# Outreach Coordinator's Handbook
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## 1. Developing a Philosophy of Outreach

- Why should you provide outreach on your campus? What is your purpose? What are your beliefs about the value of outreach? What is your philosophy of outreach?

- It may be helpful to clarify the reason you are doing a particular workshop. Is the purpose of this workshop to: (a) educate about a particular topic, (b) give people tools to use, (c) help them think in a new way, or (d) advertise the counseling center?

- Two common philosophies of outreach include prevention and development.

- A preventative philosophy of outreach assumes that outreach programs are designed to prevent negative consequences from occurring on campus. More details about three levels of prevention are provided in the next section, Outreach as Prevention.

- A developmental philosophy of outreach assumes that outreach interventions can be used to enhance or accelerate normal development.

- A developmental philosophy is not based on the assumption that there is a problem to prevent but that there is experience to enhance.

- Developmental outreach can help student develop skills, attitudes, or knowledge.

- To learn more about different outreach philosophies, you might want to read some of the Books about Workshop Design. For example...

- Developmental Interventions: Theories, Principles and Practice by Drum & Lawler (1988) describes a developmental philosophy.

- Preparing, Designing, Leading Workshops: A Humanistic Approach by Cooper & Heenan (1980) describes a humanistic philosophy.

- Workshops: Designing and Facilitating Experiential Learning by Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward (1999) describes an experiential learning philosophy.

## 2. Outreach as Prevention

- The prevention literature talks about three different types of prevention: Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary.

- Primary prevention includes efforts directed toward the entire population in order to improve resilience and optimize healthy functioning so that risk for dysfunction, disease, or distress does not develop. This type of intervention prevents risk.

- In his 1996 Counseling Psychologist article on wellness, Lightsey reported that optimism and generalized self-efficacy were two reliable predictors of healthy psychological functioning. Outreach activities geared toward enhancing optimism and generalized self-efficacy ("self-confidence") could be examples of primary prevention efforts.

- These primary prevention activities might include collaborative actions with other campus agencies, consultation with administrative units, and educational efforts directed toward the entire campus community (so called "proactive" presentations).

- Because primary prevention involves targeting everyone in a population in order to prevent distressing situations from starting, one example would be providing alcohol awareness programming for all students at your university in order to prevent the negative consequences of alcohol abuse from occurring.

- Secondary prevention involves efforts directed toward one or more specific sub-population(s) in order to reduce the risk for and incidence of dysfunction, disease, or distress. The condition already exists in these groups but not others or is affecting these groups more than others so that these particular groups have a higher probability of experiencing the condition.

- Secondary prevention targets individuals within groups that have been deemed "at risk." The individuals targeted, however, have not developed the dysfunction or disease. This type of intervention prevents dysfunction, distress, or disease.

- Effective secondary prevention efforts seem to pre-require a needs assessment. You need to know which groups of individuals are at risk and what they are at risk for. From there, you can collaborate with those groups to determine why they are at risk and how best to prevent dysfunction or disease.

- For example, if institutional research suggests that fraternity men and sorority women are more likely to binge drink or otherwise abuse alcohol than non-Greek students, then secondary prevention efforts would aim at helping drinkers in the Greek system not to become problem drinkers.

- Similarly, if institutional research suggests that non-Greek students are more prone to depression than Greek students, then secondary prevention efforts would intervene among non-depressed Independents to help them not to develop depression.

- Traditional campus "outreach," where a group has, essentially, done its own informal needs assessment and then requests a presentation, also would fall in the category of secondary prevention.

- Traditional "workshops," where a counseling center has determined that certain needs exist in the campus community, might be viewed as either primary or secondary prevention. A workshop can be considered primary prevention if it intends to prevent those in low risk (or no risk) groups from becoming affected. A workshop is secondary prevention if it intends to prevent further difficulties for those individuals who are at risk.

- One might also question whether the college campus is regarded as its own "population" or a "subgroup" of the community. In the later case, general workshops on subjects for college students (for example, test anxiety) could then be regarded as secondary prevention.

- Tertiary prevention involves efforts directed toward individuals or small groups in order to reduce the impact of dysfunction, disease, or distress; to reduce the duration of the condition; or to minimize its recurrence. This type of intervention prevents exacerbation or complications after dysfunction, distress, or disease has begun.

- This is the traditional realm of counseling and psychotherapy. From the secondary prevention examples, Greek students who are binge drinking and Independent students who are depressed would present for services.

- Tertiary preventive efforts would try to minimize the impact of the disorder on the individual. We would identify the domains where the disorder has not affected the person yet, and we would strive to keep disruption from occurring at all in those domains.

- Treatment differs from tertiary prevention in that treatment seeks to restore functioning in affected areas. Tertiary prevention seeks to maintain functioning in unaffected areas. When a disorder is progressive, this distinction blurs. Both tertiary prevention and treatment strive to minimize disruption as the disorder or its effects spread.

## 3. Identifying Staff Interests and Availability

- Who will be presenting your workshops or other outreach programs? Will you be doing most of these yourself or do you have an energetic, willing staff ready to contribute their efforts to outreach?

- Will you have trainees who may be interested in presenting workshops but may need more training and support?

- Have you considered developing a paraprofessional or peer-education program to train students to present workshops on campus?

- Once you have identified who will be presenting outreach programs, it will be important to identify their interests and availability.

- You can survey staff interests in writing or in person. If you have a set "menu" of workshops that you offer, you can use this list in a staff survey having staff indicate a high, moderate or low interest in presenting each topic.

- You will need to decide how program requests will be assigned to staff. Will they be announced by e-mail or at staff meeting or will you approach staff members individually.

- Make sure that other staff members feel that the assignment system is fair. For example, make sure you don't take all of the fun programs and leave the burdensome ones for others.

- You will probably need to decide ahead of time what kinds of programs it would be appropriate for your center to provide and which would be inappropriate.

- Make sure you don't step on anyone else's turf. If there are other offices on campus that offer workshops, make sure that you aren't presenting on topics that seem to be someone else's domain. It may be helpful to delineate areas of specialization with other units.

- At the same time, it can be beneficial to consider co-sponsoring workshops with other departments. Benefits include avoiding duplication of services, increased publicity (and hopefully attendance), and closer working relationships between departments.

- Examples of collaboration include a workshop on eating disorders co-sponsored by the campus health center, or a workshop on motivation co-sponsored by the athletic department.

## 4. Motivating Staff to Engage in Outreach Activities

- Define what outreach means at your center. Will it include involvement on committees and task forces? Will it include developing flyers, brochures, or other passive educational materials about clinical services or issues? Will it include presenting workshops? Teaching? Marketing and publicity efforts?

- Link outreach to the mission of the counseling service at every opportunity--e.g., staff discussions or in-service materials. All outreach services market the counseling center to the campus and community to attract potential clients and consultees.

- Outreach also serves a preventive function inasmuch as educational efforts and interactive workshops help prevent psychological distress.

- Outreach also includes a consultative function when the outreach format is interactive (e.g., workshop attendees asking questions about issues or conducting referrals).

- Identify the issues and outreach activities that interest staff members; then, invite them to participate in outreach efforts related to those interests.

- Collaborate with staff to set individualized goals for the semester and for the year. Follow up once a month privately. Praise the achievements of each staff member in the past month at a staff meeting.

- Look at ways to administratively compensate staff for doing outreach or give time in schedules for outreach work. If the center requires X-number of presentations, offer breaks or "discounts" to members who give extra effort to other aspects of outreach.

- Create an outreach team to share the responsibility and to bolster enthusiasm. An outreach team can share ideas, set goals, and design and implement programs together.

- An outreach team can be formed within the counseling center or can be organized across campus.

- A campus-wide outreach team might include staff from the counseling center, wellness or health center, learning center, residence life, or student activities.

- Different members of this outreach team might have different areas of specialization such as personal growth, mental health, alcohol and drug education, sexual assault prevention, learning, etc.

- Take a serious look at staff resistance to outreach. Survey the staff as to what they do not like about the current outreach system. What improvements might they suggest?

- Consider administrative resistance to outreach. Some counseling center personnel believe that outreach exacerbates the dreaded wait-list problem for individual therapy. Two strategies to help deal with this are:

    o Arrange for those coming to individual therapy to complete as part of their initial paperwork some information on how they heard of the counseling center or what caused them to come in at this time. Include "workshop or outreach presentation or advertising for a outreach" as a choice. If the percentage who check off this selection is low, then there is a good argument that this activity does not exacerbate the wait list problem.

    o As part of the evaluation given at workshops/outreaches, consider adding an additional question: "Has going to this workshop/outreach decreased, increased, or not changed the need or likelihood that you might seek individual services at the counseling center?" Should the results of these evaluations show students endorsing the "decreased" or "not changed" options, then there is again more of argument that outreach does not cause increased congestion.

- Although one benefit of a presentation is exposure of a topic to students who are ambivalent about their difficulties in this area, this creates the increased possibility they may seek individual services. To avoid this problem, outreach design can strive to present material such that participants have the tools and resources to help themselves, preventing their need for individual counseling.

## 5. Identifying your Target Groups

- To whom would you like to reach out? Who needs the information on a particular topic the most? What groups on your campus are vulnerable to a particular problem?

- With whom has your center collaborated before on these issues?

- Are there key players in a particular group who can get an audience to attend? For example, if you are targeting sorority members for outreach on eating disorders, is there an interested sorority leader who could make the workshop mandatory?

- Review your past outreach requests to identify which individuals, courses, residence halls, fraternities, sororities, clubs, teams, and organizations use outreach services.

- Express your appreciation to regular users (e.g., thank you notes).

- Are any obvious potential users missing? (e.g., the college or university's Human Resource Development department, etc.)

- Identify under-represented groups by comparing the outreach requests and attendance data to clinical data and to university / college composition (e.g., race, ethnicity, sex, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, relationship status, disability, other cultural identifiers).

- Start with a captive population; speak to other therapists, staff, etc. who might identify a subgroup of students sharing similar needs, e.g. procrastination, academic probation, writer's block.

- Is someone on staff a natural liaison to under-represented groups? If so, is she or he interested and available to reach out to that group? Otherwise, who would be most interested and available?

- Make personal contact with a leader or advisor associated with an under-represented or targeted group. Explain that this group appears under-represented (or why this group has been "targeted"). Ask for time to meet and talk so you can find out why the group is under-represented. Is it because: 1) The group has no need for counseling or outreach services; 2) The group has needs but these are met through other resources; 3) The group has needs and these are not met due to either real or perceived barriers.

- Once a group has been target and contact has been made with a leader or advisor, the next step is Assessing the Needs of Your Targets.

## 6. Assessing the Needs of Your Targets

- What do these students need? What problems do they face?

- Use the internet or virtual mailroom to survey students relative to topics of interest, time willing to devote to a workshop, and location preferences

- Inquiring about the needs and trends other staff and faculty have observed.

- Interview students in your target group.

- Send out a survey to a group before a planned workshop.

- Gather information about participants' needs from the group leader, advisor, instructor, etc.

- Use the first part of a workshop to identify needs and customize your outline on the spot. Try planning a few different activities and offering some choices to the group in menu format.

## 7. Open Audiences versus Intact Groups

- Outreach programs can be offered to open audiences or intact groups.

- An open workshop is one that is advertised on campus and open to anyone who wants to attend.

- An intact group is a group of people who already meet together. A class or campus club each represent intact groups of students who might be targets of outreach.

- It is often difficult to attract students to open / advertised workshops because of the multiple time constraints that students face.

- On some campuses, workshop presenters have successfully encouraged professors to offer extra credit to students who attend campus workshops. This provides a great incentive for many students to attend workshops related to class content.

- If you want to focus on intact groups, it may be helpful to identify target groups. For example, if you want to target freshmen, you might see if you could present to a required freshman English class.

- Intact groups offer the advantage of a guaranteed audience who know one another and may have a defined interest in the topic.

- You may need to experiment with different types of open audiences and intact groups to see what works best on your campus.

## 8. Developing a Repertoire of Workshop Outlines

- You may want to start an Outreach Resource File that contains standardized outlines and handouts for commonly requested workshops.

- The catalog of Workshop Outlines & Handouts here on Workshop Central also represent a great resource with which to start.

- It may be helpful to use a consistent format in these outlines such as the one suggested by Brooks-Harris and Stock-Ward (1999) or Drum and Lawler (1988).

- Developing this type of resource file takes time. However, if you respond directly to students' concerns, adding two or three workshops to your repertoire annually, you will be able to continue outreach without sacrificing quality or one-on-one encounters.

- Don't forget to submit some of your outlines and other resources to Workshop Central so that others around the country can benefit from your hard work.

## 9. Providing Outreach Training

- Has your staff been trained to design and facilitate effective workshops?

- It may be helpful to provide in-service training for staff or trainees so that everyone has background knowledge and feels confident about their skills.

- You may want to choose a particular model or book on workshops to guide your training. Take a look at the examples of books and other resources listed in <u>Workshop Design Strategies</u>.

- Training should cover both workshop design and group facilitation skills.

- You can also encourage your staff to use the materials here on Workshop Central as a way to learn more about workshop design and facilitation.

- If your staff or trainees don't have a lot of workshop experience, it may be helpful to provide pre-designed outlines so that they can master presentation and facilitation skills before moving on to design.

- It may be helpful to offer novice presenters the opportunity to co-facilitate with a more experienced mentor before they have to "fly solo."

- You may want to make yourself available as a design consultant as staff or trainees are making initial efforts at designing their own workshops.

## 10. Marketing Strategies

- Post flyers around campus.

- E-mail to student organizations at theme weeks or days--e.g., national eating disorder awareness week or national depression screening day.

- Use your college virtual mailroom to distribute electronic flyers 5-7 days prior to our workshops for undergraduates.

- Follow-up with table tents in the campus snack shops and lounges and one school paper ad to remind students of location and timing 1-2 days in advance.

- Use your campus or center website.

- Distribute brochures in residence hall welcome packs and in new student welcome mailing.

- Mail annually a brochure to ALL faculty (new and continuing) describing the counseling and outreach services, how to request an outreach presentation for their courses or for the student organizations that they advise, and how to refer a distressed student.

- Participate in student information fairs.

- Put an ad in campus telephone directory.

- Advertise in the student newspaper.

- Advertise on campus buses and at campus bus-stops.

- Advertise on the campus radio station.

- Participate on university or college committees.

- Co-sponsor events that are coordinated by other units (departments, offices, student organizations) within the university or college (e.g., Take Back the Night or National Coming Out Day).

- Participate in Hall Director and Resident Assistant training (they are a great referral source).

- Participate in training of Greek rush advisors (some rushees will be very upset/angry/distraught when they do not receive an invitation to a party or a bid from a certain group, or when they receive no invitations or bids at all).

- For workshops that you commonly present, it may be helpful to prepare stock flyers to which you can easily add the date, time, & location.

- Does your campus paper have a free community calendar?

- Does your outreach program have an advertising budget?

- Let the doctors and psychiatrists in your health service know about upcoming outreach programs.

- Let hall directors and residence advisors know about upcoming outreach programs.

- Offer free food at outreach presentations.

- Hand out free trinkets (e.g., fridge magnets, yo-yos, biofeedback "stress" cards, etc).

- Wear staff shirts and name tags to increase visibility on campus.

## 11. Evaluating Outreach

- Ideally, every workshop and outreach presentation should be evaluated.

- However, these evaluations can be very short:

1. Likert scale assessing overall satisfaction.

2. Likert scale assessing whether the presentation met expectations.

3. A question asking how the attendee heard of the presentation.

4. In what other presentations would s/he be interested?

5. Was this the best time of day/day of week? Would any other time be better?

6. What did s/he like most? Least-or would change?

- You may want to start with this sample Workshop Evaluation Form and then modify it for your own needs.

- If a senior staff member is doing a workshop with a trainee, there could be an evaluation of the trainee by the staff member.

- The outreach coordinator or designee should tabulate results, identifying which topics and what times are popular.

## 12. Beyond Workshops

- Although workshops have long been the hallmark of university outreach, you should consider other options as well.

- Does your campus have a radio or television station? Public service announcements or being a guest on an interview show are two ways to educate people through campus media.

- Outreach may also include written materials like educational pamphlets that you buy commercially to distribute on campus or that you write, design, and produce in-house.

- With students spending more time on-line, you might want to think about creating access to internet resources like the <u>Virtual Pamphlet Collection</u>.

- Passive programming (displays, resource fairs, brochures) are nice for advertising and quick education on some topics.