



American River College



Cosumnes River College



Folsom Lake College



Sacramento City College

LOS RIOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS PERCEPTION SURVEY Summary Findings of Employee and Student Respondents District-wide August 2016

During fall 2015 and spring 2016 the Los Rios Community College District Office of Institutional Research collaborated with leadership from across the district and colleges including the associate vice chancellor of student services, faculty, college counselors, and college nursing professionals to develop and administer a survey to Los Rios students to gather their perceptions about mental health resources and services. The Student Mental Health Needs survey was followed by a survey sent to all Los Rios employees to gather employee perceptions about the mental health needs of our students. For the purposes of this survey we asked respondents to use the definition of mental health provided by WHO (World Health Organization) to frame their responses: Mental Health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

Two randomly selected samples were drawn from all students who were enrolled in a Los Rios college in fall 2015. The samples were stratified by gender and race/ethnicity specific to reflect the student population of each Los Rios college. Over 8,000 Los Rios students were invited to complete the survey via email for the two separate sample populations, followed by a series of reminder emails. A total of 496 surveys were completed district-wide, for an overall response rate of approximately six (6) percent.

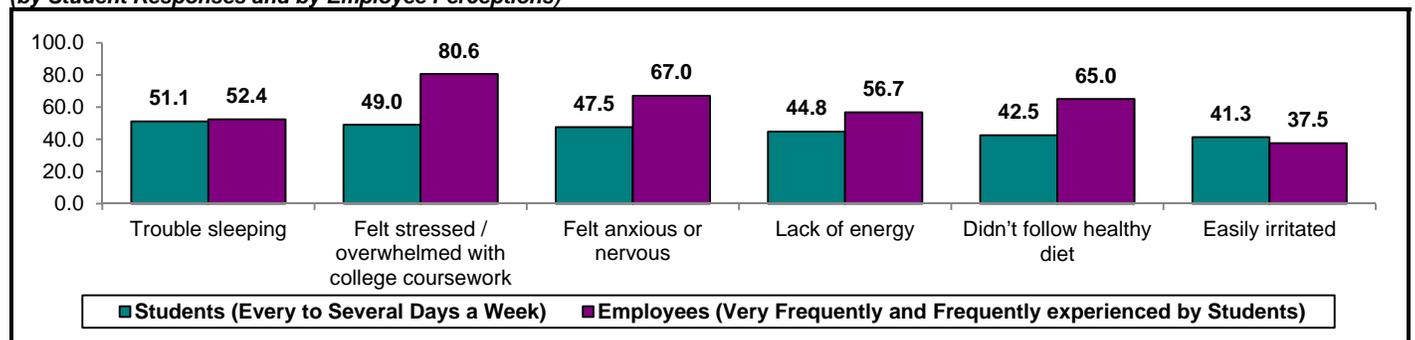
Approximately 5,400 Los Rios employees from across the district were invited to complete the Student Mental Health Needs Survey via email in spring 2016 with over 780 employees providing feedback representing a response rate of approximately 14% district-wide.

What follows are highlights of the survey results for both the student and employee Mental Health Needs surveys; for more information on responses by individual Los Rios college and by various employee groups, please refer to the comprehensive Frequency Distribution Reports available on the LRCCD Office of Institutional Research (OIR) website by clicking: <http://irweb.losrios.edu>. The Mental Health Needs Survey reports are intended to be used for *internal planning purposes* specific to the Los Rios Community College District and the students we serve.

Checking in with Los Rios Students

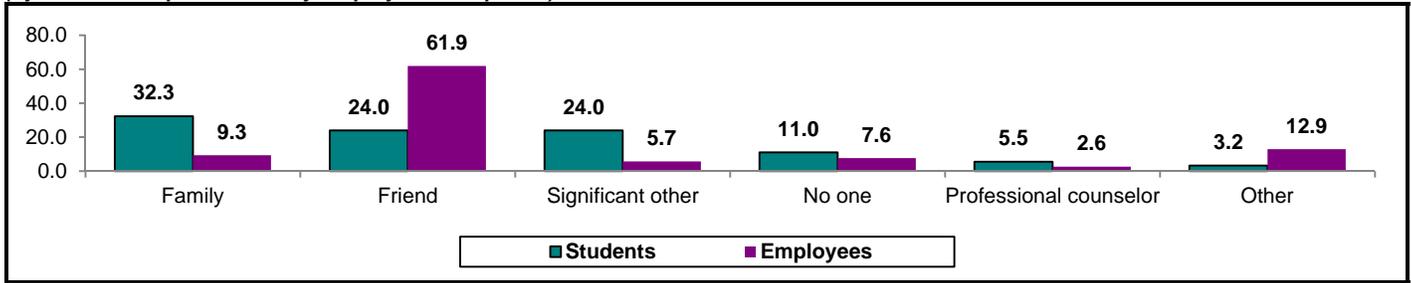
The first survey question was a “check-in” with Los Rios students that asked about potential stressors they may experience and how they deal with these situations. Employees were also asked a similar question about how frequently they believe students experience stress or anxiety and how they perceive students deal with these situations. Chart 1 demonstrates those areas where over 40% of student respondents experienced one of these conditions frequently (every day to several days a week) as well as employee perceptions of how frequently students were experiencing these feelings. Whereas almost fifty percent of students indicate they felt stressed or overwhelmed by their college coursework frequently during the week employees believe 80.6% of students frequently experience stress related to their college coursework. Likewise, 46.5% of students indicated they felt anxious or nervous frequently while employees believe 67.0% of the students they interact with experience anxiety frequently.

**Chart 1: We all get a little stressed and overwhelmed....how often, in the last month, did you experience any of the following?
(by Student Responses and by Employee Perceptions)**



Students were asked who they would most likely talk to if they found themselves experiencing a stressful situation while employees were asked who they thought students would talk to; results of both student responses and employee perceptions are illustrated in Chart 2. Student respondents indicate they talk to a variety of people in their lives, ranging from 32.3% who talk with family members, 24.0% who talk with friends, 24.0% who talk to their significant other and 11.0% who indicate they don't talk with anyone. In contrast, significant proportions (61.9%) of employees believe students predominantly talk with their friends when experiencing a stressful situation.

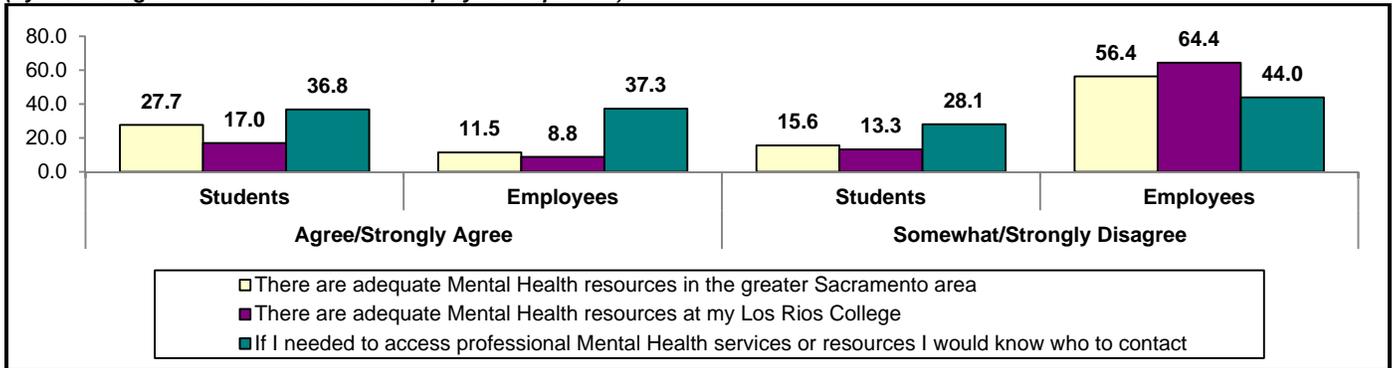
Chart 2: If you found yourself experiencing a particularly stressful situation who would you most likely talk to?
(by Student Responses and by Employee Perceptions)



Mental Health Resource Availability

Both students and employees were asked their level of agreement with the availability of mental health resources in the greater Sacramento area as well as within the Los Rios community. Higher proportions of student respondents (27.7%) agree or strongly agree that there are adequate mental health resources in the greater Sacramento area than do Los Rios employees (11.5%). Slightly higher proportions of student respondents, 17.0%, agree or strongly agree that there are adequate mental health resources at their Los Rios college compared to the 8.8% of employees who agree or strongly agree. Fairly equal proportions, over one third, of students and employees agree or strongly agree that if they needed to access professional mental health services they would know who to contact.

Chart 3: Mental Health resources in the Greater Sacramento and Los Rios Community
(by level of agreement for Student and Employee Responses)



Substantially higher proportions of Los Rios employees somewhat or strongly disagree that there are adequate mental health resources in the greater Sacramento area as well as at their Los Rios college, especially when compared to the proportions of students who somewhat or strongly disagree with these two statements. However, it is important to note that many students selected “don’t know” in response to these statements. Substantial proportions of employees (44.0%) somewhat or strongly disagree that they would know who to contact if someone they knew needed to access professional mental health services. Comparatively, 28.1% of students somewhat or strongly disagree they would know who to contact if they needed to access mental health services. The perceptions from both students and employees indicate the need for increased communications about mental health resources that are currently available in the community.

Los Rios College Community as a Mental Health Partner

Both students and employees were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements that focused on the Los Rios College communities as a mental health partner. Table 2 illustrates the proportions of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with the statements for both student and employee respondents. There is a fairly strong agreement by students that they feel a sense of belonging within their Los Rios College community, 45.1%, and employee perception of students’ sense of belonging is a similar 42.3%. There was strong agreement from students that the Los Rios academic environment supports mental well-being, that mental well-being is a priority, they are actively engaged with their Los Rios community and the Los Rios colleges encourage open conversations about mental health well-being.

Employee agreement is lower for the following statements when compared to student responses: the Los Rios academic environment supports mental health and emotional well-being and mental and emotional well-being is a priority at the employees Los Rios college.

Table 2: Los Rios as a Mental Health Partner by Respondent Agreement (sorted by % students who agree or strongly agree)

Los Rios Colleges as a Mental Health Partner	% of Students who Agree or Strongly Agree	% of Employees who Agree or Strongly Agree
I feel a sense of belonging within my Los Rios College community	45.1	42.3
The academic environment supports mental and emotional well-being at my Los Rios College	39.5	23.7
Mental and emotional well-being is a priority at my Los Rios College	33.4	23.5
I am actively engaged and a part of my Los Rios College community	30.5	27.9
The Los Rios College community encourages free and open conversations about mental and emotional well-being	30.3	27.4
There is an understanding that college can be stressful and my Los Rios College provides support by educating the college-wide community on Mental Health	29.5	26.0
Information about Mental Health resources that are available on and off campus are provided by the Los Rios college community	21.8	22.3
Students at my Los Rios college are provided connections with community Mental Health resources	20.2	18.3

There are some areas of disconnect in perceptions as illustrated by the differing levels of disagreement to many of the statements by students compared to Los Rios employees as illustrated in Table 3. It is important to note that there are higher proportions of students who responded to each statement with a response of “don’t know/ not applicable” than did Los Rios employees.

Table 3: Los Rios as a Mental Health Partner by Respondent Disagreement (sorted by % students who somewhat or strongly disagree)

Los Rios Colleges as a Mental Health Partner	% of Students who Somewhat or Strongly Disagree	% of Employees who Somewhat or Strongly Disagree
I am actively engaged and a part of my Los Rios College community	27.6	31.4
Mental and emotional well-being is a priority at my Los Rios College	16.3	46.4
There is an understanding that college can be stressful and my Los Rios College provides support by education the college-wide community on Mental Health	16.2	44.7
Students at my Los Rios college are provided connections with community Mental Health resources	14.8	48.9
Information about Mental Health resources that are available on and off campus are provided by the Los Rios college community	14.2	38.6
The Los Rios College community encourages free and open conversations about mental and emotional well-being	13.8	36.5
I feel a sense of belonging within my Los Rios College community	12.9	20.6
The academic environment supports mental and emotional well-being at my Los Rios College	12.3	41.6

Employees were asked to respond to two additional statements and those responses reflect the employee perception that students do not know who to contact if they have a question related to mental health wellness as well who to contact if they have questions related to safety concerns at their Los Rios college.

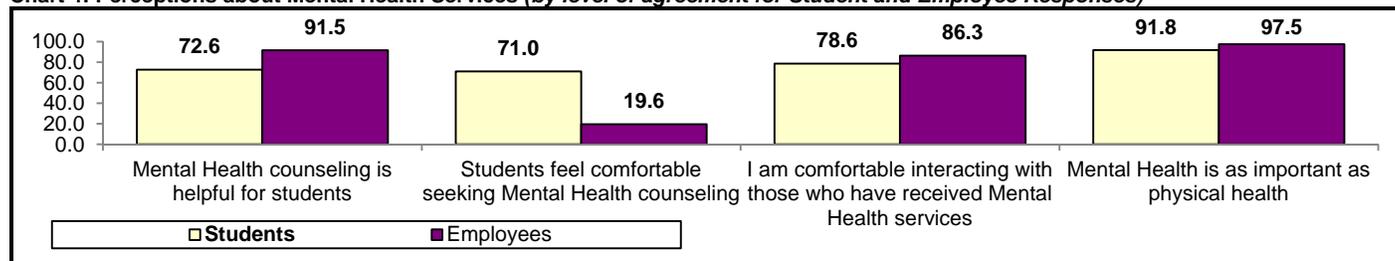
Table 4: Los Rios as a Mental Health Partner by Employee Responses to Additional Statements

Los Rios Colleges as a Mental Health Partner	% of Employees who Strongly Agree or Agree	% of Employees who Somewhat or Strongly Disagree
Students know who to contact at their Los Rios college if they have a question related to mental health wellness	7.2	62.2
Students know who to contact at their Los Rios college if they have a question related to safety concerns	27.6	39.9

Mental Health Services: The Perceptions

Los Rios students and employees were asked to respond to statements related to their perceptions about mental health services. Chart 4 shows that higher proportions of employees agree or strongly agree that mental health counseling is helpful for students while there are fairly similar levels of agreement when asked about comfort level interacting with those who have received mental health services and to the statement that mental health is as important as physical health.

Chart 4: Perceptions about Mental Health Services (by level of agreement for Student and Employee Responses)



Charts 4 and 5 illustrate the difference in the perceptions about students' comfort level in seeking mental health counseling. Substantial proportions of student respondents agree or strongly agree that students feel comfortable seeking mental health counseling while only 19.5% of employees agree or strongly agree with this statement. Conversely, almost half (47.8%) of employee respondents somewhat or strongly disagree that students are comfortable seeking mental health counseling while only 11.6% of students somewhat or strongly disagree with this perception.

Chart 4: Perceptions about Mental Health Services (by level of disagreement for Student and Employee Responses)

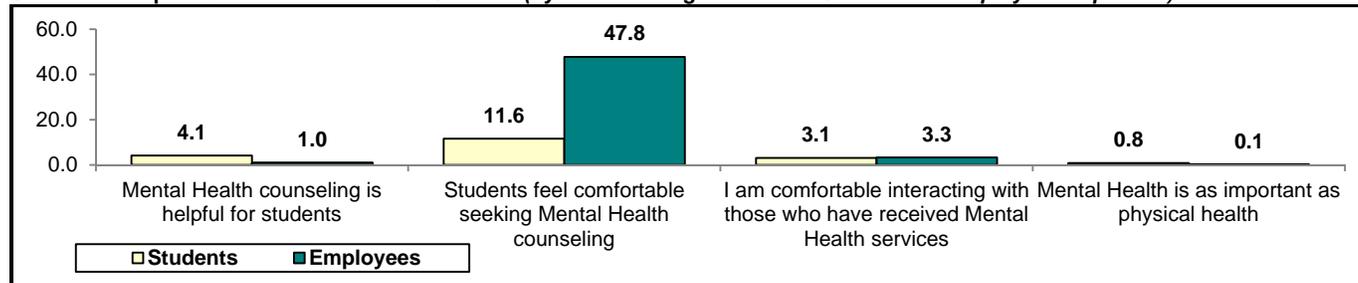


Table 5 shows the level of agreement by both student and employee responses for a series of statements on perceived barriers students face in accessing mental health services and resources. The perceived barriers with the strongest level of agreement are related to cost factors for both student and employee respondents; cost of mental health services is the most agreed upon barrier followed by mental health services not being covered by insurance. Student agreement for the remaining statements range from the 29.3% who agree or strongly agree that location of services are not convenient to the 16.3% who agree or strongly agree students have had negative experience/s in the past with mental health services is a barrier to care. The level of agreement by Los Rios employees to statements about barriers to mental health services for students are stronger, ranging from the 64.5% who agree or strongly agree that transportation is an issue to the 40.2% who agree or strongly agree that services provided are not sensitive to cultural issues.

Table 5: Los Rios as a Mental Health Partner by Respondent Agreement (sorted by % students who agree or strongly agree)

Perceived Barriers to Seeking Mental Health Services	% of Students who Agree or Strongly Agree	% of Employees who Agree or Strongly Agree
Cost of Mental Health Services	54.1	81.9
Mental Health Services are not covered by insurance	42.8	72.0
Location of services not convenient	29.3	63.0
There is concern that conversations about Mental Health might become part of academic records	27.7	48.7
Privacy concerns	27.2	45.4
Hours of services inconvenient	23.5	54.0
There is concern that parents might be notified	21.6	47.4
Transportation issues in getting to the care provider	21.2	64.5
Services provided are not sensitive to cultural issues	16.8	40.2
Have had negative experience/s in the past with Mental Health services	16.3	49.8

Table 6 illustrates the varying levels of student and employee disagreement to the statements about the perceived barriers students face when seeking mental health services. The percent of students who somewhat or strongly disagree range from the 28.2% who disagree that students believe there is a concern that parents might be notified to the 12.6% who somewhat or strongly disagree that the hours of mental health services are inconvenient. Comparatively, employee responses range from the 18.4% who somewhat or strongly disagree that mental health services not covered by insurance is a barrier to the 4.0% who somewhat or strongly disagree that the concern that parents might be notified is a barrier.

Table 6: Los Rios as a Mental Health Partner by Respondent Disagreement (sorted by % students who somewhat or strongly disagree)

Perceived Barriers to Seeking Mental Health Services	% of Students who Somewhat or Strongly Disagree	% of Employees who Somewhat or Strongly Disagree
There is concern that parents might be notified	28.2	4.0
Privacy concerns	26.2	11.6
Have had negative experience/s in the past with Mental Health services	24.2	5.9
There is concern that conversations about Mental Health might become part of academic records	24.2	13.8
Services provided are not sensitive to cultural issues	20.7	13.4
Transportation issues in getting to the care provider	19.2	4.2
Mental Health Services are not covered by insurance	13.0	18.4
Location of services not convenient	12.8	5.7
Hours of services inconvenient	12.6	4.8

Employees were asked to respond to two additional statements and those responses reflect the employee perception that the availability of appointments and student concern that services provided are not sensitive to sexual orientation are perceived as barriers to students accessing mental health services and resources.

Table 4: Los Rios as a Mental Health Partner by Employee Responses to Additional Statements

Perceived Barriers to Seeking Mental Health Services	% of Employees who Strongly Agree or Agree	% of Employees who Somewhat or Strongly Disagree
Availability of appointment	57.8	4.0
Students are concerned services provided are not sensitive to sexual orientation	39.7	12.5

Students and Employees Provide Additional Feedback Via Open-Ended Comments

Although there are some differences in student and employee perceptions about mental health resource availability and access at Los Rios colleges as well as within the greater Sacramento area, the following open-ended comment summary provided by both respondent groups highlights the similarities in perceptions as well as continues the conversation of ways we can provide greater outreach to the Los Rios community:

- **Promote mental health resources:** mental health day or mental health fair at Los Rios colleges, a “table day” to provide information about mental health resources, develop a dedicated mental health resource website and communicate the availability of information, communicate resources via posters and signage, **awareness** campaigns, promote the availability of the community resources, use social media as an information portal for mental health resource availability, Los Rios should be an active participant in **Mental Health Awareness month**, increase **outreach**
- Provide a dedicated **mental health counselor or professional** as a resource even part-time (suggestions included shared resources and partnerships with Sacramento mental health resource organizations or interns from 4-year partner institutions), consider the idea of a **wellness center or dedicated space** with access to mental health resources and information on each Los Rios campus
- **Communicate** to students that it is “ok” to ask for help by providing an open and safe environment to do so
- **Peer and mentor** support groups
- **Workshops** to discuss mental health resources for both staff and students including topics such as stress management techniques, yoga, Tai Chi, conversation and support
- Provide students and staff a **short video** that highlights both Los Rios and community mental health resources
- Acknowledge the **unique needs of the diverse student population** who attend Los Rios colleges and provide resources that are sensitive to cultural and gender issues
- **Increase faculty and staff training** including information on resource availability and access, develop a strategy for helping Los Rios employees when dealing with a student who is facing mental health challenges

This report serves as an initial framework for *internal* discussion at the district and college level about student and employee perceptions about mental health...resources, accessibility, and understanding...and how the Los Rios community can work together to address this important issue. Detailed Frequency Distribution Reports by the various constituency groups are available on the OIR website (<http://irweb.losrios.edu>) and the comprehensive confidential open-ended feedback from both students and employees have been distributed to district and college leadership to help guide the conversations.

This Mental Health Needs Perception Survey Executive Summary was written by Betty Glycer-Culver, Director of the LRCCD Office of Institutional Research. Thank you to Victoria Rosario, Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Services, Shannon Dickson, CRC Dean of Counseling, and the many Student Services employees and faculty across the district for their thoughtful input and leadership throughout this survey project initiative. Thank you to Minh La for technical survey support. Additional copies of this report, as well college level frequency distribution reports, can be downloaded from the IR Web Site at: <http://irweb.losrios.edu>.

August 2016

MentalHealth_ExecSummary_August2016.docx