

Counseling and Psychological Services Website Review Student Focus Groups Spring 2020

Purpose of Assessment

A team from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) redesigned the CAPS website, which became live to viewers near the beginning of the fall 2019 semester. That team contacted Student Life Studies during the fall semester to help them assess the student user experience of the updated website, specifically to gain student feedback to inform website enhancements and maintenance. Hence, three focus groups of students were conducted early in the spring semester. The primary goal of the assessment was to get feedback regarding whether the layout and organization of the CAPS website were easily navigated by student audience(s) - primarily students seeking counseling services, and was the information about services clear and easily found by students visiting the site. CAPS also wanted to know if the look and information provided on the website was welcoming for a wide range of students, including those who may be hesitant about seeking services.

Method and Sample

Staff from Counseling and Psychological Services and Student Life Studies staff designed the focus group protocol and questions, and all three focus groups were facilitated by Student Life Studies. CAPS staff identified potential participants through CAPS list serves, as well as through outreach to student employees within the Offices of the Dean of Student Life, inviting them to participate through email. Focus group dates and number of participants were as follows: January 30, 2020 and February 5, 2020 focus groups included seven students each and February 7, 2020 included five students. Each focus group was digitally recorded and an outside company transcribed those recordings.

Data were analyzed in a formal content analysis conducted in February by three CAPS staff members of their website redesign team and one staff member from Student Life Studies.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Several key findings were identified as well as actionable recommendations that may be taken based on the results. These results and any changes based on the results should be shared with various stakeholders including the focus group participants, and staff within CAPS.

- Generally, focus group participants found the CAPS home page welcoming, well organized and easy to navigate. However, they indicated that features that enable students to make an appointment and inform them about fees and eligibility to use CAPS should be more prominent on the home page.
- Focus group participants liked the photos on the first page that represented CAPS various student resources, but thought other pages were overwhelmingly text-heavy, needed editing and revising.
- Much of the website was not mobile device friendly. Photos were large, slowing page loading from off campus sites and text would display jumbled and compacted on phones. CAPS web design committee may want to reach out to the Division of Student Affairs marketing and communications staff for assistance in improving the sites' look and use on mobile devices.

Results

This report presents the qualitative themes developed from the analysis for each question asked in the protocol. Questions for the clients during the focus groups concentrated on their overall impression and what they liked about the website, ease of navigation, how they search for content and what they would like changed. The complete interview transcripts can be found in separate documents.

Overall Impression and What Students Like

The first two questions asked students about their overall impression when they get to the website and what they liked most. Students indicated the website was organized, engaging and attractive because the many photos represented students and CAPS services. Although the questions asked about overall impressions and what they liked, students also expressed some opinions regarding what they thought was needed or lacking, like that the placement of the “Make an Appointment” button was too low on the page and needed to be near the top.

- Overall first impression:
 - Placement of “Make an Appointment” is too low on the page (10 responses)
 - Organized, easy to search (7 responses)
 - Photos of services and groups make the first page engaging and attractive (5 responses)
 - “We’ve Moved” photo informs students CAPS have moved (5 responses)
 - “Crisis Intervention” photo is incongruent with other photos on the page (4 responses)
 - Neat and professional (2 responses)
 - Not completely accessible to screen readers (1 response)
 - Want slider at top of the page (1 response)
 - Unknown which elements (photos or text) link to more information (1 response)
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- What students liked most about the website:
 - Organized (7 responses)
 - Images/photos represent services (7 responses)
 - Information about workshop schedules and locations needs to be more obvious (5 responses)
 - “We’ve Moved” photo informs students of CAPS move (4 responses)
 - User-friendly, presents what CAPS does well (3 responses)
 - Clarify what’s available through the student portal (3 responses)
 - Variety of resources presented (2 responses)
 - Clean first impression (2 responses)
 - Photo motion (1 response)

Changes to the Website

Focus group participants were asked what they would like to change on the website. Primarily, the changes that were recommended surrounded ensuring all pages are mobile device friendly and not so text-heavy.

- Too text-heavy, editing needed to the text-heavy pages (17 responses)
 - “Services” page wording is repetitive and needs editing
 - “What to Expect” tab too much text
 - “Rabbit Holes”; linked text pages, that lead to link text pages
 - Needs color variety, blue texts that link to other resources

- Mobile device view; the pages need to be mobile device-friendly (15 responses)
 - “Emergency Resources” page view is not mobile-friendly
- Workshops’ schedule and locations need to be provided and more obvious (5 responses)
- “Tell Somebody” page is inoperable (4 responses)
- “Services” page has inoperable hyperlinks (3 responses)
- Crisis intervention photo (3 responses)
- Helpline clarified regarding hours of use and given page priority (3 responses)
- “Outreach” button on the menu bar drop-down -element removed as only one-drop down (3 responses)
- Move up the location of student portal/“Make an Appointment” on the first page (3 response)
- Sanovello App needs clarification regarding the cost of use and its size on the page (2 responses)
- Off campus load needs increased speed; lower due to photo size on pages (1 response)
- FAQ page is needed (1 response)
- Scrolling is required to review, the home page could be reduced (1 response)

Searching for Content on Website

Focus group participants were asked how they searched for content on the CAPS website and if they could easily find what they were looking for. Participants primarily indicated they just searched the site itself, some used the menu bar, but few used the search element at the top right of the home page. Many of the participants mentioned they did not trust search elements, based on experiences with search elements on other websites not adequately finding the queried resource. However, after demonstrating the use of the CAPS website search element during the focus groups, some participants indicated that it worked better than others they had used in finding the queried resource. The themes identified from the responses are noted below.

- Searched the site itself for content (10 responses)
- Do not use the search button elements as they don’t trust them to find the queried resource (9 responses)
- Used the menu bar to search for content (6 responses)
- Used both the searching site and search button element (4 responses)

Themes identified from responses to whether the participants could easily find what they were looking for on the site:

- Yes, due to photos well representing the counseling services (13 responses)
- Color of fonts/blue font leads to links, although “goal-oriented counseling” does not lead to descriptive link (6 responses)
- Yes, due to using the menu bar (5 responses)
- Search element function works good (3 responses)
- Yes, except how to make an appointment (3 responses)
- Too text-heavy (2 responses)
- “What to Expect” tab on the menu bar (1 response)
- Depends (1 response)
- “Make an Appointment” button needs to stand out on the menu bar (1 response)
- Yes, but would like better prioritization (1 response)

The second focus group (February 5th) was asked an additional question by the facilitator. They were asked if there was other content they thought students visiting the site would be searching for. The response themes identified are listed below:

- CAPS student portal (3 responses)
- What not to expect/what services are not offered by CAPS (2 responses)
- Counseling services offered (1 response)
- “Emergency Resources” through a photo on the home page (1 response)

What Is Missing from the CAPS Website

The final question asked the focus group participants what information was missing from the website. They indicated that the cost of CAPS to the students needed to be more prominent and clearer, as the participants themselves seemed to have varying levels of understanding of what CAPS charged students for sessions with counselors. More information about each counselor and psychologists’ therapeutic approaches and perspectives was also noted as missing, as was the group workshops scheduling information. Response themes identified included:

- CAPS fees and student eligibility requirements need to be clearer and more prominent (9 responses)
- Add counselor and psychologist therapeutic approach, expertise and personal statements (9 responses)
- Add photos of all staff (8 responses)
- Add workshop schedules (test anxiety, group), sign-up and locations (7 responses)
- Include personal testimonies from former student clients/reviews (4 responses)
- More color used in text and symbols (3 responses)
- Are services LGBTQ+ friendly? (2 responses)

Department Background

According to the website of the Division of Student Affairs, the Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) “provides goal-oriented counseling to address mental health and developmental issues for Texas A&M University students” (<https://studentaffairs.tamu.edu/student-counseling-services>). Services are available in workshop, group, couples and individual formats as well as limited psychiatric care and crisis intervention.” Per the CAPS website:

In support of the mission of TAMU and the Division of Student Affairs, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) contributes to student learning and development. We provide exceptional services and programming focused on student mental health. CAPS exists to advance student development and academic success by providing personalized and evidenced-based mental health care to Aggies. (<https://caps.tamu.edu/about/>)

Project Details

During the focus groups, the facilitator projected the CAPS website on a large screen for the participants to review. Participants also accessed the CAPS website through devices they brought into the focus group, such as mobile phones and laptops. Their comments were a result of viewing the website projected on the screen and their own devices, but would not fully encompass the view on all types of devices that Texas A&M University students would use to access the website.

The Department of Student Life Studies provides quality assessment services, resources and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at <https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, division staff can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

To work with Student Life Studies for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://slsform.dsaapps.tamu.edu/>.

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