

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TTU FACULTY AND STAFF MENTAL WELLNESS ASSESSMENT

Report of the President's Mental Wellness Committee

June 6, 2022

Purpose of Report

The President's Mental Wellness Committee was tasked in October 2021 to better identify areas of greatest need, and resources and support to address those needs, related to the wellness of Texas Tech University faculty and staff. The committee members and affiliates can be found in the appendix.

In initial meetings, the committee identified several questions to answer:

1. What is the current knowledge of TTU employees of the available wellness resources?
 - o 1b) If those resources have been used, what feedback do employees have about them?
2. What other wellness resources are desired by TTU employees?
3. What is the current state of employee mental wellness?

To answer these questions, a survey was determined to be the most effective method to gather information.

Methods

The survey was designed and managed by members of the committee. IRB approval was obtained, and the survey was disseminated via email from the President's office on January 31, 2022. The survey closed on February 28, 2022.

Response rate: 1392 (of ~5000 total employees; 27.8%) accessed the survey, with 1365 (27.3%) completing some of survey, 995 (19.9%) answered all questions.

- 68% of respondents were staff, 31% faculty, and 1% preferred not to say; these proportions reflect the proportion of total TTU faculty/staff.
- Full demographic information is available upon request.

Survey: The 57-question survey was available via Qualtrics and took <15 minutes to complete. The following measures were included:

- Demographics related to employee status, unit, duty point, gender
- Questions related to knowledge of HR-benefit wellness resources and other TTU-affiliated resources, including open-ended questions for assessing impediments to access
- Open-ended questions about other resources desired and how TTU can support wellness
- Patient Health Questionnaire-Module 9 (PHQ-9; assesses depression)
- General Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7; assesses anxiety)
- World Health Organization Quality of Life, Abbreviated version (WHOQOL-BREF)
- Questions about needing help for current mental health concerns and in the last 12 months

At completion, there were options to provide contact info for potential future focus groups (79 provided contact information) and to enter a drawing for various prizes.

Findings and Conclusions

Question 1: What is the current knowledge of TTU employees of the available wellness resources?

- Most respondents (80.6%) had heard of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), though there was significantly less knowledge of the other HR-benefit mental health resources (23.3-56.2%).
- About half (47.7-52.2%) had heard of other TTU resources (i.e., TTU Family Therapy Clinic, TTU Psychology Clinic).

Question 1b: If those resources have been used, what feedback do employees have about them?

- Most respondents (62.0%) had not utilized a HR-benefit mental health resource. Of those who had, 33.5% experienced an impediment to accessing the benefit.
 - The impediments included difficulty getting an appointment (long wait times, difficulty scheduling), not knowing what the resources were, or having unsupportive supervisors.
- Though most reported EAP to be helpful, others noted it was not helpful (17%) or they desired more or more frequent sessions (19%).

Question 2: What other wellness resources are desired by TTU employees?

- Respondents requested increased leave time or “mental health days” (23%), a stronger response from upper administration to support mental health (19%), internet-based mental health support (8%), more EAP sessions (5%), and more diverse approaches to wellness (e.g., acupuncture, chiropractic care, yoga, meditation, nature walks; 5%).
- In general, when asked how TTU could better support mental health and wellness on a daily basis, 57% indicated wanting a stronger response from administration (including upper administration and immediate supervisors).

Question 3: What is the current state of employee mental wellness?

- Though, on average, negative mental health symptoms (i.e., depression, anxiety, poor quality of life, poor physical or psychological health) are minimal or mild across faculty/staff respondents, there are significant numbers of employees who do report severe struggles.
- Women reported significantly greater need for addressing their mental health concerns and significantly greater anxiety when compared to men; no other differences across faculty/staff status or gender were found.

Recommendations

Based on the survey data and committee discussions:

1. Increase employee knowledge of available wellness resources
2. Make more mental health professionals available (Note: An additional EAP counselor has been approved for hire as of 6/3/22)
3. Increase the number of EAP sessions allotted (e.g., increase from 6 to 12 sessions annually, including time off/leave time attending sessions) (Note: The number of EAP sessions has now increased to 8 sessions annually as of 6/3/22)
4. Ability to earn/receive “mental health days” (e.g., 1-2 days off every 90 days for exempt employees)
5. Provide more diverse approaches to mental health and wellness (e.g., group sessions, acupuncture, yoga, more app-based meditation/wellness/counseling resources, TTU Rec Center access free or further reduced cost for employees)

Dissemination Plan

At this time, the committee awaits further guidance from the President’s office on if/how these findings should be disseminated.

Appendix: Mental Wellness Committee Members and Affiliates

Appendix

Mental Wellness Committee Members and Affiliates

- Dr. Rob Stewart, Senior Vice Provost, Mental Wellness Committee Chair
- Jodie Billingsley, Associate Vice President of Human Resources
- Stacy Caliva, Staff Senate President
- Dr. Ron Cook, TTUHSC Chief Health Officer
- Eileen Gianiodis, Senior Director of Communications, Office of the Provost
- Dr. Alan Korinek, Managing Director, Employee Assistance Program
- Dr. Katie Langford, Faculty Senate President
- Dr. Richard Lenox, Managing Director, Student Counseling Center
- Dr. Ian Lértora, Assistant Professor, Educational Psychology, Leadership, and Counseling
- Eric Maki, Managing Director, Recreation Center
- Juli McCauley, Senior Clinical Department Administrator, Student Health Services
- Dr. Brandy Piña-Watson, Latinx Mental Health & Resiliency Lab, Psychological Sciences
- Dr. Doug Smith, Chairperson, Couple, Marriage, and Family Therapy
- Dr. Megan Thoen, Psychology Clinic Director, Psychological Sciences
- Dr. Elizabeth Trejos-Castillo, Vice Provost for International Affairs
- Dr. Nathaniel S. Wright, Assistant Dean for Strategic Initiatives, College of Arts and Sciences