Deconstructing Descartes: Training the future of Healthcare
Liza Woods, MS, LPC, Connie R. Kartoz, PhD, RN, FNP-BC,
Jennifer Sparks, PhD, LMFT
The Center for Integrative Wellness at The College of New Jersey

OUR MISSION
The CIW provides integrative health services that recognize the relationship between the mind and body and the need for educational experiences for health professions students. Our vision is to be a leader in wellness and health promotion through practice, education and community service.

EDUCATING FUTURE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

CULTURE SHIFT TOWARDS INTEGRATION AND WHOLE PERSON HEALTH

COMMUNITY FOCUSED CARE BASED ON WELLNESS RATHER THAN ILLNESS

STRENGTHS
• Resource to the campus community and students for both training and education as well as MH/Healthcare services.
• Access to multidisciplinary faculty
• TCNJ is accessible to communities with high need quality services at an affordable cost.
• Connection and partnerships in the community and at the state level

CHALLENGES
• Financial
• Resource constraints, space constraints, and staffing limitations.
• Clinician/nursing schedules- barrier to collaboration
• FERPA vs. HIPPA limits billing

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP/GRANTS
• The Christina Seix Academy- is an innovative urban pre-K-8 independent school focused on students from low income single parent families. Contract to provide developmental education/counseling and integrative care.
• VOCA AmIOK grant – Grant will allow integrative care for victims of criminal acts/sexual assault. We will provide physical assessment, trauma counseling, and a trauma informed advice for victims.

TO DATE/PILOT DATA
• 20 CLIENTS.
• 35 UNIQUE VISITS
• QUALITATIVE OUTCOMES
  • Improved sleep
  • Increased fruit/veg intake
  • Enhanced primary care connection
  • Reduced harmful substance use
  • Reduced anxiety
• 93 ACTIVE COUNSELING CLIENTS
  • 23% interested in integrated care
  • Scripting for phone intake assessments developed based off of MI principles and nursing/health/wellness appointments are introduced and offered free of charge to pilot group
  • This is helping teach clinicians how to assess clients and encourage bi-directional integrative care
  • Face to face interdisciplinary huddles

FUTURE
• Implement sliding scale payment for nursing/health/wellness visits
• increased collaboration and interventions
• Common charting
• Ultimate goal to be fully integrated with warm handoff’s and Integrated assessments at time of initial visit.

By having mental health and nurse practitioner students learning side by side using an integrated approach, patients are able to access affordable, holistic care that improves quality of life.
Abstract

Deconstructing Descartes: Training the future generations of healthcare

The Center for Integrative Wellness (CIW) at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), in collaboration with local primary healthcare providers and community education partners, is working to provide a range of integrated, biopsychosocial healthcare services to Mercer County, NJ and the TCNJ collegiate communities. In recognition that the future of healthcare necessitates the collaboration and balance of both medical and mental health, the TCNJ School of Nursing, Health and Exercise Science, and Public Health, in conjunction with TCNJ’s School of Education, are piloting a restructuring of the College’s graduate-level, mental health training clinic.

The goal of the CIW is to develop a comprehensive and fully integrated, trauma-informed clinical health and wellness center, promoting a holistic and systemic vision of healthcare rather than our current bifurcated view. Our distinctive business model provides: 1) Quality healthcare to our local communities, including long-term, low-fee, healthcare to the most at risk populations; as well as, 2) Tiered services that allow faculty practice at higher fees, while teaching and mentoring students who provide supervised practice at lower fees. The CIW intends to cultivate a new generation of health care providers in a balanced and integrated approach that then changes the system of care and re-connects health and wellness back into our communities.

The healthcare industry is currently navigating a shift that requires strategic intervention to address the increasing onslaught of complex stresses. The data is overwhelming in its clear demonstration of the direct correlation between high numbers of chronic health illness and deaths of despair. It is the CIW’s goal to train future healthcare professionals designating integrated medical care as the “new normal” and to deconstruct the assertion that there is a clear and distinct division between mental and physical health. Developing and piloting a Center rooted in an integrated and systemic approach to health care out of an operational, graduate, mental health training clinic continues to present challenges. The majority of integrated care models start in primary care settings and build in mental health. Our mission is one that has logistic and strategic issues to dissect and resolve with few prototypes guiding our effort.

Where we came from:
The TCNJ Clinic was opened in 2005 as a Practicum/Internship site for Post-Master students in Marriage and Family Therapy. The TCNJ clinic served the local Mercer County community as a quality, low-fee, long-term, mental health counseling alternative. Counseling sessions were recorded and supervised by TCNJ Counselor Education faculty and staff. As incidents of anxiety, depression and suicide rose nationally across college and university campuses, TCNJ found itself overwhelmed by mental health issues. In response, the TCNJ Clinic opened its doors to individual students to supplement the college’s short term counseling model. The clinic operated with minimal funding stretching budgets and resources to maintain the comfortable, warm, mom- and pop feel that clients and students had grown to love. With financial threat looming over a clinic closure, the Dean of Nursing, Health and Exercise Science, and Public Health, Dr. Carole Kenner, initiated a merger that, in 2018, became known as the Center for Integrative Wellness.
Where we are:
The transition from mental health to integrated healthcare at the Center for Integrated Wellness has been slow but steady. CIW currently runs with two full-time employees, one Director and an Administrative Assistant. Two part-time licensed clinicians have recently been hired to support supervision and operations management. The CIW has two different categories of clinicians. Our Tiered Service Counselors (TSC) have graduated with their Masters degree and are working toward licensure. TSCs receive a space to practice, referrals and supervision along with a small fee for each session. These counselors see clients who are able to pay the top of the sliding scale fee. The majority of our counselors are working toward their Masters degree in Clinical Mental Health, Addiction Counseling and Marriage and Family Therapy. In exchange for clinical hours and exposure to a working Clinic, our interns see a range of clients at the lower end of the sliding scale fees under experienced supervisors.

The CIW is currently piloting two projects as well as received a VOCA grant, moving toward its goal of integrated healthcare. Clients are currently offered integrated assessments in addition to ongoing physical health checks with an NP student and a faculty NP practitioner. CIW counselors are being trained by nursing faculty to distinguish and flag potential physical issues that may mask as mental health issues. In turn, mental health staff will be training nursing students to distinguish and flag physical issues that may present as physical concerns. One evening each week Nursing faculty and students are housed in CIW offices and work collaboratively with current mental health clinicians to address the medical and physiological needs of the clients coming in for mental health counseling.

The Center for Integrative Wellness is currently working toward solvency. Ongoing grant writing includes collaboration with local primary care providers at the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) to become a satellite office for their patients. Additional grants are coming through to expand medical care and treatment for at risk women and provide trauma informed medical care and counseling for women’s health initiatives. This programming is also being executed in community schools.

Ongoing barriers we are battling include budget and funding, space constraints, staffing limitations, as well as ethical and legal issues related to FERPA/HIPPA. CIW is also exploring the pressures and privileges related to running a business on a college campus.

Where we are going:
Short term, our goal is to expand clinical hours for the nursing team while incorporating a full spectrum of integrated services to include physical fitness and exercise programs, nutrition, yoga groups, basic medical care and treatment. For any complex advanced medical issues we will collaborate with our community PCMH. This is in addition to ongoing, trauma-informed counseling to support the scope of problems that come through our doors.
Ultimately, our long term goal is to be a truly integrated, functional, healthcare center where both nursing and medical staff work collaboratively and alongside behavioral health clinicians as an equally important part of the treatment team. We will educate, supervise and train students in the fields of nursing, mental health, and health and exercise science embedded in a collaboration that reinforces the importance of interdisciplinary care. The heart of our mission is to change the way healthcare is experienced and delivered in order to truly treat the function and cause of symptoms, as well as to provide excellent clinical care to the consumers, and an outstanding and innovative training experience for the students in our programs. Through ongoing networking, community partnership and collaboration, as well as funding and business development, the realization of the dream for the CIW is closer than ever before.

Special thanks to our Leadership team at The CIW TCNJ who’s hard work and dedication day in and day out make what we do possible and directly contributed to content in this presentation.
Katherine Warga, MA, & Beth Fier LPC, NCC, ACS

CONTENT REFERENCES

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