

Report

Sanyo Gakuen University and College Student Counseling Room (*Kokosapo*) Activity Report 2015–2016

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1. Introduction

The Departments of Nursing, Human Sciences, Food & Nutrition, and Preschool Education at Sanyo Gakuen University and College comprise about 1,000 students and faculty members. The student counseling room at Sanyo Gakuen, which is commonly referred to as the *kokosapo* (a shortened version of “*kokoro no sapōto*” in Japanese, meaning “mental support”), was established in April 2003. After Ishihara summarized the first decade of the student counseling room in terms of users and services in 2013, we published the Sanyo Gakuen University and College Student Counseling Room (*Kokosapo*) Activity Report 2013–2014. In our report, we examined client data from 2015–2016 to elucidate a number of issues related to the future of the student counseling room.

2. Methods

During 2015–2016, the opening hours of the student counseling room were between 12:30 and 17:10 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Two clinical psychologists, who were also members of the Faculty of Human Science, each provided counseling services one day per week, and another psychologist provided part-time service the other two days. Excluding that between February and March 2017, all client data from the student counseling room between 2015 and 2016 were obtained for this study.

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3. Results

From 2015 to 2016, the number of consultations decreased from 310 to 240, as shown in Table 1. During these past 2 years, the peak demand periods were from April to July and from September to January, when the university was in session.

From 2015 to 2016, the number of consulted individuals decreased from 40 to 28, as shown in Table 2. The contents of the consultations comprised all major health issues, including mental health, which was the most prevalent issue, followed by school and career issues, as shown in Table 3.

In addition, to promote more successful adaptation to college life, several different stress management and communication programs were offered. The full list of psychoeducation courses offered to university students by grade is shown in Table 4.

Furthermore, a new peer group work program was introduced in the 2016 academic year (Table 1, Table 5). This new program involved a preparatory meeting in May regarding the curriculum guidance session to be held in June, the guidance session itself in June, and group work in July to review the meeting and session.

Table 1. Total number of consultations from 2015–2016

	Counseling		Telephone/ Letter/E-mail		Consultation/ Others [†]		Peer Group Work
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2016
April	32	19	0	3	5	3	0
May	35	29	0	1	3	8	15
June	45	32	2	0	15	3	12
July	30	20	2	0	3	1	17
August	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
September	15	9	2	1	0	1	0
October	30	15	0	1	2	0	0
November	25	21	0	0	1	0	0
December	18	15	0	0	2	0	0
January	26	14	0	0	1	0	0
February	11	-‡	0	-‡	2	-‡	-‡
March	0	-‡	0	-‡	0	-‡	-‡
Total	270	174	6	6	34	16	44

[†]Others included consultations for teachers, advising the parents of students, and cooperation with external expert organizations.

[‡]Client data from February to March 2017 were excluded from these categories as the counselling room's statistical data was calculated in 31 January 2017.

Table 2. Number of clients from 2015–2016

Grade	New cases in 2016	Ongoing cases from 2015	2016 total	New cases in 2015	Ongoing cases from 2014	2015 total
University						
First	4	0	4	4	0	4
Second	1	2	3	3	7	10
Third	3	8	11	2	4	6
Fourth	0	3	3	6	7	13
Subtotal	8	13	21	15	18	33
Junior college						
First	4	0	4	4	0	4
Second	2	1	3	1	2	3
Subtotal	6	1	7	5	2	7
Total			28	20	20	40

Table 3. Contents individual consultations from 2015–2016

	School and career path	Adapting	Health and living	Psychological assessment
Consultation contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of study • Change of schools • Temporary absence or withdraw from school • Career • Extracurricular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal relations • Love or sexual identity • Personality • Home • Philosophy • Mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Economy • Housing • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality test • Vocational interest test
2016	4	23	1	0
2015	4	34	1	1

Table 4. Psychoeducation courses offered to students from 2015–2016

No	Date	Faculty	Grade	Contents of psychoeducation	Program time (min)	Number of students
1	2015.5.18	Nutrition	First	Communication Program Skills	50	120
2	2015.7.13	Nursing	Third	Stress Management & Assertion Program	180	8
3	2016.1.25	Nutrition	First	Assertion Program	50	71
4	2016.7.4.	Nursing	Third	Assertion Program	90	9
5	2016.7.11	Nursing	Third	Stress Management	90	9

Table 5. Peer group work for students in 2016

No	Date	Faculty	Grade	Contents of Psychoeducation	Program time (min)	Number of students
1	2016.5.18	Human sciences	Fourth, Third	Meeting of curriculum guidance for the foundation stage	90	15
2	2016.6.15	Human sciences	First	Peer group work for college curriculum	180	12
3	2016.7.20	Human sciences	Fourth, Third	Encounter group	90	17

4. Discussion

The primary objective of the present study was to examine client data from 2015–2016 and elucidate issues related to the future of the student counseling room.

The results suggested that: 1) there were 240 total consultations; 2) many students visited the student counseling room during class hours; 3) the primary consultation contents were about health, including mental health; 4) numerous stress management and communication programs were offered; and 5) Peer group work was conducted in the first semester. The findings of the present study were similar to those reported by Ishihara (2013) and Masuda et al. (2015).

The results also suggest that psychotherapy, including psychoeducation programs for students, teacher consultations, advising the students' parents, cooperating with external expert organizations, and peer group work, not only in the student counseling room, but also in the community, has the potential to promote improved mental health in university students.

The decrease in the total number of consultations in 2016 compared to previous years may have been due to the reduction in emergency support regarding self-harm and attempted suicide. Conversely, the need for guest psychoeducation classes in other faculties and peer group work was high. During peer group work, although a counselor took on the role of group leader, group progress was actually in the hands of senior students (second and third year Human Science students), which enabled the participants (first year Human Science students) to better relate to the discussion content. This background suggests that high interest for activity for student counseling room ("kokosapo") and high motivation of counseling in "kokosapo" are influenced by the presence of their immediate seniors and by the fact that the counselors in "kokosapo" are also faculty members. In other words, it can be hypothesized that prior acquaintance between counselors and clients makes a major contribution to the counseling motivation in "kokosapo".

Future issues involve the need to 1) proactively conduct guest psychoeducation classes in all faculties to enable students from faculties other than the counselors' faculty to become acquainted with the counselors, and 2) conduct peer group work in each faculty throughout the year, not only in the first semester. To resolve these issues, proactively incorporating peer group work and guest classes taught by counselors into the educational curriculum of each faculty should be considered.

5. Notes

- 1) This research was supported by a research grant from Sanyo Gakuen University.
- 2) We would like to thank *Forte Inc.* for their English language editing service.

6. References

- 1) Ishihara, M. (2013) Activities over 10 years and future topics of discussion regarding the Student Counseling Room of Sanyo Gakuen University and College. *Sanyo Review*, Vol. 20, p107–120. (In Japanese.)
- 2) Masuda, R., Kamiji, R. & Nakano, M. (2015) Activity Report of the Student Counseling Room (*kokosapo*) of Sanyogakuen University and College, 2013–2014. *Sanyo Review*, Vol. 22, p137–143.