



President's Advisory Committee on Mental Health and Well-Being

1/9/2026, 1:00-4:00 PM, Via ZOOM

Meeting Recap

The President's Advisory Committee on Mental Health and Well-Being reviewed systemwide mental health and well-being activities including annual reports, trainings, and initiatives. The UW universities shared updates on campus-specific mental health initiatives, including peer education programs, new therapy groups, and well-being programming, with particular focus on faculty support resources and student health services. The committee concluded by sharing out progress on subcommittee work around Healthy Minds in the classroom, identification of service needs and gaps, and a repository of faculty and staff resources.

Attendance

- 21 members attended, representing all 13 Universities of Wisconsin
- New members welcomed
 - Jennifer Bird, Associate Dean of Students, UW-Superior
 - Ryan Callahan, Athletic Director, UW-Whitewater
 - Kaeden Conway, Student member, UW-Stout

Update on Mental Health & Wellbeing Activity

UW Counseling Impact Assessment Annual Report

- Riley provided an overview of the [UW Counseling Impact Assessment Annual Report](#).
- High Demand: Counseling widely utilized; top concerns: anxiety, stress, depression.
- Positive Impact: 86% of students improved after counseling; academic outcomes also benefited.
- Staffing Variability: Ratios differ by campus; some meet recommendations, others (Milwaukee, Whitewater) fall far below.
- Challenges: Low staffing linked to high turnover and salary-related recruitment issues.

Disability Services Annual Report

- Andrew provided an overview of the [Disability Services Annual Report](#).
- Disability Services Report: Tracks student needs and accommodations; informs service improvements.
- Trends: 10% of students affiliated with DS offices in 2025-26. The number of students reporting disabilities has more than doubled in the last decade; Psychological disabilities are the most commonly reported, followed by ADHD and chronic health conditions.

- Purpose: Both the counseling and disability reports guide decision-making, influence staffing, and support national conversations.
- Advocacy Tool: Helps secure resources and align practices across institutions.

UW Behavioral Health Activity Summary and Telehealth Review

- John presented [behavioral health initiatives](#) funded by the American Rescue Plan Act.
- Key Services: Telehealth, mindfulness training, Healthy Minds Program app.
- Usage: 15,000+ students accessed telehealth services over 3 years; 300+ completed mindfulness workshops in the first year.
- Funding Renewal: Legislature approved \$7M for two years to continue virtual mental health services.
- New Telehealth Contract: In addition to tele-counseling, telepsychiatry, and 24/7 phone support, Mantra Health added emotional wellness and productivity coaching, peer support, and on-demand video/text support.

Recognize, Respond, Refer Suicide Prevention Training

- Val and Anna provided an overview on the progress of the RRR trainings at all UWs.
- Course Rollout (2025):
 - 12 UWs implemented the updated faculty/staff course
 - 10 UWs implemented the new undergraduate student course
 - 4 UWs implemented the graduate/professional student course
- Additional Resources: Toolkits, communication materials, glossary of terms, and referral chart based on urgency
- Training Reach: Significant participation and positive evaluations across UW universities.
- Updates: Campus-specific versions and new visual identity for training materials.
- Future Plans: Update graduate student version and create TA-specific training for UW-Madison.
- Next Steps: Val encouraged interested parties to connect with Anna for more information.

Upcoming BIT/CATE/TAT Trainings

- January 15, 9:00–10:30 AM: Legal Issues – Wade Harrison
- February 26, 9:00–10:30 AM: Threat Management in Wisconsin Higher Education – Brett Van Ess
- March 5, 10:30 AM–Noon: Triage Risk Assessment (D-PREP Pathways Tool) – Brian Van Brundt
- April 24, 10:30 AM–Noon: Advanced Violence Risk Assessment (D-PREP DarkFox Tool) – Brian Van Brundt
- [Registration can be completed on the BIT/CARE/TAT website](#)

Campus Round Robin

- UW-Eau Claire: New Dungeons & Dragons-themed therapy group.
- UW-Green Bay: Panel on mental health stigma; new counseling groups.
- UW-La Crosse: Peer health advocates' work; mindfulness art exhibition.
- UW-Madison: Growth in well-being programming; Healthy Mind Survey; plans for suicide prevention & mental health promotion council.
- UW-Milwaukee:
 - "Don't Cancel Class" initiative
 - Increased screening partnerships
 - Bandana project with student advisory board
 - Faculty support resources integrated into Canvas
 - Campus-wide food drive
- UW-Parkside: Student-led mental health campaign; new academic support initiatives.
- UW-Stevens Point: Peer education program; collaboration with athletic department.
- UW-Stout: New group therapies; extensive peer educator outreach.
- UW-Superior:
 - Success of Mantra telehealth services
 - Renovating space to put Counseling Center and Pruitt Center in one location
 - Live Well initiative addressing loneliness
 - Well-being innovation lab studying social nature prescribing
- UW-Whitewater: Secured funding for three additional counselors, informed by external documents. UHCS: New nurse case management role; DBT program (Wise Minds); new wellness coordinator; revamped website.

BREAK

Sub-Committee Progress Share Out

Healthy Minds in the Classroom Update: Randy Barker and Amber Handy

- Program Growth: Expanded from 4 to 14 courses across 6 campuses; reached 1,040 students in 24-25, and 830 students in F'25—with students completing 26,000+ well-being activities.
- Recent Changes: Healthy Minds Innovations is now Humin; Added an 8-week course option in addition to the 15-week format.
- Challenges to further scaling: Gen. Ed. revisions (eliminating some FYE courses), faculty buy-in, and budget constraints.
- Planned Solutions: Increased marketing, faculty training, and research opportunities.
- Goal: Maintain accessibility and continue scaling impact across Wisconsin universities.

- Integration Strategies: Committee discussed ways to embed mental health resources into courses for faculty without mental health expertise.
- Instructor Toolkit: Val and Jennifer Muehlenkamp emphasized need for a stronger toolkit to support faculty.
- Budget needs: Keep the app. free for students, if possible. Funding for research?

Service Needs and Gaps: Jen Bird and Andrew Ives

- Identifying Needs: Committee has explored methods for assessing mental health service gaps, including [Healthy Minds Study](#) student survey and other data collection strategies. Other strategies discussed include media campaigns to challenge myths/stigma; pulse surveys, possibly implemented through Navigate 360; and building partnerships/liaison relationships.
- Findings: Jennifer Bird stressed balancing gap identification with addressing resource/staffing concerns.
- Committee discussed the benefits of implementing the Healthy Minds survey system-wide, emphasizing population-level data and economic impact metrics to support advocacy for additional resources.
- Budget implications: funding for Healthy Minds Study student survey.

Faculty and Staff Resources: Val Donovan and Lori Bokowy

- Plan Presented: Val and Lori outlined strategy to gather faculty/staff mental health resource information across campuses using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) survey.
- Action Required: Committee members asked to review/provide comment on the survey and campus stakeholder list by January 13. Campus stakeholders will be asked to complete worksheets by February 9 to help create a system-wide repository of resources and inform any FY27 budget requests.

Future Focus and Strategic Directions

- John announced a FY27 budget request process and template, inviting workgroups to submit proposals by February 27 for student mental health and well-being initiatives.
- The group agreed to hold the next in-person meeting in May at UW-Eau Claire.

Action Items

- All subcommittee members: Submit budget requests using the provided template to Kristen by February 27th. Continue committee work through Spring 2026 semester.
- Riley: Coordinate with UW-Eau Claire campus on logistics for hosting May meeting, and work with Kristen for any support needs.