

## **PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME (PLO) 5:**

### **Clinical Mental Health Counseling**

## **ANALYSIS AND REPORT**

**Spring 2021**

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Learning Outcome (PLO) 5 states: Students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling master's degree programs within the Department of Counseling and Human Services at the University of Scranton will: Demonstrate knowledge pertaining to the provision of evidence-based clinical mental health counseling services that enhance the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, relational, and spiritual well-being of individuals, families, and groups seeking help with either everyday life concerns or more significant challenges.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

An assessment of PLO 5 (CMHC) was conducted in December 2020. Students were assessed using the *PLO 5 Evaluation Rubric for Clinical Mental Health Counseling*. The evaluation targeted a key assignment (the Avatar case conceptualization in Fall 2018 or 5 Domain Assessment of Wellness Paper and Treatment Plan and Outcome Evaluation in Fall 2019 and 2020) from the COUN 577: Evidence-Based Practice course. In total, there was data for forty-seven students across the three years ( $N = 47$ ). These were the only times that the course was offered since our last assessment of this PLO.

The Fall 2018 semester had 11 students (11/16 students enrolled), the Fall 2019 semester had 18 students ( $n = 18/18$  students enrolled), and the Fall 2020 semester had 18 students ( $n = 18/18$  students enrolled). The "*PLO 5 Evaluation Rubric for Clinical Mental Health Counseling*" was used to assess each student's work. This instrument measures students' ability to evaluate, conceptualize, and anticipate treatment needs with respect to five distinct areas of well-being: emotional wellness, cognitive wellness, behavioral wellness, relational wellness, and spiritual wellness. Students' work within each wellness domain is scored using a 4-point scale, and their work was evaluated by Dr. Ollie Morgan in Fall 2018 and Dr. Ben Willis in Fall 2019 and 2020.

### **RESULTS**

A non-random representative sample of students was obtained from the Fall 2018 COUN 577 Evidence-Based Practice course, and each student's major course assignment, the Avatar case conceptualization project, was evaluated according to the PLO 5 Evaluation Rubric for Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The reviewer determined a score for each area of the five aforementioned wellness assessment areas, then obtained the average of the five scores (Emotional,

**PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME (PLO) 5:**  
**Clinical Mental Health Counseling**  
**ANALYSIS AND REPORT**  
**Spring 2021**

Cognitive, Behavioral, Relational, and Spiritual Wellness domains). The averages for each wellness area as well as the overall total are shown in Table 1. Four of the five areas were above a 3 average. The one area that was not above a 3 was spiritual wellness.

In Fall 2019 and 2020, all students were assessed from the COUN 577 Evidence-Based Practice course using the PLO 5 Evaluation Rubric for Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The assignments considered for this assessment were the 5 Domains Assessment of Wellness Paper and the Treatment Plan and Outcome Evaluation Paper. In this assignment, the students used the same pseudo client to talk about the case conceptualization (5 Domain Assessment of Wellness Paper), treatment plan, and outcome evaluation (Treatment Plan and Outcome Evaluation Paper). They received feedback before turning in their second paper (Treatment Plan and Outcome Evaluation Paper). The averages for each wellness area were over 3 for each semester and are shown in Table 1.

Overall, only the spiritual wellness had remarkable changes across the three semesters. This may be because of the change in assignments that the rubric used to evaluate this area. The trend was an increasing score, which is positive. This may or may not be due to a pre-cursor course to COUN 577 Evidence-Based Practice (COUN 549 Assessment and Diagnosis) started adding in more coverage of assessing wellness.

<b>Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Each Semester by Domain of Wellness and Overall Average Score</b>				
	Fall 2018 (n = 11)	Fall 2019 (n = 18)	Fall 2020 (n = 18)	Total (N = 47)
Behavioral Wellness	M = 3.36 SD = 0.67	M = 3.53 SD = 0.62	M = 3.44 SD = 0.78	M = 3.46 SD = 0.69
Cognitive Wellness	M = 3.27 SD = 0.47	M = 3.24 SD = 0.75	M = 3.50 SD = 0.51	M = 3.35 SD = 0.60
Emotional Wellness	M = 3.18 SD = 0.75	M = 3.47 SD = 0.72	M = 3.61 SD = 0.61	M = 3.46 SD = 0.69
Relational Wellness	M = 3.18 SD = 0.75	M = 3.24 SD = 0.66	M = 3.39 SD = 0.85	M = 3.28 SD = 0.75
Spiritual Wellness	M = 2.36 SD = 1.03	M = 3.35 SD = 0.70	M = 3.50 SD = 0.79	M = 3.17 SD = 0.93
Total	M = 3.07 SD = 0.81	M = 3.36 SD = 0.69	M = 3.49 SD = 0.71	M = 3.34 SD = 0.74

## **PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME (PLO) 5:**

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Areas of note are presented in the “Recommendations” section followed by an “Action Report” section to document the department’s ongoing “Closing the Loop” activities.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Continue to complete an item analysis including means and standard deviations for each area of wellness to be able to better understand student performance and learning in this PLO. Watch to see if there are any domains of wellness that need further coverage to help students perform better.
2. Change the two assignments that have been used in COUN 549 Assessment and Diagnosis into a combined assignment for better assessment of student competency in case conceptualization, treatment planning, and outcome evaluation. With the current format, it is difficult to assess each domain in each of the three areas (case conceptualization, treatment planning, and outcome evaluation) because there are not goals addressing each domain of wellness specifically. Therefore, not every domain of wellness has clear treatment planning and outcome evaluation because of those two areas being a global, and not domain specific, focus in the current format. Therefore, altering the assignment to require specific focus in treatment plan and outcome evaluation for each of the domains of wellness would better evaluate the actual competency for the students and the program’s learning outcome.
3. Have mentors talk with students about their competence in this area from their formative assessment scores from COUN 549 Assessment and Diagnosis. This can help students be better aware of their competency going into this course and is likely to increase competency by having greater awareness of this going into COUN 577 Evidence-Based Practice.
4. Monitor continued student progress and potentially process benchmarks for desired outcomes on the summative assignment.

### **ACTION REPORT**

1. Preliminary working draft sent to Standards Work Group via e-mail for preview and subsequent discussion at an upcoming meeting (12/15/20).

**PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME (PLO) 5:**

**Clinical Mental Health Counseling**

**ANALYSIS AND REPORT**

**Spring 2021**

2. The Standards Work Group discussed the report at the April 22, 2021 meeting. The group added recommendation 4 to the report and decided to move the report toward a department discussion and vote.
3. The department received the report via email before the May 6, 2021 department meeting. Ben Willis briefly went over the report and asked for any questions. Rebecca Dalgin then motioned to accept the report, and Kevin Wilkerson seconded the motion. The report was then accepted by a unanimous vote of department members.