.

My first recommendation is the recent James Bond films. Daniel Craig does an amazing job as Agent 007. The films feature action, romance and humor in a way that brings light to a franchise known around the world. With a new film (hopefully) coming out in November, it will give you a great opportunity to step into the twists and turns of Bond's world. As an added bonus, if you finish the films and are still wanting more Bond, there are 20 films before the recent revitalization of the

franchise that are sure to impress. Even if some might be lack luster, it's about the experience.

Fan of British accents? Interested in detective stories? Maybe you like modern reinterpretations of books written as early as 1887? If so, despite your oddly specific requests, you are in luck! Available on Netflix is the entire BBC series *Sherlock*. Okay, TECHNICALLY it is a TV series, but each episode runs at about an hour and a half, which qualifies as a short movie to me, plus there are only 13 episodes in the entire series. Most episodes will leave you enthralled in watching the way Sherlock Holmes mind unravels to solve a mystery. Whether it's murder, theft or a disappearance, Holmes almost always finds his way to the truth. I would highly recommend this when you're avoiding homework, as the series will do the thinking for you.

Finally, I am proud to recommend the biggest and most successful franchise in the world: the Marvel Cinematic Universe. It is near impossible to find someone today that has not seen at least one film in the "MCU", whether they are a fan or not. With 23 films in the series, this will occupy a few weeks of your time. To be specific, 3,000 minutes of your time, which is 50 hours of film! Do you have Disney+? BAM, you already have access to 19 of the 23 films. Do you have Netflix too? BOOM now you can watch 22 out of the 23. You may be wondering which film you can't watch then, well that film would be 2008's *The Incredible Hulk*, but most will agree, it is okay to forget that one. The short version of it is that Bruce Banner doesn't want to be Hulk but cannot get rid of the Hulk, so he lives with being the Hulk. I just saved you two hours and fifteen minutes.

With that, I leave you with roughly 4,716 minutes of content to watch at home in this trying time. I hope that you are all staying safe, washing your hands and trying to find the light in every day during this dark time for the world. If it's any consolation, you read the read all the way through this, and I appreciate that! Have a good week, stay safe, stay happy, and STAY INSIDE.

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