

MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS AT UNIVERSITY COUNSELING
CENTERS IN TÜRKİYE: EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES, NEEDS AND
RESOURCES



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RESOURCES

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Mental Health Providers at University Counseling Centers in Türkiye: Experiences,
Challenges, Needs and Resources

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Esma Adem, certify that

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ABSTRACT

Mental Health Providers at University Counseling Centers in Türkiye: Experiences, Challenges, Needs and Resources

This qualitative study examined the experiences of mental health professionals working in university counseling centers (UCCs) in Türkiye. It explored what it is like to provide mental health services in the university context, focusing on working conditions, positive experiences, challenges, needs, and support resources. Semi-structured online interviews were conducted with ten mental health professionals working at universities in different regions. Obtained data was analyzed using content analysis with the help of MAXQDA software, and the findings were presented under five main themes: working conditions, positive experiences, challenges, needs, and support resources. Physical working conditions, especially being on campus and having access to nature as well as working with university students were found among the most commonly reported positive experiences, while the most frequently mentioned challenges included center structure, managerial attitudes and financial difficulties. Professional needs—particularly opportunities for ongoing education—along with managerial and structural, and financial needs, were identified as primary needs. Supportive resources were diverse and among others included providers' internal processes, close personal relationships and colleagues at the center. This study contributes to the limited literature on UCCs in Türkiye by underscoring institutional and contextual dynamics. Recommendations include establishing structured supervision systems, promoting campus-wide mental health awareness, and developing policies to support professionals' well-being.

ÖZET

Türkiye’deki Üniversite Psikolojik Danışma Merkezlerinde Görev Yapan Ruh

Sağlığı Uzmanları: Deneyimler, Zorluklar, İhtiyaçlar ve Kaynaklar

Bu nitel çalışma, Türkiye'deki üniversite psikolojik danışma merkezlerinde görev yapan ruh sağlığı uzmanlarının deneyimlerini incelemiştir. Üniversite bağlamında ruh sağlığı hizmeti sunmanın nasıl bir deneyim olduğunu anlamayı amaçlayan çalışmada; çalışma koşulları, olumlu deneyimler, zorluklar, ihtiyaçlar ve destek kaynakları ele alınmıştır. Farklı bölgelerdeki üniversitelerde görev yapan on ruh sağlığı uzmanıyla yarı yapılandırılmış çevrimiçi görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler MAXQDA yazılımı ile içerik analizi yoluyla değerlendirilmiş ve bulgular beş ana tema altında sunulmuştur. Fiziksel koşullar—özellikle kampüste olmak, doğaya erişim ve öğrencilerle çalışmak—en sık belirtilen olumlu deneyimler arasında yer alırken, merkez yapısı, yönetsel tutumlar ve finansal güçlükler en yaygın zorluklar olarak öne çıkmıştır. Sürekli eğitime dair fırsatlar başta olmak üzere mesleki, yönetsel, yapısal ve mali ihtiyaçlar temel gereksinimler olarak tanımlanmıştır. Destek kaynakları çeşitlilik göstermekte; içsel başa çıkma süreçleri, yakın ilişkiler ve meslektaş desteği bu kaynaklar arasında yer almıştır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye’deki üniversite ruh sağlığı hizmetlerine ilişkin sınırlı literatüre kurumsal ve bağlamsal dinamikleri vurgulayarak katkı sunmuştur. Bulgular doğrultusunda yapılandırılmış süpervizyon sistemleri kurulması, kampüs genelinde ruh sağlığı farkındalığının artırılması ve uzmanların iyi oluşunu destekleyen politikaların geliştirilmesi önerilmektedir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

University years are known as a time of great change (Brunner et al., 2017). Students face several challenges along with high expectations (Phoenix, 2020; Sui & Leng, 2023). And while students' psychological health very much informs their academic performance, the very nature of higher education puts students' mental health at risk (Francis & Horn, 2017). Psychological counseling centers in universities are units that aim to support students' well-being (Vescovelli et al., 2017). University counseling centers (UCCs) offer a variety of services, and their effectiveness in facilitating student well-being is supported by numerous studies in the literature (Bani et al., 2024; Connell et al., 2007; Kharas, 2014; O'Shea et al., 2021; Sharkin, 2004). These facilities are known to make positive contributions to students' academic success as well (Choi et al., 2010; Cronin et al., 2021; McKenzie et al., 2015). Increasingly more students reach out to UCCs for their personal or academic needs (Smith et al., 2007), and being located in students' immediate surroundings, these centers might even become the primary source of support for most students, especially in the West (Harrison & Gordon, 2021). UCCs serve not only students but also different communities via consultation and collaboration work with various faculties and departments within the university, which further contributes to student wellness and academic success (Brunner et al., 2017).

While UCCs may have overlapping missions and are known for effective service delivery, there are considerable differences between centers. First, the organizational structures and services they offer can change based on location as well as time (Brunner et al., 2014). For instance, some centers are administratively

integrated with student health services, while others function under Dean of Students. Moreover, service modalities vary: one center may emphasize psychotherapy and crisis response, while another may concentrate on outreach, prevention, and peer education efforts. Some centers provide in-house psychiatric care, whereas others refer students externally. UCCs also differ by the backgrounds of the mental health providers working at these centers.

UCCs in the Western world have followed a particular developmental path influenced by sociopolitical changes including the student activism of the 1960s, economic challenges in the 1980s, and increased institutional focus on student mental health in the 1990s. These changes have influenced both the organizational structure of the centers and the kind of services they emphasize (Guinee & Ness, 2000). UCCs also differ by the backgrounds of the mental health providers working at these centers. Providers in the West may come from fields such as psychology, psychological counseling and guidance, educational sciences, and social services and may have different areas of expertise (Newhart et al., 2021).

Regardless of their background and area of expertise, mental health providers working at a UCC share certain experiences working in other contexts (Sim et al., 2016). Studies examining the experiences of those working in mental health provision in general show that these providers often report rewarding experiences such as promoting growth and change in the clients, establishing cherished bonds with the clients (Farber & Heifetz, 1981; Oberleitner et al., 2021), and experiencing personal and professional growth for themselves (Kramen-Kahn & Hansen, 1998). Those working in this field also encounter difficulties related to personal exhaustion stemming from therapeutic relationships, as well as struggles in managing the pressures inherent in these relationships and navigating the hardships in their work

environment (Farber & Heifetz, 1981). New challenges have been added to the mental health providers' experiences with the COVID-19 crisis and the increased use of remote online services that have accompanied the pandemic. These difficulties included technical disruptions and concerns regarding ensuring the suitability of the service provided for online environments (Ignacio, 2023). Furthermore, professionals in the mental health fields are known to be at risk for mental health problems themselves as a result of secondary traumatization or compassion fatigue (Arpacioğlu et al., 2020; Cavanagh et al., 2019; Farber & Heifetz, 1981; Moran et al., 2012). Luckily, mental health providers are not without resources. It was observed that mental health practitioners' sources of support may include focusing on self-care such as going to therapy themselves (Mahoney, 1997), physical exercise (Gil-Beltrán et al., 2020; Seo & Huh, 2022) and maintaining and strengthening relationships with people around them (Halbesleben, 2006; Schultheiss et al., 2001).

While the literature offers some insight into the rewarding and challenging experiences of practitioners in the mental health field, the experiences of professionals working in the university context are not as readily available. In the international literature, studies on UCCs are not only limited in number but also focus mostly on the provided services and student experiences (Pérez-Rojas et al., 2017). A number of studies speak to the challenges that UCCs face and highlight that they have experienced a supply-demand imbalance for many years. This problem is exacerbated by an ongoing increase in demand for services, along with a demand for a broader range of needs (Mull et al., 2018; Walls, 2023). Very few articles give voice to the providers themselves. Yet, available data suggest that UCC professionals are struggling to meet the high demands while also explaining their complex roles to

those they work with and striving to be creative and find flexible methods that fit this changing environment (Harrison & Gordon, 2021).

Shifting attention to Türkiye, it becomes apparent that there's a notable absence of comprehensive quantitative studies like the routine surveys commonly undertaken in Western settings over the years. In contrast to the wealth of international studies, especially in Western contexts, there's a noticeable scarcity of research covering the establishment of centers, the range of services offered, student demographics, and the challenges they face. Research exploring the firsthand experiences of professionals, including their rewards, challenges, needs, or supportive resources, also appears to be missing. This absence leaves a significant void in our efforts to form a thorough understanding of the experiences encountered by professionals within these centers.

Moreover, it is unclear how mental health providers working at UCCs are impacted by their context. University counseling centers exist in a rich historical, political, and social context. How and when UCCs are formed and what they look like today in terms of structure, purpose, and service delivery are informed by stakeholders' perceptions and needs, social context, political climate, and time. Attempts to understand the experiences of the mental health providers working at these centers would benefit from recognizing and clarifying how the multi-tiered context shapes their reality.

1.1 Purpose of the study

This study aims to understand the experiences of mental health providers working at UCCs in Türkiye. Specifically, this study seeks to understand the perceptions of these professionals with regard to the benefits and challenges they experience, their

needs and the support they receive while working at a UCC. Understanding the nuanced experiences of mental health providers within UCCs necessitates a holistic examination of the myriad contextual factors that converge to shape their professional realities, spanning from the immediate organizational context to the broader socio-cultural environment. We are to specifically explore the influences of interactions with family, colleagues, and students, referred to as the micro-system layer, as well as broader relationships with administration, termed the macro-system layer (Bone, 2015). Therefore, the research questions of the current study are as follows:

1. What are the work conditions of mental health professionals who work at university counseling centers, considering the various levels of influence in their environment?
2. What positive experiences do mental health professionals face in university counseling centers, and how are these positive experiences shaped by the micro and macro-level contexts in which they operate?
3. What challenges do mental health professionals face in university counseling centers, and how are these challenges shaped by the micro and macro-level contexts in which they operate?
4. What needs do mental health professionals working in university counseling centers have, and how do these needs manifest within the micro- and macro-level contexts of their work environment?
5. What supportive resources contribute to mental health professionals' sense of wellness and effectiveness in university counseling centers, and how do these resources interact within the micro and macro-level contexts in which they operate?

1.2 Significance of the study

The university years represent a pivotal transitional phase in students' lives, marked by numerous changes and challenges across academic, social, physical, and psychological domains (Duffy et al., 2019; Hotez et al., 2021). Situated within the students' microsystem, university psychological counseling centers play a crucial role in addressing these multifaceted difficulties. While supporting students through their struggles holds immense significance, the demand for services often surpasses the available resources, leading to potential strain on centers' financial and physical capacities (Cerolini et al., 2023). There is a gap in the literature concerning how mental health providers working at UCCs experience these dynamics. Moreover, a notable gap also exists with respect to understanding the operational dynamics of UCCs in Türkiye and how these dynamics interact with and shape the experiences of the mental health professionals working within them.

Drawing upon Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), which posits that various layers of systems influence individuals, it can be speculated that diverse managerial and structural characteristics of UCCs, along with collaborations with stakeholders, profoundly impact the work experiences of mental health providers. Yet, to date, scholarly inquiry has largely overlooked this important aspect. This study aims to shed light on the experiences of professionals whose voices have largely been overlooked in the literature, particularly within the context in which they work.

This research seeks to offer valuable insight into what a career in university counseling centers might entail by exploring what motivates professionals to remain in their roles, the challenges they face, the needs they express, and the types of support they utilize. Additionally, such insights could inform administrators

overseeing these centers, prompting strategic changes aimed at minimizing challenges as well as maximizing benefits and access to sources of support. Ultimately, these changes have the potential to foster workplace wellness for professionals and positively influence the well-being of the student population they serve. This and other related implications for the counseling field are further identified below.

1.2.1 Implication for counseling

This study is expected to contribute to counseling practice by providing information to counselors who will serve as mental health professionals at university counseling centers and supervisors who support these providers' professional development. An increased understanding of the experiences of practitioners and the difficulties they face may inform and enhance the support offered to them. In addition, this study may contribute to how their educators, supervisors and mentors support the professional development of counseling trainees. In other words, the current study may inform counselor education processes with respect to facilitating professional development and increasing insight into readiness and fit for specific workspaces.

In counseling psychology, advocacy is an essential part of ethical responsibility for both clients and the profession (Herlihy & Corey, 2015). Advocacy is the act of a counselor taking steps to support and improve not only the individual life of the client but also the broader context in which the client lives and striving for systematic changes (Myers et al., 2002). This study has the potential to provide self-advocacy tools to counselors by examining the experiences of UCC mental health providers in a way that takes environmental factors into account. It may contribute to strengthening self-advocacy efforts by understanding the contribution of work

environments to professionals' experiences as well as helping to identify the sources of support needed.

Finally, understanding the experiences of university mental health providers and developing supportive resources may contribute to the effectiveness of student services. A better understanding of relevant issues and more supportive work environments may enable practitioners to provide students with more effective mental health services, which may lead to better student outcomes.

In summary, the implications of the current study extend beyond the individual practices of university mental health providers to include systemic changes. The findings can further inform the counseling that mental health providers receive, training and supervision practices, and professional development efforts. Perhaps most importantly, the results may facilitate systemic changes in the field.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review begins by laying the theoretical foundation for the study, namely the Bio-Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and its adaptation to the workplace by Bone (2015). Then, the literature overseeing the historical background, structure, and function of university counseling centers (UCCs), both in Western contexts and in Türkiye, is explored in depth. The current approaches UCCs take and how stakeholders perceive these centers are clarified. Subsequently, the focus shifts to mental health providers, specifically those who work at UCCs. Studies that shed light on these professionals' rewarding and challenging experiences, as well as their needs and sources of support, are summarized.

2.1 Theoretical framework

Our exploration of the experiences of university mental health providers is built on the Bioecological Systems Theory, initially developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) in the context of child development and was also adapted to workplace environments (Bone, 2015). Before providing a detailed explanation of this theory which serves as the study's theoretical framework, a brief discussion of possible alternative theories is presented to justify why Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory was chosen.

A number of theoretical orientations could be suitable to provide a framework for the current study. Job Demands-Resources Model (Demerouti et al., 2001), Self-Determination Model (Deci & Ryan, 1985), Person-Environment Fit Theory

(Kristof, 1996) were considered among alternatives to Bioecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The Job Demands-Resources Model (Demerouti et al., 2001) primarily focuses on the impact of job demands, such as workload and emotional strain, alongside job resources, such as autonomy and supervision, on employees' well-being and burnout. Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Model, on the other hand, evaluates employees' well-being and job involvement through the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Both of these models could provide a meaningful lens to understand unique stressors and motivators that professionals at UCCs face. However, having focused more so on the individual, both models might be limited in fostering our understanding of external environmental factors that influence employees' experiences.

Person-Environment Fit Theory (Kristof, 1996), which focuses on the alignment between an individual's needs, abilities, and values and the environmental factors of their job, was considered as an alternative that could shed a better light on the context of being a UCC employee. However, this model could be limited in facilitating our understanding of broader layers such as cultural, political, and societal influences on the UCC professionals' work experience. Eager to explore the experiences of mental health practitioners as influenced by various contexts and the interaction between them, Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for the current study. Next, we elaborate on and explain this theory further.

Placing the individual at the center, Bioecological Systems Theory recognizes different layers of systems surrounding the individual and influencing his/her development. These layers include the microsystem, exosystem, mesosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

Each layer of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory can be elucidated with examples drawn from its original context of child development, enriching our understanding of its complexity. The microsystem, the closest and most immediate environment wherein the individual directly interacts, includes entities such as family, friends, and school. Moving outward, the exosystem encompasses influences not directly interacting with but impacting the individual's life and growth. A descriptive example is the parents' work environment, where the child is not present but by which the child is indirectly affected.

The mesosystem, often called the system of the child's microsystems, explores the interactions of two or more distinct layers. For instance, while family and school represent microsystem factors, their interactions and the resulting impact on the child's development occur in the mesosystem. The macrosystem encompasses the broader cultural and societal structures within which the individual exists, including societal norms, cultural practices, and political structures related to the child's environment. Lastly, the chronosystem includes the temporal dimension, which examines how the person is affected by changes over time as well as historical events.

It is argued that the interaction of the individual with the structures in these different layers, as well as the interaction of these various layers with each other, are important in the development of the individual. It is also argued that the individual is not only shaped by external influences but also shapes these different layers through the interactions s/he has with these factors (Bronfenbrenner, 2004).

Bronfenbrenner's Systems Theory is used not only to understand personal development but also to examine career journeys (i.e., Bone, 2015; Doughty & Moore, 2021). According to Bone's innovative adaptation of the bioecological model

to workplace environments (2015), the employee assumes a central position, serving as the locus of interaction within a multifaceted framework and engaging dynamically with structures within the microsystem. In this model, the microsystem of the employee encompasses both the workplace and family contexts. Within the workplace, elements such as the physical environment and interactions with colleagues shape the employee's experiences. The employee mesosystem points to the interactions between the various layers that actively involve the employee. The delicate balance between work and family life exemplifies a profound interaction within this sphere. The employee exosystem includes environments such as union activities, in which the employee is not present, yet it significantly influences the work experience. Lastly, the employee macrosystem encompasses spheres that impact the employee from a broad perspective, spanning the economy, cultural ideologies, mass media, and politics.

Bone did not emphasize the employee chronosystem in her model but recognized its role in introducing the bioecological model of workplace health and well-being management. Bone illustrated the effect of time through the example of attending a health and well-being program and stated that regularly attending such a program three times a week over the years would understandably be more effective than attending that program only once a year.

Through this comprehensive investigation, Bone's (2015) adapted model sheds light on the complex interdependencies that shape the contemporary workplace environment. The bioecological model of workplace health and well-being management is illustrated in Figure 1 below to facilitate the reader's understanding of the identified variables.

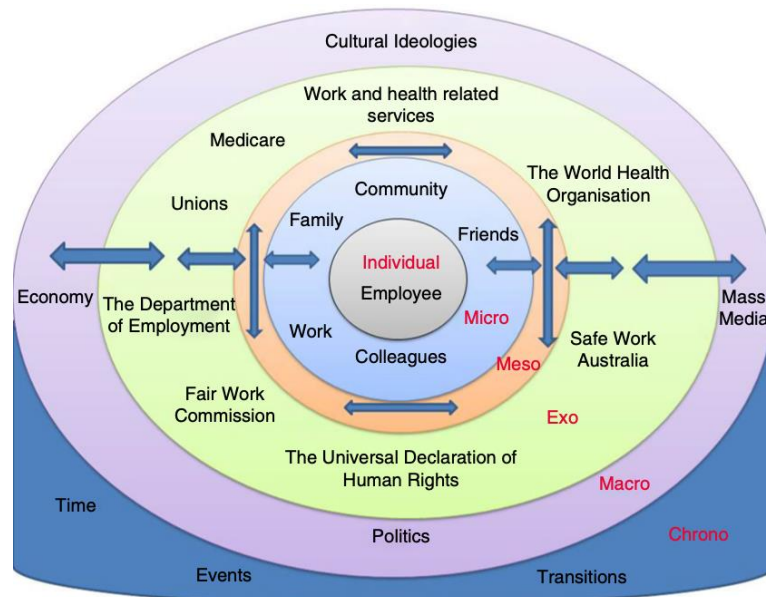


Figure 1. The bioecological model of workplace health and well-being management Reprinted from “The Bioecological Model: Applications in holistic workplace well-being management,” by K. Bone, 2015, *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 8(4), p. 258.

Bone’s (2015) adaptation of Bronfenbrenner’s theory to workplace environments serves as the theoretical foundation of the present study. Guided by this framework, the research questions are crafted to explore the interplay between mental health providers and their work contexts. Specifically, the study focuses on the microsystems wherein these professionals operate, examining the dynamics of their interactions within this sphere and delving into the overarching macrosystems. The interview protocol is intentionally designed to probe into how mental health practitioners’ experiences within UCCs are shaped by their immediate surroundings and engagements with diverse stakeholders.

Bronfenbrenner and Bone remind us that individuals exist in multiple layers of context. To understand the experiences of mental health professionals who work at UCCs, we need to understand their context well. On that note, the following section gives a detailed account of the historical context in UCCs were established and flourished.

2.2 University counseling centers

University counseling centers are institutions within academic settings that provide mental health services and support to students, faculty, and staff members. These centers offer a range of counseling and psychological services to address various personal, academic, and emotional concerns experienced by individuals within the university community. UCCs are vital in promoting student well-being, enhancing academic success, and fostering a supportive campus environment (Gorman et al., 2024; Heppner & Neal, 1983).

This section discusses the emergence of UCCs and the changes they have undergone throughout history are discussed. A brief introduction is provided on the development and transformation of these institutions in the context of Türkiye, which has emerged along with the developments in the United States. The following sections explore the structures and functions of these centers in Western contexts and within Türkiye. This is followed by a discussion of the current approaches adopted by these centers and their significance. Lastly, how these centers are perceived by various stakeholders in higher education is explored.

2.2.1 Historical background

The history of UCCs shows that mental health services for university students on campuses have been provided through two distinct and occasionally intersecting units: mental health clinics and counseling centers. The first mental health center for college students arose at Princeton University in 1910. Since then, the provision of mental health services to university students through an organized institutional structure has evolved in response to social movements that influenced social norms,

shifting perceptions of mental health services, and institutional responses to students' mental health needs (LaFollette, 2009; Smith, 2012).

Heppner and Neal's compilation study (1983) provides a comprehensive examination of the historical development processes for the UCCs in the United States up until the beginning of the 1980s. The study identifies four major periods: the early period named beginnings (1910-1945), the period of transition and professionalism (1945-1955), the period of expansion and consolidation (1955-1970), and the period of broader scope and constricted budgets (1970-1982). Historical developments that UCCs have experienced can be explored through these four periods.

In the early period of beginnings, mental health centers served as part of campus health facilities and were chiefly staffed by psychiatrists (Leitch, 1978; Mitchell et al., 2019). Events such as World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, and the guidance movement, which was initially designed to offer vocational guidance to individuals aligning their needs, interests, and abilities with suitable professions (Tan, 2011)—were influential in the spread of the developmental model in UCCs (Bound & Turner, 2002; LaFollette, 2009; Mitchell et al., 2019). University personnel, with various titles, provided a variety of services to students. Psychological counselors, in particular, provide personality, educational, career, health, and financial services. During this timeframe, vocational guidance, psychological counseling, and personality services were frequently used interchangeably, resulting in a confusing array of concepts. Uncertainty about the delivery and accountability of such services initially resulted from this conceptual confusion. Subsequently, professionals specialized in psychological counseling came

to be widely recognized as the most suitable candidates for employment in universities starting in the 1930s (Heppner & Neal, 1983).

The period between 1945 and 1955 was named as the period of transition and professionalism (Heppner & Neal, 1983). Veterans' return from World War II significantly shaped the field and led to the establishment of psychological counseling centers on many campuses that were focused on vocational counseling (Heppner & Neal, 1983). Although the focus was primarily on students' career development and academic progress, students' social and emotional problems were not ignored, and research was initiated to address these issues (Heppner & Neal, 1983). Students started to be perceived as clients challenged with managing their lives instead of being treated solely as patients. As a result, UCCs began to focus more on issues related to adjustment, vocational training, and personal and social development (Mitchell et al., 2019). In addition, this era witnessed the emergence of psychological counseling as a specialized field distinct from other services. Psychological counseling centers were established independently from other university departments to meet the specific skill and training requirements of the psychological counseling field.

The period between 1955 and 1970 was named the period of expansion and consolidation (Heppner & Neal, 1983). The conceptual changes of the mid-1950s significantly impacted developments during this period. At that time, the term guidance started to be replaced by psychological counseling and counseling psychology (Heppner & Neal, 1983). The counterculture movement of the 1960s, a period when traditional societal norms and values were questioned and challenged, led to a decrease in students' trust in health professionals, prompting them to seek

alternative solutions to their problems rather than relying solely on medical approaches (LaFollette, 2009; Mitchell, 2019).

The role and functions performed by university psychological counseling and guidance centers experienced diversification (Heppner & Neal, 1983). Individual psychological counseling services became increasingly important during this period. Preventive and developmental programs and counseling services for students were also developed, and these centers began to emphasize their educational and supervisory functions (Heppner & Neal, 1983).

In the late 1960s, health clinics and counseling centers began to merge as universities sought to reduce the cost of counseling services and started to charge students individually for these services (Kraft, 2011; Mitchell, 2019). These centers merged in certain schools, and when such a merger did not occur, the borders between mental health clinics and counseling centers became increasingly distinct. As a result, both types of centers remained present on campuses, primarily in large schools. While these centers shared the goal of promoting the well-being and academic excellence of university students, occasional conflicts have arisen between the centers due to their different medical and developmental approaches to students (Mitchell, 2019).

The period between 1970 and 1982 was named as the period of broader scope and constricted budgets (Heppner & Neal, 1983). The student movements that emerged at the end of the 1960s, coupled with the social challenges that students faced, put pressure on universities. As a result, administrators innovated in structuring university psychological counseling and guidance centers to meet new needs. In the same period, due to the decline in the number of university students and the restriction of budgets, psychological counseling centers also faced serious

economic problems and started to experience resource problems. Nevertheless, the centers persisted in modifying their functions and roles. Throughout this era, it can be mentioned that individual counseling activities also increased in the centers in addition to preventive and developmental interventions.

During this same timeframe, with the increased adoption of the ecological perspective, an appreciation of the university campus itself as a recipient of services, with studies focusing on adapting students to this environment, emerged. Another critical development in this period was the establishment of career planning centers, where career counseling services were mostly provided. Additionally, the evaluation of the training offered in these centers differed between students and center staff. While students deemed individual psychological counseling as the most suitable activity, center staff identified vocational guidance as the most appropriate field of study (Heppner & Neal, 1983). After providing the historical background for the UCCs in the US, with a focus on their early developmental stages, the next step is to review the historical background of these centers in Türkiye.

2.2.2 Historical background of UCC's in the Turkish context

A review of the historical developments of the UCCs in Türkiye paints a relatively different picture than those in the West. What remains constant, though, is how multiple levels of context have impacted them. A summary of the history of UCCs in Türkiye can be found below.

In Türkiye, the evolution of guidance within the education system began to take shape around 1950, marking the inception of developmental strides in university counseling. Notably, Middle East Technical University (METU) pioneered this ethos with its orientation program in the fall semester of 1958, which aimed at acquainting

new students with the university environment and fostering efficient study habits. Concurrently, establishing a psychological counseling center within the university underscored recognizing students' need for support during the transition to university life and resolving personal challenges (Tan, 2011). However, the available literature does not clearly indicate when this service was first made available.

Faculty of Education at Gazi University emerged as another vanguard institution in advancing counseling and guidance practices in higher education during the 1950s. This era witnessed seminal studies in psychological counseling and guidance services, setting precedents for subsequent developments in the field (Tan, 2011). By the 1960s, a notable convergence of mental health professionals from diverse disciplines occurred within major universities such as METU, Ankara, Hacettepe, and Boğaziçi, which had previously focused primarily on physical health (Tan, 2011).

The pivotal transformation came in 1982, as delineated by Demir (1996), when psychological counseling and guidance services, previously confined to select faculties and departments, were standardized and extended nationwide under the rubric of Health and Guidance Centers. This institutional framework was further solidified in 1984 through legislation enacted by the Council of Higher Education under Law No. 2547, mandating the establishment of psychological counseling and guidance centers in all universities (Higher Education Law No. 2547, 1981). In the 1990s, universities recognized the need for comprehensive mental health support and assistance in adapting to the academic environment. This led to establishing diverse Psychological Counseling and Guidance (PCG) centers to address evolving student needs (Ercan, 2019).

In light of the historical progression detailed above, it is evident that Turkish universities have made strides in establishing psychological counseling centers; however, scholarly discourse underscores persistent challenges hindering their optimal functionality. As noted in the academic literature discussing these obstacles (Demir, 1996; Demir & Aydın, 1996; Gizir, 2011), these centers appear deficient in institutionalization and organization, and their efficiency level can be lower than desired. Moreover, they seem to operate under different universities with different objectives and approaches.

A review of historical developments of UCCs in the West as well as Türkiye shows us how these centers were shaped in response to different social and political movements. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's theory of bioecological systems (1979), the development of UCCs has been shaped by the interplay between micro, exo, and macrosystems. In complex ways, these interactions facilitated gradual development and expansion in their service delivery, their composition of providers, and their structural organization (Gizir, 2011). How UCCs were perceived was yet another variable that played into the complex dynamics that shaped the evolution of these centers. The following sections attempt to clarify what kinds of services these centers have been offering under what types of structures and how their stakeholders have perceived them.

2.2.3 Function, services, and structure

While the organizational structures and services provided by psychological counseling centers in various universities may differ, they share a core mission of providing essential services to all university stakeholders, with a primary focus on meeting the needs of students. A comprehensive understanding of UCCs necessitates

clarification of how these centers vary with respect to the services provided, the functions achieved through these services, and the structure of the centers. This section aims to present a coherent picture of these variations.

Contemporary research has summarized the primary roles that university-based psychological counseling and counseling centers play in the West in three ways. First, they provide psychological counseling or psychotherapy services for students experiencing psychological problems or facing developmental, academic, or occupational difficulties. Delivery of or referral to psychiatric services may also be part of these efforts (Brunner et al., 2014; Owen et al., 2007). Second, they engage in preventive work, aiding students in achieving their academic, professional, or personal life goals by supporting them in acquiring basic life skills. Last, these centers expand their range of preventive and developmental programs and consultation activities to support students' growth and development in a healthy manner (Boyd et al., 2003; Gizir, 2011). Preventive and developmental functions may be facilitated through individual and group counseling, guidance, consultation, program development, evaluation, education, and outreach (Brunner et al., 2014; Gizir, 2011; Phelps, 1992).

Training and research can be identified as two other functions of the UCCs. University counseling centers in the West play a pivotal role in training and supervising graduate students specializing in counseling fields. The contribution of these interns is significant in enhancing the quality of services provided to students (Brunner et al., 2014; Gizir, 2011). Research, on the other hand, might be a less utilized function. Despite the potential for research and development activities within UCCs, Western studies indicate a scarcity of research projects being conducted in these settings (Cooper & Archer, 2002). Factors contributing to this scarcity may

include prioritizing service over research, insufficient incentives for research, limited time, and a lack of financial resources (Gizir, 2011).

Furthermore, the diversification of counseling services across different centers is influenced by the structural differences of the institutions in which they are situated (Gizir, 2011). These structural variances encompass an array of factors, including organizational frameworks, resource allocations, staff specialties, and institutional missions, each of which impacts the scope and nature of counseling services available (Brunner et al., 2014; Gizir, 2011). In addition, these centers collaborate not only with students or clients but also with other stakeholders, such as university staff and administration (Hewitt & Wheeler, 2004).

Whiteley et al.'s 1987 study (as cited in Stone & Archer, 1990) investigating the landscape of UCCs in the United States identified five distinct types of centers based on their functions and priorities. These classifications, which captured the structural differences among UCCs, also seemed to highlight how priorities, roles, structure, and services inform one another.

According to Whiteley et al. (1987), the first type, which was referred to as macro-centers, offers a comprehensive spectrum of services encompassing individual and group psychological counseling, vocational guidance, assessment and evaluation, training, and consultation. Approximately 21% of the centers examined in the study adopted this structure. The second type, labeled as career planning and placement centers, focuses primarily on career development, with services such as career planning and placement taking precedence over other offerings. This category accounted for 16% of the surveyed centers.

Additionally, the third type was counseling orientation centers, resembling macro-centers in most aspects except for their reduced emphasis on career

counseling. This category accounted for 29% of the centers. The next center type highlighted in the study is general-level service. These centers offer a broader array of services to a larger student population than common centers. Additionally, they include a variety of functions akin to those typically associated with Dean of Students services. This category accounted for 20% of the centers in the sample. The fifth and last category was minimal service centers, which offered the least comprehensive range of support among all the other types identified. In contrast to macro-centers or counseling orientation centers, these centers offered only limited psychological counseling services and were devoid of supplementary elements like training programs, outreach, consultation, or vocational guidance. They often functioned with fewer staff and more limited institutional roles. This category accounted for 15% of the centers. Having worked on differentiating the distinct priorities of various centers, Whiteley et al. (1987), as cited in Gizir (2011), also highlighted that it is critical for UCCs to tailor their services to meet the diverse needs of their students.

The exploration of the services provided by the psychological counseling and guidance centers in Türkiye reveals that the services offered vary according to the staff's background (Ercan, 2019). For instance, centers run by psychologists and psychological counselors provide individual and group therapies as well as seminars and workshops. On the other hand, centers run by social workers support students with housing and scholarships. In addition, psychiatric treatment services are provided in centers where clinical psychologists and psychiatrists work together (Ercan, 2019).

Structurally, in Türkiye, according to articles 46 and 47 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions No. 2547 (Law No. 2547, 1981), university psychological

counseling centers are usually affiliated with the health, culture, and sports departments of their respective universities. In addition, some universities have established application and research centers under the rectorate, which include psychological counseling centers as a newer form of organization (Gizir, 2011).

In the Turkish university landscape, centers offering services to students commonly operate under various names, including Health and Guidance Centers, Guidance and Psychological Counseling Research and Application Centers, and Psychological Counseling and Guidance Centers. Presently, there is a prevailing trend toward preferring the name Psychological Counseling Guidance and Research Center. The evolution of these facilities intertwines with the resources at the disposal of the respective universities and their managerial paradigms (Ercan, 2019; Türküm, 2009).

Güneri (2006) studied counseling services offered at 28 universities in Türkiye. The study found that the services were primarily affiliated with the Departments of Health, Culture, and Sports. Among the most common services provided were individual counseling, emergency intervention for students, and consultations with administration and academic staff. Outreach activities, group therapy and counseling, evaluation of services, development of orientation programs, and research studies followed these services. The least common services were career counseling and supervision of counseling students.

While counseling centers in the United States primarily concentrate on psychotherapy/psychological counseling, group counseling, consultation, and preventive and developmental programs, Turkish centers also give more importance to emergency intervention, measurement, and evaluation, albeit with less emphasis on career counseling, supervision, and training activities (Gizir, 2011; Guinee &

Ness, 2000; Güneri, 2006). Although research is part of the given names of the centers, to what extent these centers produce research or assume research as one of their primary functions is unclear. Moreover, information regarding how often Turkish UCCs serve the training function has yet to be identified. We also do not have enough data to clarify if the UCC types identified by Whiteley et al. (as cited in Stone & Archer, 1990) apply to Türkiye or if more culture-specific types of centers are present.

Overall, the roles, services, structures, and priorities of UCCs are rather intertwined and can be varied. These variations create a rich diversity concerning how a UCC may look and function. While some information is available, more research is needed to clarify the nature of UCCs in Türkiye. Next, the current approaches to university counseling centers are explored.

2.2.4 Current approaches

When considering current approaches in university counseling centers, the most recent model is the “comprehensive counseling center” (Brunner et al., 2017). This model identifies four major activities conducted in UCCs: clinical work, outreach and preventive interventions, consultation, and training. Although clinical work such as crisis intervention and individual and group counseling is widely known, professionals working in these centers not only work with students but also provide services to parents, friends, faculties where students study, and university staff. In addition to the services offered for different problems encountered across the campus, comprehensive counseling centers (CCCs) contribute to the university’s academic goals with the internship and supervision opportunities offered to graduate students studying mental health (Mitchell et al., 2019).

The CCC model includes primary interventions for the well-being of all students (healthy and at-risk), secondary interventions that include early identification of and work with at-risk students, and tertiary interventions that include clinical recovery services. Upon evaluating the model, it is evident that counselors are compelled to provide predominantly therapeutic services, and there is a lack of collaboration opportunities with professionals working in various departments across the campus (Mitchell et al., 2019).

One of the primary challenges encountered by UCCs today is managing the increasing demand for counseling services (Gizir, 2011; Stone & Archer, 1990). Despite efforts to prioritize emergency interventions without hindering other center functions, long waiting lists for students persist. Consequently, studies addressing developmental issues are often sidelined due to the focus on emergencies (Davis et al., 2001; Gizir, 2011; Stone & Archer, 1990).

When faced with a shortage of professionals and limited budgets, centers often resort to restricting the number of individual counseling sessions offered to clients as a first solution (Gizir, 2011; Stone & Archer, 1990). Additionally, many centers are increasingly adopting solution-oriented, short-term counseling approaches as their primary mode of operation (Gizir, 2011; Vonk & Thyer, 1999).

2.2.5 Significance

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, UCCs play a pivotal role in supporting students' holistic well-being and academic success. These centers offer a variety of psychological, emotional, and social support services tailored to meet the diverse needs of students navigating the complexities of university life (Cerolini et al., 2023). As universities increasingly recognize the vital link between mental health and

academic achievement, the significance of counseling centers on campus becomes more pronounced.

These centers not only provide crucial interventions during times of crisis or distress, such as the challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Zhai & Du, 2020), but they also serve as proactive platforms for fostering resilience, personal growth, and student retention (Brunner et al., 2014; LeViness et al., 2017; as cited in Cronin et al., 2021). By addressing socio-emotional challenges that often accompany the pursuit of higher education, counseling centers contribute not only to individual student flourishing but also to the overall vitality and inclusivity of the academic community. Consequently, UCCs play a critical role in promoting student well-being, academic success, and the thriving of the campus as a whole (Sim et al., 2016).

Moreover, the scholarly discourse has notably lacked comparative analyses of psychological counseling services offered across global university contexts. Cerolini et al. (2023) embarked on a meticulous, systematic review encompassing 152 articles to address this gap. The studies included in this qualitative synthesis were primarily conducted in North America, followed by Europe, Asia, Oceania, Africa, and South America. Their investigation revealed that both traditional face-to-face and modern online counseling modalities benefit university students' mental well-being, as underscored by the study's principal findings. This research not only contributes to our understanding of effective counseling practices but also emphasizes the importance of further exploring and enhancing the provision of psychological support services in higher education settings worldwide. Such research would ensure that UCCs would continue to play a critical role as a student's support system in higher education.

While research supports the relevance and significance of UCCs, understanding how their stakeholders recognize their significance is yet another important part of understanding the nature of working at a UCC. In the next section, we explore stakeholder perceptions.

2.2.6 Perceptions

Stakeholders for university counseling centers include various groups, such as students, academic staff, personnel, administration, and alumni. Our understanding of the UCCs and the experiences of service providers working at these centers would be deepened by clarifying how these different stakeholders might perceive the goals, functioning, or significance of UCCs in the West as well as in Türkiye. In this section, we highlight a few examples that give a glimpse into the perceptions of students and academic faculty members.

International literature guides our understanding of how counseling centers are perceived within their contexts. Perceptions of different stakeholders would be essential to glimpse the bigger picture, yet current literature speaks more to how students perceive these centers. For instance, a study of 262 students from 49 higher education institutions in Georgia, US, found that the use of services offered was associated with the perceived accessibility of the centers (Alvarez-Hernandez et al., 2022).

Moreover, Kahn et al. (1999) shed light on student perspectives regarding UCC services. Their study, conducted at a medium-sized university in the Northeast of the US, revealed a prevalent awareness of the counseling center among students. However, despite this awareness, utilization primarily occurred during perceived moderate mental health challenges, perpetuating the stereotype of counseling centers

as crisis-oriented entities. The study unveiled a significant gap between students' awareness and the use of services, hinting at the potential influence of perception on service provision (Kahn et al., 1999).

Meanwhile, Cronin et al. (2021) conducted qualitative research, elucidating the intricate barriers impeding students from seeking counseling support. Through focused group interviews, the study identified financial constraints, stigma surrounding mental health assistance, confidentiality concerns, and misperceptions about counseling center utilization as pivotal preventive factors. Moreover, the study revealed that students' comfort levels with UCCs notably increased when they encountered center professionals in informal campus settings outside of official contexts. This informal interaction not only fostered a sense of familiarity but also enhanced students' knowledge about the services offered, particularly through outreach activities.

A study by DeStefano et al. (2001) investigated directors' perceptions of 87 counseling centers at four-year colleges and universities in the USA regarding their roles and functions. Participants completed the College Counseling Role and Function Survey, where they identified the five most important responsibilities among the 14 functions performed by college counseling centers. The directors perceived individual counseling and crisis intervention services as the most important functions of the center. Additionally, services tailored for students from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds were seen as primary functions. Vocational counseling, counseling staff on retention efforts, and the education of graduate students were deemed secondary functions. The study also revealed that large and small institutions differed in perceived responsibilities.

Researchers Shaw et al. (2014) conducted a quantitative inquiry involving 157 administrators from UCCs across the United States. Their objective was to evaluate these administrators' perspectives on the readiness of new graduate-level counselors for university-level work and the adequacy of their professional preparation. The study found that, overall, counselors were perceived as sufficiently prepared for their profession. However, a notable portion of administrators expressed apprehension regarding their ability to address more complex student issues effectively. Consequently, counselors seeking to enhance their perceived competency were advised to pursue further education and practical experience, such as obtaining a doctoral degree. Most administrators believe a doctoral degree significantly enhances counselors' competence and job prospects within higher education settings.

Focusing on the Turkish context, two studies can be highlighted that gave voice to stakeholder perceptions, primarily reflecting the perspectives of students and academicians. A survey conducted with 403 students at Hacettepe University in Türkiye during the fall semester of 2010-2011 revealed that although university students require psychological assistance, the rate of seeking help is relatively low (Kızıldağ et al., 2013). Yelpeze and Ceyhan's (2019) qualitative study with 644 university students investigates students' psychological help-seeking perceptions and can further clarify why utilization rates can be low. Their results suggested that students hold relatively mixed perceptions regarding counseling as well as providers and services of the UCCs. The notion that those who go to counseling are "insane" showed up in their results. A subgroup of participating students had low expectations regarding the efficacy of counseling services and the competency of the staff. Students also expressed concerns regarding the expense of counseling services.

Yelpaze and Ceyhan (2019) invited professionals working at these centers to take student concerns seriously and make intentional changes to address these concerns.

A qualitative study conducted with the participation of seven academics and 40 undergraduate students at the Faculty of Education of a university in İzmir, Türkiye (Şensoy et al., 2018) revealed that the participants believed that there is no counseling center at their university or that they were unaware of its existence. When academics were asked about the issues their students sought help with, they reported needing assistance with romantic relationships, family problems, and career issues. In contrast, students indicated that they primarily sought assistance for exam anxiety and personal issues. It was also revealed that not only students but also academics require support from the UCC. It was understood that this need was primarily in effective communication with students and referring students to psychological services. Additionally, it was concluded that students would prefer such a unit to be conveniently located and even within the faculty where they study.

Demir and Koydemir (2005) investigated the perceptions of academic faculty regarding UCCs. Their study, encompassing participants from prominent Turkish universities, namely METU, Boğaziçi, Başkent, and Bilkent, revealed a consensus on the necessity of counseling centers among academicians. However, despite recognizing the significance of these centers, a notable gap existed in understanding service utilization frequencies. Furthermore, while every service provided by the center was generally considered necessary, the perceived necessity diminished for lesser-known services such as consultation and vocational guidance (Demir & Koydemir, 2005).

Perceptions surrounding UCCs are critical for the centers' accessibility and efficacy. These studies underscore that understanding the interplay among

awareness, stigma, and the services provided is essential. Fostering informed perceptions and active involvement seems necessary to make counseling centers as effective as possible in university contexts.

Our exploration of UCCs encompassed examining their historical emergence, developmental milestones, structural compositions, functional roles, and current approaches. We then reflected on the significance of and stakeholder perceptions of UCCs. This overview sets the stage for a more comprehensive understanding of what it means to be a mental health provider at these centers, paving the way for exploring what it means to be a UCC professional.

2.3 University counseling center professionals

Having explored what a university counseling center is, how it impacts campus life, and how some key stakeholders regard it, we now focus on the individuals working within these centers. This section begins by examining mental health providers in Western contexts, followed by an exploration of their counterparts in Turkish settings. Survey and study findings that shed light on these professionals' personal and professional characteristics, as well as insights into their training and qualifications, are presented.

The significance of periodic surveys cannot be overstated in the realm of mental health research, as they serve as crucial tools for gathering diverse data and providing a comprehensive view of the landscape. In the context of university centers, where mental health services are often provided, these surveys offer valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and administrators alike, aiding in understanding prevalent issues and formulating theoretical frameworks (Newhart et al., 2021).

One notable example of such surveys is the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD) annual surveys (i.e., Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors [AUCCCD], 2022), conducted at regular intervals and highly regarded for their thorough analysis of mental health trends and service provisions on a large scale. While these surveys, predominantly conducted in the US context, primarily focus on general trends and characteristics of clients and services, they tend to overlook the personality traits and details about clinical practices of professionals within university settings (Newhart et al., 2021). Similarly, studies that explore the experiences of UCC professionals are scarce in the literature. In the 2017 special issue of the academic journal of Psychological Services, which focused on counseling services in higher education, nine out of 14 articles addressed these services from students' perspectives, while only two of the remaining five articles discussed the experiences of the center employees. Therefore, more research is needed to understand the professionals' experiences in these centers.

Existing studies tend to emphasize general trends in the university counseling field and providers working in these settings. Common trends include the number of students applying to UCCs, the most prevalent problems of the university student population, intervention methods preferred by practitioners, and approaches found effective while working with this population.

One recent study on this subject was conducted by Newhart and colleagues (2021). This study might be an exemplary effort to take a picture of UCC settings in the US context. Data on demographics, professional experiences, and clinical services were gathered from surveys administered to 205 counselors employed at UCCs in the US. The study revealed that the primary type of service counselors

provided with varying approaches was direct treatment for clients. Counselors devote their time to various activities in decreasing order, namely: individual counseling, crisis intervention, outreach programs, consultation activities with faculty and parents, single-session consultation services for students, collaborations with other professionals on campus, group therapy, workshops, career counseling, couples counseling, psychological testing, and family therapy (Newhart et al., 2021).

Shifting the focus to Türkiye, it becomes apparent that there is a dearth of studies examining both the overarching trends for UCCs and the specific characteristics of professionals operating within them. The absence of fundamental information about this professional cohort signifies a critical gap in the literature, resulting in a one-sided approach to understanding these centers' dynamics (Newhart et al., 2021). Güneri's (2006) study on university counseling services in Türkiye aimed to address the above-mentioned gap in the existing literature. It was reported that most of these counseling services were carried out by psychologists, that more than half of the psychologists and counselors working there had master's degrees, and that more than half of the center staff participated in national conferences. Additionally, it was observed that the majority of the staff in these centers were members of professional organizations.

In essence, while large-scale surveys provide valuable insights into general trends and client-service dynamics, there is a pressing need for research that delves deeper into the experiences and practices of professionals within UCCs (Newhart et al., 2021). Bridging this gap in the literature will be instrumental in fostering a more integrated and nuanced understanding of mental health services within educational settings, both globally and within the unique context of Türkiye.

2.4 University counseling center professionals' experiences

Following a brief introduction to mental health providers employed in university counseling centers and their educational backgrounds, this section delves into the experiences of these professionals. Beginning with a general overview of relevant literature, the focus then shifts to the rewarding aspects of working in the mental health field, particularly within the university setting. Subsequently, the challenges they encounter both in general practice and specifically within university environments as well as their perceived needs are addressed. Lastly, the various sources of support utilized by these professionals to navigate these challenges effectively are explored.

In today's academic landscape, the pivotal role played by mental health professionals within UCCs cannot be overstated. These professionals are tasked with a myriad of responsibilities, including understanding, supporting, and guiding students through their psychological, emotional, and academic challenges (Bohner, 2018). However, a notable gap exists in the literature regarding comprehensive research focusing on the experiences of professionals working within UCCs (Harrison & Gordon, 2021). Existing studies tend to emphasize general trends in the university counseling field and providers working in these settings while overlooking crucial aspects of who they are, such as personality traits and clinical practices (Newhart et al., 2021). Part of getting to know these providers is to understand their experiences. There seems to be a need for an in-depth exploration of the experiences of these professionals to address this shortfall.

Despite the gap in the literature on the experiences of mental health providers working at counseling centers, existing research provides some insight, which is summarized below. Studies that explore the multifaceted experiences of UCC

professionals often present a complex picture where different dynamics are at play (Sim et al., 2016). We explore this complexity by categorizing their experiences under the headings of (1) rewarding experiences, (2) challenging experiences, (3) needs, and (4) sources of support. Concepts such as thriving at the workplace, burnout, and job satisfaction are introduced as part of this professional experience.

2.4.1 Rewarding experiences

In examining the experiences of mental health providers in university counseling centers, we first delve into rewarding experiences. Rewarding experiences refer to people's positive encounters with their work and their profession in general (Steger et al., 2012). Rewarding experiences as a construct has been approached in the literature through various terms and frameworks. A prominent concept in this context is job satisfaction, defined by Borne (2008) as a positive or pleasurable emotional state that employees experience while performing their jobs. Job satisfaction is assessed by considering both work experiences and the organizational context. Additionally, the concept of thriving, which includes employees' experiences of learning and vitality related to their work (Spreitzer et al., 2005), frequently appears in the literature and is therefore included in our review. This section highlights the positive aspects of working in UCCs by examining job satisfaction, thriving, and other concepts related to rewarding experiences.

In exploring the multifaceted experiences of UCC professionals, a limited number of studies shed light on the positive experiences of the providers. Sim et al.'s study (2016) is one of the few examples that study the fulfillment of mental health professionals working at a UCC. This study, which interviewed both early career psychologists and later career psychologists employed at UCCs in the United States,

suggested that factors contributing to a sense of professional fulfillment encompass not only recognition for achievements but also the favorable climate of the counseling center and the broader campus environment. Interestingly, the latter was found to be more significant for early career psychologists than for later career psychologists. Therefore, the supportive and collaborative atmosphere among colleagues within counseling centers can be an important factor in enhancing job satisfaction.

Another exemplar of research is a mixed methods study conducted to gain insight into the positive experiences of counselors working in UCCs in Canada and their motivations for providing counseling to higher education students (Kadambi et al., 2010). The participants' responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed and clustered based on their similarities. Each cluster was then given a name to reflect the main theme of the statements it contained. The cluster names obtained as a result of the study are as follows: witnessing the process of change, contributing to client change, feeling hopeful for clients, perceiving work as meaningful and valuable, experiencing competence and growth, forming meaningful connections, counselor values and beliefs, types of support, positive client characteristics, and work-related diversity and resourcefulness. These results indicate that the rewarding aspects of counseling in this context have both an intrinsic and an extrinsic focus. Intrinsically oriented rewards are linked to one-on-one work with students and reflect how counselors experience the therapy process. In contrast, extrinsically oriented rewards seem more related to the work environment of the counselors.

Given the lack of studies specifically looking at the positive work experiences of providers working at UCCs, we can turn our attention to mental health providers' experiences as a frame of reference. A survey study conducted in the United States

(Gambrell et al., 2011) investigated the job satisfaction of counselors with master's degrees or higher who were still working in the field. The study considered the impact of counselors' different areas of expertise and education levels on their job satisfaction. This multivariate analysis of covariance study found that doctoral-level counselors were more satisfied than master's-level counselors in terms of promotion opportunities. Another study conducted with 137 guidance counselors in the Philippines (Mateo & Salanga, 2018) highlights the interdependence of counselors' work-related and non-work-related experiences. The study revealed that counselors who reported greater satisfaction with their lives also rated the counseling experience as more rewarding (Mateo & Salanga, 2018).

The Moss et al. (2014) study, which delved into the development of counselors' professional identities at key career stages, gives us insight into when and how rewarding experiences might be part of mental health providers', specifically counselors' journey. Through focus groups categorized by experience level as beginning, experienced, and expert, perspectives of 26 counselors were collected. This qualitative inquiry revealed six themes representing transformational tasks in a counselor's professional evolution. These included moving from initial idealism to practical realism, overcoming burnout to find rejuvenation, and transitioning from a segmented professional identity to a unified sense of self. Notably, experienced counselors expressed deep satisfaction in seeing their clients achieve goals and viewed the conclusion of counseling as a mutual celebration of progress. This study gives us another insight into the potentially rewarding experiences of mental health providers.

In light of the findings from these studies with counselors in general, it is possible to hypothesize about the kinds of rewarding experiences that might be

available to mental health professionals working in a university context. Beyond personal achievements, the rewarding nature of this profession may include job satisfaction derived from aiding students through personal and academic adversities, opportunities for professional growth amidst a diverse academic setting, and the tangible positive outcomes observed in student well-being, academic success, and retention (Moss et al., 2014).

While these studies shed light on the rewarding aspects of working in UCCs, highlighting the sense of reward professionals experience, they also reveal a scarcity of research focusing on the overall experiences of mental health providers in these settings. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory could serve as a valuable theoretical framework for further exploration of this issue. It might be fruitful when professionals' experiences working in UCCs are examined from a broader perspective.

2.4.2 Challenging experiences

Our review suggests that the challenges that are particularly experienced by the university counseling center professionals have yet to be extensively studied. Though limited in number, the few studies that address the experiences of UCC providers are presented after the introduction of key concepts related to professional challenges often faced by people-oriented professions. A summary of the challenges faced by mental health providers in general is also provided, offering insight into the potentially challenging experiences of the target population.

Since the concept of burnout is frequently encountered in the literature on the difficulties experienced by professionals, it may be useful to define it here briefly. According to Maslach and Goldberg (1998) burnout is an occupational risk

associated with different people-oriented professions, and it is defined as an overwhelming state of exhaustion that includes feelings of anger, frustration, cynicism, a sense of failure, and inefficiency. The concept of job stress is frequently encountered in the literature on challenging experiences as well as burnout. Borne (2008) defines job stress as a physical and emotional state that employees experience when the performance required to fulfill job requirements adequately exceeds their abilities. Factors associated with job stress include insufficient training, resource inadequacy, lengthy work hours, deadlines, and other work-related pressures (Borne, 2008).

Although the challenges faced by UCC professionals have not been extensively researched, a few studies from the United States and Türkiye shed light on the subject. One such study by Sim et al. (2016) examined the experiences of early and later career psychologists employed at US university counseling centers. The findings suggest that burnout is prevalent among early career psychologists, with professional responsibilities and interprofessional relationships emerging as prominent contributing factors. Sim et al. (2016), whose results addressing positive experiences were included in the previous section, reported that being alone and feeling isolated at work caused burnout only for early career psychologists.

The taxonomy of burnout-inducing responsibilities outlined in their study (Sim et al., 2016), which includes clinical obligations, non-clinical tasks, and workplace dynamics, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon within mental health professions. To elaborate on this classification, clinical responsibilities associated with counselor burnout might include working with clients who exhibit challenging behaviors, dealing with high-risk issues such as suicide and trauma, and heavy caseloads.

Administrative obligations and excessive paperwork are examples of non-clinical responsibilities that can lead to burnout. The final category of this classification, work dynamics, encompasses several factors. These may include salary opportunities, the nature of the relationship between colleagues, and the identity of the organization itself, which might be private or public (Sim et al., 2016).

A recent interpretative phenomenological analysis by Harrison and Gordon (2021) delved into the experiences of university-level counselors, revealing two salient themes: fighting for recognition and zigzagging. The former encapsulates counselors' struggles to assert their professional identities and articulate the complexity of their roles. At the same time, the latter underscores the necessity of adaptability in response to the ever-evolving university milieu. This study underscores the evolving and multifaceted nature of roles within university mental health services, emphasizing the need for tailored support mechanisms and recognition of the unique challenges encountered by mental health providers in academic settings.

In another mixed-methods study conducted with 30 clinicians from six college counseling centers in the Midwest region of the United States, it was found that professionals working at those centers experienced difficulties such as feeling socially isolated, worrying about their personal and family lives, and technology-related problems while providing remote mental health services during COVID-19 pandemic (Hersch et al., 2022).

Following a brief review primarily concentrated on the international arena, with a particular emphasis on the United States, the Güneri (2006) study emerges as a pertinent reference for the Turkish context. In this investigation of counseling services within Turkish universities, the following were identified as the main

difficulties experienced by counseling staff: excessive workload, misinformation and unrealistic expectations of clients regarding counseling, inadequate physical resources, and the lack of a psychiatrist (Güneri, 2006).

Given the insufficient evidence in the literature focusing solely on the context of UCCs, studies targeting mental health providers in general may also contribute to our understanding of the challenges university mental health providers experience. Psychotherapists, who may be referred to by different titles, such as counselors, psychologists, therapists, and social workers, encounter a multitude of challenging experiences in their work. Assuming diverse roles, including teaching, client care, and supervision, can be both rewarding and exhausting at times. In a study conducted in the United States with the participation of 160 therapists (Briggs, 2006), 68% of the participants indicated that they experienced some degree of stress as a result of their experience of working as a therapist. The same study revealed a positive correlation between therapists' work stress and the average number of clients seen weekly. Furthermore, it was observed that the stress experienced by therapists in their professional lives was also manifested in their personal lives.

A cross-sectional qualitative study conducted in the American context (Mullen et al., 2021) examined the impact of changing student caseloads on school counselors' burnout, job stress, and job satisfaction levels. The survey research involving 327 school counselors revealed a correlation between increased burnout and job stress levels and decreased job satisfaction with an increased caseload.

Additionally, Ignacio's (2023) qualitative phenomenological exploration of post-pandemic counseling elucidated significant challenges both clients and counselors face amidst the new normal of online counseling. In the study, where five out of 10 participants were counselors, three themes emerged regarding the

difficulties experienced by these experts in online counseling. Difficulties in internet connection and the resulting interruption of effective communication are related to the first of these themes, means of delivery, and most of the participants stated that they experienced significant challenges regarding this point. Other identified themes included the difficulties guidance counselors experienced in maintaining clients' commitment to the process and sustaining the continuity of the sessions.

In addition, a study on psychological counseling in Türkiye conducted by Dost and Keklik (2012) involved 108 psychological counseling professionals from various institutions. The study aimed to explore the challenges faced by these professionals in their work settings, their perceived competencies and inadequacies, evaluations of their undergraduate education, and levels of professional satisfaction. Data were analyzed using content analysis. The findings indicated that the most significant challenges included prejudiced attitudes of teachers and administrators toward psychological counseling services, a lack of knowledge and cooperation from these stakeholders, and the absence of clear job descriptions.

Additionally, participants identified several other challenges, including managing a large number of students, dealing with unrealistic expectations, and encountering uncooperative or uninterested parents. A few professionals noted that the difficulties they faced were multifaceted and that they were often involved in numerous committees. Lastly, counselors reported feeling inadequately prepared in areas such as psychological counseling, special education, clinical situations, test anxiety, psychological testing, and working with primary school-aged children.

Another qualitative study conducted in Türkiye (Parmaksız & Gök, 2018) involved interviews with 74 school counselors in Malatya to identify the challenges they face in school settings. The study found that the biggest difficulty counselors

experienced was collaborating with teachers, school staff, administrators, and parents. This was followed by challenges related to the supervision of their services. Counselors reported facing the least difficulty in providing the direct counseling services.

We have thus far explored the Western and Turkish literature on the challenges experienced by the mental health providers in general to shed light onto the potential experiences of the UCC providers. However, it would be important to recognize that the latter would have unique struggles informed by their setting and roles. In fact, a noteworthy contribution of the study by Sim et al. (2016) lies in identifying unique sources of difficulty for mental health providers working in university settings that differ from those working in other settings. Professionals operating within university environments are tasked with the well-being of a broader and more diverse population—namely, the campus community—requiring nuanced boundary-setting strategies and interpersonal skills. This necessitates a deeper exploration of the intricate dynamics inherent to their roles and responsibilities.

Investigating the process of transitioning from training to professional practice, Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992) observed a prevailing unpreparedness among counselors, culminating in a sense of disillusionment regarding the adequacy of their specialized training (as cited in Moss et al., 2014). This raises a pertinent question regarding whether this sentiment of discontent stemming from the perceived insufficiency of early professional education extends to mental health professionals operating within university contexts. The paucity of empirical investigations addressing this phenomenon, coupled with the specialized nature of training programs tailored to prepare mental health providers for university settings, underscores the relevance and urgency of this inquiry.

The literature presented above suggests that the challenges faced by mental health professionals, particularly those working in university settings, are influenced by the context in which they operate. In Türkiye, factors such as resource limitations, societal perceptions of mental health, and role ambiguity can be counted among the factors that make providing counseling services more difficult. Additionally, the increased use of technology and the integration of online counseling practices during the COVID-19 pandemic have brought about new challenges. Therefore, taking the context in which professionals work into account will not only help better understand the various challenges they face but also provide a clearer insight into their needs.

2.4.3 Needs

Exploring university counseling center professionals' needs to enhance their well-being and effectiveness can further deepen our understanding of their experiences. This section explores these needs in detail by first reviewing a few prominent theories on human needs and their application in workplace settings and providing a summary of employee needs in general. The discussion then shifts to those in the mental health field and, finally, to counselors working in various contexts. Through this approach, insights into the potential needs of the target population are provided.

Our review of the prominent theories on human needs can start with one of the most well-known theories on this subject, namely Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1943) organizes human needs into a pyramid, starting with basic physiological needs like food and sleep, followed by safety needs (e.g., health, employment), love and belonging (e.g., friendships, social connections), self-esteem (e.g., self-confidence, respect), and finally, self-actualization (e.g., personal growth).

According to Maslow (1943), different needs layers are interrelated, and lower-level needs must be met before higher-level needs can emerge.

The theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs was adapted to the management field by McGregor (1960) in his book, *The Human Side of Enterprise*. McGregor reorganizes the categories of needs as originally theorized, situating them within the context of occupational life. Accordingly, basic needs are defined as payment needs, whereas elements such as pensions, health insurance, and trade unions define security needs. The fulfillment of social needs is contingent upon the presence of formal and informal work groups. In contrast, the satisfaction of self-esteem needs is associated with promotion, title, and status symbols. On the other hand, self-actualization needs are related to discovering the individual's potential and personal development goals within working life.

Ryan and Deci's (2002) Self-Determination Theory offer a macro-level understanding of human motivation, highlighting three key psychological needs essential for autonomous action: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. According to this theory, the need for autonomy refers to a state of freedom and a sense of ownership over one's actions. The need for competence is the drive to outperform one's surroundings and develop new abilities. The need for relatedness involves the need to be connected to others, feel cared for, and feel safe within one's community. Fulfilling these three fundamental needs is important for individual well-being (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013) and can play a significant role within the context of working life.

Another noteworthy theory can be Murray's Manifest Needs Theory (1938) and McClelland's (1961) adaptation of this theory to the management field. With this theory, employee needs are considered in a different framework, and three basic

needs are identified that motivate individuals: achievement, connection, and power. The need for achievement can be defined as the desire of employees to accomplish a task and achieve a certain level of excellence. This need may also manifest as avoiding tasks perceived as too challenging to prevent potential failure. The need for connection manifests itself in forming friendly and warm personal relationships, while the need for power is demonstrated by the desire to influence, control, and exercise power over others (Taormina, 2009). In theory, these needs coexist simultaneously but at varying levels within each individual (McClelland, 1961).

Following an examination of potential theoretical frameworks regarding the concept of need, we proceed to a review of the general literature on understanding employees' needs. Adopting a holistic perspective on employee satisfaction in the workplace, Budie et al. (2018) found that the characteristics and design of workspaces impact satisfaction. The path analysis revealed that environmental and personal factors influence employee satisfaction through the perceived importance of needs. They adopted Vischer's (2008) classification of needs into psychological, physical, and functional comfort. In their literature review, Budie et al. (2018) identified several elements, including privacy, social interaction, autonomy, aesthetics, and relaxation, as psychological needs. The category of physical needs encompasses requirements such as climate and visual comfort, as well as the control of climate comfort. Finally, the functional needs category encompasses requirements such as focus, communication, proximity to colleagues, space, and ergonomics.

Similarly, a study by Adam et al. (2021) concluded that employees prefer a work environment that allows for social interaction and is supportive in terms of self-development. Furthermore, while the physical and mental environment at the workplace stands out as an important motivating factor for employees to be happy at

work, it has also been observed that employees value concepts such as justice, teamwork, and trust. In an investigation conducted by López-Cabarcos et al. (2022), the impact of leadership behaviors and work environment variables on job performance was investigated. The findings revealed that transformational leadership and social support contribute positively to employee performance. In light of these findings, it can be posited that the aforementioned factors, which have been demonstrated to enhance employee performance, might be regarded as a need.

In their 2018 study, Chong and Khong emphasize that the minimum acceptable standard of living in contemporary societies is not limited to meeting basic needs but should also ensure financial security and social inclusion. In addition to delineating the parameters of financial security and social inclusion, the study also observed that economic hardship should not be a chronic source of distress. These findings indicate that financial opportunities and a sense of security in this area can be regarded as a fundamental employee need.

Although financial opportunities are considered crucial for employees, Panneerselvam and Balaraman's (2022) viewpoint paper contends that this element is inadequate to motivate individuals to pursue employment in the evolving work environment. In light of the transformative impact of the global pandemic on the modern workplace, this study underscores the growing demand among employees for respect and recognition of their individual differences and strengths. It also highlights that it is no longer attractive for employees to work just for the salary. Instead, employees seek a work culture that fosters collaboration and support, enabling technologies, a sense of meaning at work, and an employer who can align with their expectations and needs (Panneerselvam & Balaraman, 2022).

Having reviewed studies on employee needs and the work environment in general, we can now focus on the target population of this study: mental health professionals working in university settings. In this section, we aim to develop an understanding of the needs of mental health professionals working in the university context, in line with the flow of the previous topics of “rewarding and challenging experiences”. In alignment with this objective, we examine the findings of studies conducted with professionals working in similar fields due to the limitations of the studies conducted with this group and the gaps in the literature on needs.

In a national research project conducted with professionals working in the health sector in Canada, a subgroup of 14 social workers was examined in terms of the factors that cause compassion fatigue in their organizations (Kreitzer et al., 2019). The study revealed that factors such as time constraints, the current political climate, a lack of communication between fieldworkers and managers, an atmosphere of fear, interruptions in services, and the need for results-oriented measurement led to employees feeling a negative organizational culture in their workplace while striving to provide effective services. It can be posited that there is a need for employees to eliminate the factors that may give rise to such negativity.

In the same study, there was a clear emphasis on the ethical responsibility of social work educators to inform students about the potential negatives and difficulties they may encounter in professional practice. In addition, it was stated that social workers can use the relationship-building skills they gained during their education with their professional colleagues to meet their need to earn respect through relationship-building (Kreitzer et al., 2019). Finally, it was stated that social workers must engage in continuous professional advocacy to represent the significance of their role in the healthcare sector. The requirements identified in this study, including

the education of students against potential challenges in the profession, the utilization of professional skills with colleagues, and professional advocacy, may be considered instructive in understanding the needs of counselors working in the university context.

A study conducted in the Indonesian health sector examined the relationship between environmental factors in the work environment and employee motivation. The study demonstrated that environmental factors such as wall color, lighting, and humidity positively impact employee motivation and performance (Parashakti et al., 2020). In addition, in another study conducted with occupational therapists, these professionals' current practices and support needs were examined through an online questionnaire filled out by 93 people and a focus group with 10 participants (Moll et al., 2018). The research findings revealed that the primary challenges facing occupational therapists include a lack of awareness of their role, inadequate training opportunities, and limited funding. The participants identified training and resource development, defining occupational therapy's role in employee mental health, and professional advocacy as the most pressing needs.

A qualitative study conducted with 15 newly graduated physiotherapists in Australia examined the role and importance of mentoring in the transition of graduates to professional life (Lao et al., 2021). As a result of the study, it was found that newly graduated physiotherapists considered workplace mentoring as critical in their transition from student to professional and found personalized mentoring valuable for their professional development. In their job search and application processes, the participants preferred workplaces where employees were known to be supportive of new graduates and each other. They also identified the frequent use of affirming words and encouragement by mentors as a significant factor in their

professional development. The necessity for mentoring and a supportive environment may not only be limited to physiotherapists but also play an important role in the transition from student to working life in other professions.

In light of the preceding examination of the role of mental health professionals in general, it is now appropriate to turn our attention to counselors. The study conducted by Chan et al. (2003) with rehabilitation counselors revealed that professionals working in different settings (private sector, public sector, and non-profit organizations) may have common training needs but also have needs specific to the areas in which they work. The necessity of addressing these common and distinct requirements during the training of these professionals was underscored (Chan et al., 2003).

In a study conducted in Israel with 202 school counselors, it was observed that professionals with different levels of experience differed regarding their supervision needs and preferred intervention styles (Shechtman & Wirzberger, 1999). The participants were divided into four groups according to their level of experience: seven years and less experience as less experienced, eight years and more experience as more experienced counselors, novice counselors, and supervising counselors. The results of the multivariate analysis of variance indicate that novice and less experienced counselors require more supervision and prefer more instructive and structured supervision than that desired by the other two groups. Within these groups, there are also differences in the content of the intervention they need, with novice counselors needing supervision on many more topics than less experienced counselors.

In their 2013 study, Bickmore and Curry interviewed seven novice school counselors and their principals to identify the elements of the induction process that

correspond to these new professionals' professional and personal needs. The study results indicate that novice school counselors require specific feedback on their abilities and both structured and unstructured mentoring support. Additionally, informal interactions with their principals meet their personal needs by enhancing their feelings of competence, self-esteem, confidence, and effectiveness. Moreover, positive feedback from their immediate environment, including students, teachers, parents, and the broader community, is crucial for meeting both their professional and personal needs.

In a study conducted by Holman et al. (2019) with school counselors, it was concluded that counselors who did not receive adequate support from their colleagues and supervisors, who were assigned non-counseling tasks, and who perceived their workplace as a negative environment experienced high level of fatigue, which led to burnout. It can be argued that eliminating these unfavorable situations can be preventive in terms of burnout experiences and, therefore, can be considered among the needs of counselors. Additionally, the study indicated that counselors' perceptions of the school atmosphere were negatively influenced by a lack of control over decision-making processes and high demands with inadequate support. While these findings regarding the workplace environment are discussed in the context of the needs of school counselors, they may also provide insight into the needs of counselors in different work environments.

While the studies discussed in this section have provided insight into employees' needs, there is a notable absence of research addressing the specific needs of mental health professionals working in the university context. Moreover, studies examining general employee needs also lack a comprehensive perspective. At this point, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory may emerge as a valuable

theoretical framework for a more detailed examination. Having discussed the various needs of UCC professionals, we now focus on understanding their sources of support.

2.4.4 Sources of support

According to Halbesleben et al. (2014), resources are anything that individuals perceive as helping them achieve their goals. In this study, we embrace the notion of supportive resources to describe ways in which individuals receive support as they move forward in their work and deal with both pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Exploration of one's resources has been a topic of interest in human resources studies as well. A review analysis of 137 articles on employee engagement revealed 216 distinct resources documented in the literature, underscoring the pivotal role of resources in enhancing engagement levels. These resources are classified into five overarching categories from macro to micro level: organizational, social, job, home, and personal resources (Lee et al., 2019).

Exploring the supportive resources available for mental health providers, particularly those employed in UCCs, contributes meaningfully to understanding their diverse experiences. In addition to investigating the rewarding and challenging facets of their work and their relating needs, comprehending the array of resources at their disposal might play a significant role in developing a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and facilitating their personal and professional wellness. And in this section, studies that give us insight into support mechanisms and resources for professionals working at UCCs are highlighted.

Drawing from the insights of Sim et al. (2016), a study encompassing early and later career psychologists (ECPs and LCPs) within university environment, it

appears that both cohorts prioritize seeking support from their social networks, practicing self-care, and employing cognitive and behavioral coping strategies to navigate the rigors of their profession.

Despite limited literature addressing supportive resources for mental health providers in university settings, leveraging the framework of bio-ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and Bone's (2015) adaptation to workplace environments sheds light on potential avenues for bolstering their sources of support. Within the microsystem layer, it is paramount to foster collaborative environments where counselors can connect with colleagues, share insights, and receive emotional support from their social circles, including family and friends. Additionally, interdepartmental collaborations within the campus community may serve as vital extensions of support networks. In that regard, some of the strategies reported by the psychologists at Sim et al.'s (2016) study, namely social support from colleagues, friends, and family, corresponds to the microsystem, while self-care practices and internal coping mechanisms represent aspects of the individual layer. This may be an example of the interaction between personal agency and proximal relationships in handling professional challenges.

Yet the ecological lens hints to other potential resources. At the exosystem level, which encompasses workplace and health-oriented services, measures such as access to supervision and consultation services, participation in professional development training, and seeking assistance from mental health experts might contribute to the resilience of mental health providers. Finally, management practices wield considerable influence at the macro level, with supportive leadership and conducive working conditions serving as pillars of support for these professionals.

By comprehensively examining and enhancing these supportive resources, universities can cultivate environments conducive to the well-being and effectiveness of mental health providers, ultimately facilitating optimal care for students and the broader campus community.

2.4.5 A potential next step

The experiences of the mental health providers at university counseling centers in Türkiye are yet to be studied. An exploration framed within Bronfenbrenner's Bio-Ecological Systems Theory (1979) may offer meaningful insights into the experiences of professionals. As stated, this theory centers on the dynamic relationships between various interacting systems and environments and provides a robust framework for understanding individual development. Examining the experiences of professionals working at UCCs through this lens can facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of these providers' positive experiences, challenges, needs, and resources.

Mental health providers in UCCs navigate a complex environment influenced by multiple layers. Direct interactions with students and colleagues (microsystem) and the interplay between their work and personal lives (mesosystem) shape their daily experiences. Indirect factors like university policies and societal attitudes towards mental health (exosystem), along with broader cultural and national policies (macrosystem), can also impact their practices. Furthermore, the evolving trends in student mental health and changes in counseling practices over time (chronosystem) may play a role in shaping their professional journey. This multi-layered context underscores the need for the exploration of diverse influences on mental health providers' work in educational settings.

While quantitative studies are essential for providing numerical insights into the experiences of university mental health providers, qualitative research holds equal importance for capturing more nuanced and holistic information. As evidenced by Hersch et al.'s (2022) study on remote services provided by college counselors, clinicians' depiction of remote work varied significantly based on factors such as health conditions, technological resources, and family dynamics. For some practitioners, remote work during crises was considered advantageous, while others highlighted it as a challenge. Therefore, incorporating qualitative methodologies alongside quantitative approaches can offer a comprehensive understanding of professionals' experiences within UCCs.

The current study intends to bridge the gap in the literature and give voice to professionals working at UCCs to understand their experiences. Qualitative methodology informed by the bio-ecological model is utilized to clarify the ways in which providers' context, especially at the micro and meso-level, shapes their perceptions of what is rewarding and challenging and what their needs and supportive resources are. Detailed information regarding the methodology of the current study can be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This section provides details about the research design, participants involved in the research, the instruments utilized for data collection, and the data collection process. Additionally, it offers an overview of the data analysis method and provides an explanation of the researcher's identity.

3.1 Research design

This study adopted a qualitative approach to explore and understand the experiences, challenges, needs, and supportive resources of mental health providers working in university settings in Türkiye. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for investigating groups whose experiences remain underexplored in the existing literature (Creswell, 2013). To gather rich, personal narratives, in-depth interviews were conducted, focusing on the positive experiences, challenges faced, specific needs, and utilized supportive resources of mental health providers at UCCs.

3.2 Participants

Following Patton's (2014) recommendation, this study utilized purposive sampling in order to explore the experiences of a specific group, namely mental health providers working at UCCs in Türkiye. Purposive sampling is acknowledged as a suitable approach for qualitative inquiries seeking profound insights, as it helps select information-rich cases that closely align with the study's eligibility criteria (Patton, 2014). When difficulties were encountered in reaching the initially targeted number of participants, the snowball sampling method was employed. This method

of sampling enables researchers to access informants via contact details supplied by previous informants (Noy, 2008). As we have changed our inclusion criteria and worked with those who had already answered our call for participation, the sampling method has also included elements of convenience sampling.

In the current study, ten mental health professionals, including psychological counselors, psychologists, and clinical psychologists, were recruited from UCCs in Türkiye, as providers from differing backgrounds tend to work in these settings. The targeted number of 10 practitioners, determined at the research proposal process, was reached despite challenges. The participants consist of nine female and one male providers. All participants, except one (P2), work in metropolitan cities. Similarly, all centers where the participants work, except for one (P8), have been providing services for more than five years. The participants of the study represent eight different schools across six cities, including both public and private institutions. The researcher had no prior personal acquaintance with any of the participants before the data collection phase. To maintain confidentiality participants were encrypted and referred to by their assigned participant numbers (e.g., P8). Table 1 outlines the certain demographic characteristics of the participants. After that, participants of the present study are introduced individually, including their demographic and professional information.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Professional title	Years of practice	Institution type	Approx. no. of students in the uni.	Avg. weekly caseload size
P1	32	Male	Clinical Psychologist	3	State	-	25-30
P2	37	Female	Psychologist	14	State	26k	16
P3	40	Female	Psychologist (MA in Psy)	16	State	60k	25
P4	39	Female	Psychologist, PhD	15	State	60k	25
P5	27	Female	Psychological Counselor	5	State	90k	10
P6	32	Female	Clinical Psychologist	9	State	18k	9-9
P7	35	Female	Psychologist	13	State	6k	25
P8	29	Female	Psychologist (MA in Psy)	8	Private	5k	30
P9	30	Female	Clinical Psychologist	5	Private	-	18-20
P10	27	Female	Clinical Psychologist	4	Private	7-8k	>20

Participant 1 (P1) is a 32-year-old Clinical Psychologist. He reported his relationship status as in a relationship. He reported that he graduated from a Psychology department and pursued a master's degree in Clinical Psychology, which he completed in 2020. He stated that he has been practicing for three years. He mentioned that his practical experience at the current center spans the same period. He added that, aside from himself, there are no other administrative staff or mental health providers at the center. He noted that he has received training in various therapy approaches, although he did not specify which ones. During the interview, he appeared willing to talk and assist, but he preferred to give shorter responses rather than detailed or lengthy explanations.

Participant 2 (P2) is a 37-year-old psychologist who is married. She graduated from a psychology department in 2010 and attempted to pursue several master's degrees but did not complete any of them. She has a total of 12 years of experience in university counseling, all of which have been at her current center. She noted that only one other mental health professional works at her center. She mentioned receiving training in Schema Therapy, CBT, and MMPI and listed her areas of expertise as clinical psychology, adult populations, university counseling,

and academic anxiety. The participant stated that she is involved in one commission in the university. She appeared eager to share her experiences during the interview. She even expressed interest in the findings of the study once it is completed and published, requesting that the results be shared with her.

Participant 3 (P3) is a 40-year-old specialist psychologist who reported her relationship status as single. After earning her bachelor's degree in Psychology, she completed a master's degree in Family Counseling and Couple Therapy in 2015. She reported having 14 years of experience in university counseling, with the last 11 years at her current center. She mentioned that her center has five staff members in total, including four mental health professionals. The participant listed her additional training as clinical psychology, CBT, crisis intervention and suicide prevention, and Positive Psychology Introduction Training. Her areas of expertise include addiction/substance abuse, crisis and trauma, marriage and family therapy/counseling, and creativity and art therapy. She stated that she is not currently involved in any university committee or commission. During the interview, she noted her limited time and periodically asked how many questions remained. The interview, interrupted by internet connection issues, was completed with her providing shorter and quicker responses.

Participant 4 (P4) is a 39-year-old married psychologist with a PhD. After earning her bachelor's degree in Psychology, she completed a master's degree in Clinical Psychology and a doctorate in Guidance and Psychological Counseling in 2018. She has 15 years of experience at her current UCC, which is also the only center she has worked at during her career. She works at the same center as Participant 3. She mentioned receiving training in trauma, Addiction Trainer Training from her university's addiction institute, Psychodrama, Tension Release

Exercise, Mindfulness, and Brainspotting. She listed her areas of expertise as addiction/substance abuse, career counseling, clinical psychology, psychological counseling, adult populations, university counseling, crisis and trauma, eating disorders, academic anxiety, and preventive services. She is involved in one university commission as well as two work groups on different issues. The participant described herself as someone who enjoys sharing and discussing, and she responded to the interview questions with long detailed explanations.

Participant 5 (P5) is a 27-year-old psychological counselor who stated her relationship status as in a relationship. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Guidance and Psychological Counseling in 2020 and is currently pursuing a master's degree in the same field. She reported five years of experience at her current UCC, which employs 11 staff members, including eight mental health professionals. She listed her additional training as International CBT Therapy, Positive Psychotherapy, Reality Therapy, Solution-Focused Therapy, Play Therapy, and Solution-Focused Therapy for Marriage. Her areas of expertise include psychological counseling, adult populations, crisis and trauma, and academic anxiety. She mentioned being involved in one of the university's commissions. The participant joked about needing therapy herself during the interview, noting that some questions touched on areas she felt anxious about. However, she also shared that she found the study valuable, adding, "It's nice that someone is conducting research about us."

Participant 6 (P6) is a 32-year-old single clinical psychologist. After earning a bachelor's degree in Guidance and Psychological Counseling, she completed her master's degree in Clinical Psychology in 2019. She has two years of university counseling experience, with 14 months at her current center. The center has five staff members, three of whom are mental health professionals. She mentioned receiving

training in Schema Therapy, Family and Couple Counseling, Rorschach, and CAS and listed her areas of expertise as addiction/substance abuse, clinical psychology, adult populations, and preventive services. She stated that she is not currently involved in any committee or commission work at the university. The interview with this participant lasted longer than any of the others. Due to her lengthy responses, the initially planned time was insufficient, and a second session was conducted. She shared that the study raised her awareness and made her reflect on things she wouldn't usually consider in daily life.

Participant 7 (P7) is a 35-year-old married psychologist with children. She completed her master's degree in Social Work in 2019 and is currently pursuing a PhD degree. With six years of experience in university counseling, she has been working at her current center for 1.5 years and is the only mental health professional there. She reported receiving additional training in Gottman Couples Therapy, Family Counseling, CBT, Motivational Interviewing, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Brief Solution-Focused Therapy. Her areas of expertise include general populations, adult populations, marriage and family therapy/counseling, and preventive services. She mentioned being a member of two university committees. Throughout the interview, she shared information beyond the questions and expressed her willingness to assist, noting that she understands the challenges of recruiting participants for research as she conducts studies herself. She offered to provide support if needed in the future.

Participant 8 (P8) is a 29-year-old single psychologist. She completed her bachelor's degree in Psychology and earned a master's degree in Mental Rehabilitation in 2019. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Clinical Psychology. With 2.5 years of experience in university counseling, all at her current center, she works

alongside one other mental health professional. She mentioned receiving training in CBT, EMDR, addiction counseling, and group therapy. Her areas of expertise include addiction/substance abuse, clinical psychology, psychological counseling, general populations, adult populations, community mental health, crisis and trauma, and academic anxiety. She is involved in one university commission. She expressed familiarity with the difficulties of thesis writing and data collection from her own experiences. She demonstrated a collaborative attitude throughout the interview.

Participant 9 (P9) is a 30-year-old married clinical psychologist. After completing her bachelor's degree in Psychology, she earned a master's degree in Clinical Psychology in 2021 and is currently pursuing a PhD in the same field. She has been working at her current center for approximately three years, which corresponds to her entire experience in university counseling. She noted that only one other mental health professional works at her center. She reported receiving training in EMDR and Schema Therapy and listed her areas of expertise as clinical psychology, adult populations, and academic anxiety. She stated that she is not involved in any university committee or commission work. Throughout the interview, she was open to collaboration, noting that discussing both the positive and challenging aspects of her work felt rewarding. She shared that the mere existence of such a study, reflecting curiosity about their experiences, made her feel valued. She concluded the interview by expressing her appreciation.

Participant 10 (P10) is a 27-year-old married clinical psychologist. She earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology, completed a master's degree in Clinical Psychology in 2021, and is currently pursuing a PhD in the same field. She began her three years of university counseling experience at her current center, where she works with Participant 9. She reported receiving training in CBT, EMDR, EMDR

Flash, CBT Workshops, and Brief Solution-Focused Therapy. Her areas of expertise include clinical psychology, adult populations, university counseling, academic anxiety, crisis and trauma, and eating disorders. She is involved in one of the coordination activities at her university. During the interview, she was cooperative and provided detailed responses. She shared that the study gave her a new perspective on her work during a time when her motivation was low, helping her reflect on how she overcame challenges, which in turn made her feel empowered. She added that knowing someone is curious enough to study their work was encouraging and expressed interest in seeing the results.

3.3 Instruments

The demographic information form and semi-structured interview protocol were utilized for data gathering purposes. The comprehensive information regarding these instruments is presented in the sections below.

3.3.1 Demographic information form

The demographic information form was utilized to gather personal information from the participants. Items included the participant's name, age, contact information, relationship status, professional title, role at the center, specialty areas, years of experience in counseling practice, and years of experience at university-level counseling work. Also, the name, type, number of total and mental health employees, and average caseload size information regarding the institution and, in particular, the counseling center at which they work was included. Please refer to Appendix A for the demographic information form in English and Appendix B for the same form in Turkish.

3.3.2 Semi-structured online interview protocol

For this research, all participants underwent online in-depth interviews designed to capture their first-hand experiences in detail. Therefore, the semi-structured online interview protocol was developed using (1) existing international research on the overall experiences of counseling professionals, including those in university settings, and (2) Bone's (2015) adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's development theory to workplace environments. The interview questions emphasize the key areas addressed in and/or missing from the literature. These key areas are categorized into six, and each is named and briefly explained below, along with the corresponding ecological systems layer(s).

Work Conditions at University Counseling Centers: This part explores university-level mental health providers' roles, priorities, and daily activities within the counseling center. It also considers how their experiences are influenced by their direct encounters (microsystem), interdepartmental relationships within the university (mesosystem), and broader institutional and cultural contexts (macrosystem).

Positive Aspects of Working at a University Counseling Center: This part examines the perceived benefits, both personal and professional, of employment in a UCC. It encompasses elements such as workplace environment (microsystem), institutional regulations and societal attitudes towards mental health professionals (macrosystem), and the ways in which these experiences evolve over time (chronosystem).

Challenges Encountered: This part investigates the difficulties faced at the counseling center through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory. It examines various challenges, including individual issues, financial

concerns, and student service demands, all of which fall within the microsystem layer. Furthermore, it explores relationship dynamics between different university departments (mesosystem), issues related with institutional structure and policies (macrosystem), and broader external factors such as national regulations impacting the profession (exosystem).

Needs of University Counseling Center Employees: This section examines the needs of UCC employees in relation to the challenges they encounter. It highlights the importance of identifying key stakeholders and implementing practical strategies to address these needs effectively.

Supportive Resources: This part discusses the factors from different layers of the participants' environment that aid in coping with challenges. It includes internal resources, personal life support, and support from colleagues which falls within the microsystem. Additionally, it covers support from the center and the university (mesosystem), as well as external professional connections (exosystem).

Please refer to Appendix C for the interview protocol in English. The interview protocol in Turkish can be found in Appendix D.

3.4 Procedure

The study began with a pilot phase to test the clarity and feasibility of the instruments and interview format. More specifically, a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the planned interview protocol, to understand whether the prepared interview questions were understandable, and to determine if the questions were suitable for answering the research questions.

Once an initial permission was obtained by the Ethics Committee of Boğaziçi University Institute of Social Sciences (SBINAREK), a pilot study was conducted

with two mental health professionals who work in a university context. These professionals were reached through personal connections. The first professional had 10 years of experience working at a UCC and had recently left her position. The second professional also had 11 years of experience in a UCC and also held a faculty position at the same university.

Interviews with both professionals were conducted online via Google Meet. In addition to following the interview protocol described below in detail, they were asked to provide feedback on the interview process. They were guided to evaluate aspects such as the length of the interview, the clarity of the questions, and the extent to which the questions reflected their university counseling experience. Additionally, they were encouraged to share any points they wanted to highlight or suggest improvements. Following the pilot applications, the main researcher and the thesis advisor reviewed the interview protocol and made minor revisions that included removing a few questions that caused conceptual confusion or were difficult to understand, rephrasing some items for clarity, and adjusting the order of certain questions to ensure a more natural flow of conversation.

The data collection phase began once the final permission was granted by the SBINAREK for the revised procedures. The researcher used a list of contact information for UCCs across Türkiye, which was collected and put together for a separate research study conducted by the thesis advisor. This list included names and contact information of most UCCs in the country, as it could be identified on universities' websites. In addition, the thesis advisor had a list of UCC providers who had previously given permission to be contacted for participation in future studies.

At the first stage of participant recruitment, thesis advisor sent an informative e-mail about the research to 14 providers who agreed to be invited to future studies,

along with three other practitioners she professionally knew. This e-mail briefly introduced the study and provided interested professionals with access to the researcher's contact information, informed consent form, and demographic information form. The content of this e-mail, written in Turkish, is included in Appendix G.

To secure the necessary number of participants, the main researcher reached out to additional professionals. Initially, the same invitation was sent to the official e-mail addresses of centers within 26 state universities across different cities in Türkiye, inviting providers at these centers to participate in the study. Interviews were scheduled with those who responded, and the data collection process began. However, due to a low response rate and an insufficient sample size, approximately one month after the initial invitation, individual e-mails were sent directly to providers at these centers to introduce the study.

Inclusion criteria established during the study's proposal phase included working at a state school, the school being located in a metropolitan area, and the counseling center having been in operation for more than five years. As recruitment progressed and the number of eligible participants remained below the target sample size, the number of respondents who did not meet these criteria but were available for interviews increased. Midway through data collection, with the approval of the thesis advisor, these initial criteria were dropped. To cast a wider net, invitation e-mails were subsequently sent to the official addresses of counseling centers at 20 private universities, in addition to the 26 state universities mentioned above. As a result, providers working at private universities, in smaller cities, and in centers operating for less than five years were also accepted for an interview.

Professionals who have volunteered to participate in the study began their participation by clicking the Google Form link provided in the invitation e-mail. The content of the Google Form, in order of appearance, included the Informed Consent Information (Appendix H), one question confirming that the participant met the eligibility criteria, which was expanded as explained above, the Demographic Information Form (Appendix B), and questions inquiring about participants' availability for an online interview. Once participants filled out this form, the main researcher established the meeting schedule based on mutual availability and emailed each participant with the meeting day, time, and link. Participants were asked to confirm receipt of the scheduling email and were invited to contact the researcher to reschedule if necessary.

All interviews were conducted by the main researcher with the practitioners who followed up with the above-explained e-communication. For the purposes of diversifying the study sample, we chose to conduct online interviews to reach professionals working in universities across different cities in Türkiye. This approach allowed us to overcome challenges associated with face-to-face interviews, such as travel distance, tight work schedules, and limited resources for transportation, while also enabling the primary researcher to conduct interviews without disrupting her own work responsibilities.

However, despite these advantages, several challenges were encountered. Internet connection issues occasionally caused interruptions in the interviews, requiring repetition of unclear statements and, in one case, even necessitating the rescheduling of a second session due to complete connection failures. Furthermore, although online interviews provided flexibility in location, they also posed challenges regarding confidentiality and noise control. For instance, background

noises at home or constant distractions in an office setting, such as knocking on the door, sometimes disrupted the flow of the interviews.

Interviews were conducted using Google Meet, a video chat platform operated by Google. Google Meet was selected as the platform since it is free of charge, secure, and accessible through one link without requiring participants to download an application. It was assumed that the target participant group is already familiar with this platform and can access it with relative ease.

Interviews started with giving participants a verbal reminder of the research participant's rights and responsibilities as stated on the electronically provided Informed Consent Form. The main researcher specifically reminded the participants that the interviews would be audio recorded and obtained their verbal consent for the recording as well.

The researcher did not exclude any participants at the interview stage; however, interviews with two participants who were simultaneously pursuing their master's degrees at the same private university while working as interns at the university's counseling center were not included in the analysis. The reason for this exclusion was that, during the interviews, it was revealed that these participants primarily worked with adult couples or children, rather than university students, due to the structure of their center. Although their internship technically took place in a university counseling center setting, the nature of their work did not reflect the specific experiences this study aimed to explore. In practice, these participants appeared to be using the UCC merely as a physical office space to provide external services, rather than engaging in counseling practices aligned with the core functions of a UCC in higher education. Therefore, their experiences were considered outside

the scope of the current research. The rest of the data obtained from the ten interviews were included in the analysis.

At the conclusion of data collection phase, each participant was given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. These pseudonyms were used to identify the audio recordings of the interviews and notes, and all files were encrypted to restrict access to the researcher's password-protected personal computer. The thesis advisor had access to the written interview responses in cases where support was required, such as during the analysis and write-up of results. However, the responses and notes were not matched to the personal information of the participants, and the advisor only had access to the pseudonyms.

3.5 Data analysis

Following the data collection phase, interviews were transcribed, and a content analysis was employed to examine and interpret the data. Content analysis is a method that translates the meaning of qualitative data into a coding frame used to detect, organize, and analyze existing patterns in the data (Dollarhide et al., 2023). MAXQDA software, which is a powerful tool for assisting research processes with the interpretation and analysis of qualitative data, was used for coding purposes.

The transcripts were initially generated using Microsoft Office Word's built-in dictation feature, ensuring that no audio or text data was shared with any third party. However, since the resulting texts contained spelling and punctuation errors and some expressions from daily language were not fully comprehensible, the researcher had to review the transcripts by re-listening to the audio recordings and correcting errors.

Subsequently, the response transcripts from the Word document were manually transferred into the MAXQDA program. The researcher first created codes and labels based on the interview questions, then read through all transcripts three times to assign the relevant codes to corresponding statements. Finally, utilizing MAXQDA and Office Word, the responses were grouped according to the interview protocol. To ensure consistency and clarity, the coding and categorization decisions were reviewed with the thesis advisor through the analysis and especially before finalizing the findings.

3.6 Identity of the researcher

In his guide to conducting research, Denscombe (2010) highlights the significant role of the researcher's identity in qualitative methodology, noting that the researcher's perception shapes both the data collection and analysis processes. Building on this, qualitative studies often include reflections on why the researcher chose a particular topic, their experiences related to it, and their professional background.

My interest in this topic began during a literature review I conducted for another study with one of my professors. While examining research on online university counseling within the global and Turkish contexts, I noticed a significant lack of studies focusing on professionals working in this field in both settings. Additionally, my thesis advisor Assist. Prof. Gizem Toska's 13 years of experience in UCCs in the United States as a psychologist served as a strong source of motivation and guidance for pursuing research in this area.

During my master's program, I completed my internship at my university's counseling center, which allowed me to gain minimal yet valuable experience in this area. This experience sparked my desire to explore the field in greater depth and

contribute meaningfully to it. The gap I identified in the literature, combined with my limited professional experience, inspired me to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences, challenges, needs, and support resources of professionals working in university counseling. As an aspiring candidate to enter the mental health field, it is personally meaningful for me to create space for and advocate this professional group, whose experiences and challenges are often unseen, unheard, and unrecognized. Reflecting on how this study would allow me to contribute to the field through my dual identity as a counselor and researcher felt particularly meaningful. For these reasons, I chose to focus on this topic, aiming to give voice to these professionals and shed light on their experiences.

Also, during my undergraduate education at Boğaziçi University, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory held a significant place. The frequent references to this theory in various courses taught by different professors not only sparked my interest in it but also led me to adopt it as a conceptual perspective. Therefore, while conducting my research, I decided to choose Ecological Systems Theory as my theoretical framework, as it is a comprehensive approach I frequently encountered throughout my studies. My studies at Boğaziçi University not only gave me a comprehensive lens through which I approached the current study but also prepared me to conduct a qualitative study. Coursework on research methods, such as Advanced Research Methods and Applied Research, especially when combined with my efforts to delve into nuances of qualitative studies through existing literature, prepared me to conduct this study.

While conducting this study, I had the opportunity to meet with various professionals working under different conditions in university counseling and to conduct in-depth interviews with them. These interviews not only served as a

valuable source of information for my research but also provided inspiration for my own career journey. I gained insights into what it means to work in university settings and to be a mental health professional through sincere and reflective conversations. In addition to the rich content of the interviews, conducting them in an online environment required the use of certain counseling skills—such as active listening, attending, and reflecting—even though the interactions were not therapeutic in nature. I consider this a new skill that I have acquired through this process. Lastly, as a researcher with limited experience in the field, I remained mindful of the potential influence of my own experiences, beliefs, and biases throughout the interviews and data analysis processes.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this section, findings from the data analysis are categorized under five main headings, determined based on the research questions of the study: (1) work conditions, (2) positive experiences, (3) challenges, (4) needs, and (5) supportive resources. The subcategories under these main headings were formed based on the open-ended questions included in the interview protocol. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in place of participants' real names, and identifying details such as city, school, and center names were masked. Table 2 lists the categories and subcategories that emerged from the analysis, arranged in descending order based on the number of participants who mentioned them.

Table 2. The Categories and Sub-Categories

Categories	Sub-categories
Work conditions	Structure Physical working conditions Additional social rights and benefits Center's relationship with the university Prevalent dynamics affecting the center's work Duties and responsibilities at the center
Positive experiences	Physical working conditions Working with students Personal Structural/managerial Career journey Relational Financial
Challenges	Structural/managerial Financial concerns Relational challenges Personal issues Emotionally intense or life-threatening situations Physical working conditions Challenges in working with students The influence of regulations and expectations from higher management Career-related obstacles
Needs	Professional needs Managerial and structural needs Financial needs Social needs Personal needs
Supportive resources	Thoughts and behaviors Close personal relationships Support from the center and colleagues Prevalent dynamics in society Support from the university Colleagues outside the center Physical conditions, spaces, or nature of the office or campus

4.1 Work conditions

Participants were asked a series of questions designed to explore their experiences working in a university setting from multiple perspectives. Their responses were categorized into the following subcategories: (1) structure, (2) physical working conditions, (3) additional social rights and benefits, (4) the center's relationship with the university and departments/collaborations, (5) prevalent economic, political, social, and cultural dynamics affecting the center's work, and (6) duties and responsibilities at the center.

4.1.1 Structure

We first asked participants about the organizational structure of the centers where they worked. The information we have obtained in response to that question included the name of the center, the management structure, number of mental health professionals working there, and division of labor among the providers. We found that most of the centers represented in the study were similarly named and affiliated with the Department of Health, Culture, and Sports in their respective universities. Additionally, a key common factor regarding the organizational structure was the insufficient number of practitioners in these centers, which led to variations in task distribution.

When asked about the naming of these services provided in the university context, six of the ten participants responded as “Psychological Counseling and Guidance Unit,” two as “Psychological Counseling Service,” and one as “Psychological Counseling and Guidance Center.” Only one participant stated that there was no unit-like organization at their university and that the services were provided under the name of “Student Counseling System Coordinators.”

With respect to management structure, seven participants noted that the unit they work in is affiliated with the Department of Health, Culture, and Sports. One of the remaining participants who stated working under a coordinator-based structure reported that they were affiliated with the general secretary. However, two participants did not provide information regarding management structure of their workplace during the interview.

All participants stated that the number of providers in their unit was insufficient considering the size of the student population they serve. Only one of the ten interviewees reported having eight providers in their center, while five of the

remaining participants reported working as only two providers. Two other participants stated they work as four providers, while the remaining two worked alone. One participant explained that to address the high student demand for the services, they utilize a network of volunteering professionals from outside the center.

As the number of available professionals decreases and the number of applications increases, we also have a network of volunteer specialists. These are external professionals who provide services free of charge, just like our system, including face-to-face sessions in our office here at [center name]. Additionally, we collaborate with these specialists to secure low-cost appointment slots that students can afford. If students do not wish to wait in the queue here, we direct them to these options. So, we have such a specialist network as well. (P6, Appendix J, 1)

When asked about the division of labor between the providers in the centers, Participant 1 and Participant 7, who work alone, stated that they undertake all the necessary work themselves. According to Participant 5's work experience, labor is divided among those working in the center. While university professors and assigned research assistants conduct sessions at the center, part-time students like Participant 5 perform other tasks besides sessions. Participant 5 listed these tasks as "managing the admission process, welcoming clients and students, answering questions, and keeping the rooms in order."

In units where two or four providers work together, the participants stated that there is no specific division of labor; whoever is available at the time receives the client. Moreover, Participant 6 said they alternate with each other in the center as the deputy head, which involves paperwork and administrative processes.

4.1.2 Physical working conditions

Physical working conditions shared similarities and differences. Having private office space to provide counseling was a common experience. All participants stated having separate rooms suitable for individual therapy. However, participants' reports

showed divergence when it came to location of the center and level to which confidentiality is protected.

With respect to their physical conditions, each participant stated they had separate rooms suitable for individual therapy. As an example, Participant 3 highlighted that this may not be the case for their colleagues working at other institutions: “Each of us has our own separate office, which is truly important. Sometimes, even psychologists don’t have their own offices; we see this in hospitals. But here, we all have our private spaces.” (P3, Appendix J, 2).

Five out of the ten participants shared that their centers were located in central locations where students can easily access them, and care is taken to ensure that they are located in a place that cannot easily be noticed to ensure privacy. Another participant reflecting on the physical conditions of her workspace mainly focused on suitability for therapy sessions and ensuring privacy:

Additionally, our floor is located on the top floor of a block, in a more secluded corner. Being away from the crowd and not in a highly visible area makes it easier for people to visit and choose our services. (P10, Appendix J, 3)

While most participants mentioned that their physical working conditions were well-suited for therapy, only Participant 2 expressed a concern about the lack of privacy in her office where she conducted the sessions. She explained that having a restroom right next to her office made her worry about potential disruptions, as sounds could be heard, or the silhouette of someone passing by could be seen at the door, potentially interrupting the session.

Participant 7 also described her unique circumstances due to the campus’s remote location, likening it to living on an isolated mountain. Additionally, she shared difficulties related to commuting between two campuses and not having a permanent room as an office on the newer campus.

4.1.3 Additional social rights and benefits

In response to the question regarding additional rights and benefits, a few participants stated that, aside from their status as public officers, they do not have any other social rights comparable to those in the private sector. Additionally, the majority of participants (six) mentioned that they have access to free or discounted meals, while only three reported receiving transportation support. Participant 9 shared the following on this matter:

Unfortunately, there are no additional benefits; I only receive my salary. I receive my salary regularly. In some workplaces, this can be an issue—they pay late or incompletely, etc. Thankfully, I haven't faced such an issue so far, but we don't have any extra benefits. (P9, Appendix J, 4)

4.1.4 Center's relationship with the university and departments/collaborations

When asked about the center's relationship with the university, participants disclosed varying degrees and forms of engagement with other units and/or stakeholders. While three participants suggested that they had no contact or collaboration with other university partners, the remaining participants shared that their collaborations included consultations, staff and faculty training efforts, and taking part in various committees and/or commissions.

Four participants stated they are in direct contact with the academic faculty when asked about the departments they work with and the types of collaborations they engage in. They reported consulting with center professionals via individual communication. Participant 6 explains this relationship with the following words:

We are in close contact primarily with the rectorate, the dormitory, and the faculty members in various departments. In fact, we even prepared a booklet for them on how to identify students in risky situations and what actions they can take. Now, we are in the process of digitizing it. (P6, Appendix J, 5)

Six participants identified different university-level collaborations. Participant 2 mentioned she took part in supporting the school's quality processes and staff and faculty training efforts. Additionally, Participant 7 and Participant 4 shared that as a center, they collaborated with their university on disaster coordination efforts following the recent earthquake. Similarly, three participants reported they served on their university's addiction commissions and contributed to its initiatives. In addition, one participant stated that the center is in contact with all administrative units but most frequently with dormitories. As a different example of collaboration, Participant 7 explained that, upon the request of senior management, she conducted a research study to assess staff needs, based on the belief that employees at the school were unhappy.

Lastly, two participants from different private universities stated that their centers do not collaborate with their universities. Participant 8 concluded that their work primarily relies on individual sessions with students and justified the preference for individual counseling as follows:

There was a high demand from students for counseling services, and as a result, my schedule filled up quickly, and things progressed in that way. Later on, to be honest, I developed some hesitations about interacting with students in roles other than that of a therapist, especially after most of them had come to know me in that capacity. So, the relationship remained confined to this room, in a way. (P8, Appendix J, 6)

4.1.5 Prevalent economic, political, social, and cultural dynamics affecting the center's work

When asked about the economic, political, social, and cultural dynamics influencing their work conditions at the center, participants identified several factors: the size of the city (n=2), changing perspectives on mental health (n=3), events in the broader context (n=3), and the country's economic conditions (n=4).

First, the size of the city where the university is located was recognized as an influential factor by two participants. Participant 4, who described the city she works in as cosmopolitan, stated that she has gained experience working with various cultures, which has influenced her sessions. On the other hand, Participant 2 who works in a small town, described the people's perspective on psychology and their prejudices about seeking services from the center as follows:

There are prejudices among students about receiving services here. Beyond these prejudices, even when they overcome them and come, we can sometimes face situations where solutions are not possible. For instance, when we work on psychological empowerment, there are cases where we don't get a response to those efforts. This is because some students, considering the life and family profile they will return to after their 4- or 5-year process, respond with something like, "[Hocam], I can't do any of what you're suggesting." So, yes, there are cases where we experience a sense of helplessness. (P2, Appendix J, 7)

In addition to the size of the city, some participants stated that the changing perspectives of society towards psychology and receiving therapy services affected their work at the center. Participant 7, drawing from 14 years of experience, reflected on this significant shift in students' perspectives on seeking psychological support. When first working with university students, the participant observed that they were hesitant about others knowing they had received psychological help and were concerned about confidentiality. For example, they feared that having a history of therapy could negatively impact their professional careers. However, over time, the participant noticed that students became more familiar with therapy, with many already having prior experiences, also seeing aspects like confidentiality as established rights rather than concerns.

Similarly, Participant 5 mentioned that individuals who used to shy away from receiving therapy now see it as an indication of higher status, while Participant 6 expressed the increasing popularity of psychotherapy in recent years with the

following words: “Recently, there has been a rapidly growing popularity of psychologists and psychotherapists. A mindset has emerged suggesting that everyone should have a psychologist and resolve their childhood traumas, and we are certainly seeing the effects of this.” (P6, Appendix J, 8). After describing this changing perspective, Participant 6 explained that even if students did not have any problems, they applied to the center out of curiosity about psychology:

These students are already at a certain level, and they have things they want to understand about themselves, their curiosities, their questions, and their existential inquiries. (...) Even though the team is shrinking, its recognition seems to be growing, which I think is somewhat connected to this need. It’s about people’s increasing desire for self-awareness, meaning-making, and trying to address their existing issues. Sometimes, they come with a symptom in mind, but sometimes it’s more about the curiosity and allure of psychotherapy itself.” (P6, Appendix J, 9)

When asked about the dynamics influencing their working conditions, some participants responded by placing this in a broader context. For example, Participant 5 mentioned that they, as a center, volunteered for support in the region after the major earthquake that struck the country in early 2023. Participant 4 explained that in the aftermath of the same earthquake, in addition to the sessions they were already conducting, they continued with an intensive program of interviews, prioritizing students affected by the earthquake. Emphasizing that it is impossible to be detached from the context when working with students, both Participant 4 and Participant 6 explained how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted their work. Participant 6 noted that new presenting concerns have emerged, and existing concerns were intensified during the pandemic. Participant 4 reflected on how the way they provide services have changed with pandemic. They were given technological devices and began conducting online sessions. She went on to describe how this advancement influenced and transformed their work even after the pandemic in the following ways:

This also helped us in another way. Previously, when students—especially those living outside the city—went home during the summer break, they would leave, and we wouldn't hear from them until the end of the summer. During those three months, we wouldn't know what was happening unless they sent an email, which we could only respond to. But now, even when they leave, they can connect with us online from wherever they are. This allows us to continue sessions with them during summer breaks. Of course, this has increased our summer workload, but it has also played an important role in ensuring students don't lose touch with the process. (P4, Appendix J, 10)

When discussing the economic conditions affecting their work experiences, participants often emphasized that the services offered for free within the university were provided at very high prices elsewhere, creating conflicted benefits for students. Four participants noted that, due to the economic situation in the country, offering these services free of charge increased students' demand and led to a higher workload at the center.

However, Participant 8 also views the free provision of these services from a different perspective. Participant 8 stated "(...) I think it facilitates that first contact with a therapist." (P8, Appendix J, 11). She suggested, while it enhances accessibility, it may not always positively impact the therapy process especially when a cognitive behavioral approach is utilized. For needs like self-exploration, she believes longer-term and more dynamic approaches would be more beneficial.

4.1.6 Duties and responsibilities at the center

When we asked participants about their roles and responsibilities at the center to better understand their working conditions, the most common response was providing individual counseling/therapy to students. Some participants mentioned being responsible for group work, psychoeducation/seminars, and orientation programs, while only two participants noted having non-therapeutic responsibilities. Additionally, nine out of ten participants stated that individual counseling sessions

took up most of their time at the center. Finally, they discussed the types of problems for which students frequently sought help for.

With respect to their duties and responsibilities at the center, all participants mentioned conducting individual counseling/therapy sessions with students. Participant 1 used the following analogy to describe his duties in the center: “Well, actually as I respond, to students, I could say something like, ‘You know how high schools have a guidance counselor? I’m basically the university’s version of that.’ It’s the same thing—I provide counseling and psychological support to students.” (P1, Appendix J, 12).

Five of the ten professionals who participated in the study said they conducted seminars/psychoeducation sessions. An issue noted among these professionals was the lower-than-expected attendance at these seminars, leading them to prioritize other activities. Three participants mentioned that they participate at the orientation through making a presentation about available services at the center.

Additionally, four participants stated that they also dedicate time to group work. Only Participant 4 mentioned having academic responsibilities, such as teaching courses in the department, in addition to counseling duties. Unlike the other participants, Participant 6 stated they were responsible for creating content for the center’s website and brochures.

Participants were not just asked about their duties and responsibilities but also how they allocate their time among the responsibilities. Eight out of ten participants stated that individual counseling sessions took up most of their time, while the remaining two did not specify such information. Participant 3 summarized the shared

experience with the following words: “We do therapy sessions every hour, that’s it.” (P3, Appendix J, 13).

When participants were asked about the issues and needs that students frequently present with, four participants emphasized that these problems and issues are diverse. Summarizing this situation, Participant 4 said: “Of course, as we know, there are as many problems as there are people, and honestly, the university sample reflects the general population really well. I think just about every issue comes up here.” (P4, Appendix J, 14). The presenting concerns that participants reported are ranked in the table below, from the most frequently mentioned to the least.

Table 3. Presenting Concerns Endorsed by Participants

Work issues	<i>n</i>
Anxiety	8
Family-related	7
Depression/depressive symptoms	6
Relationships	5
OCD	4
Addictions	3
Adjustment problems	3
Trauma	2
Eating disorder	2
Panic	2
Impulse/Attention	2
Social phobia	2

The first research question of this study aimed to understand the working conditions of mental health professionals employed at UCCs, highlighting both

differences and commonalities across institutions. Findings indicate that these professionals work in similarly structured but understaffed centers, with separate therapy rooms. Participants also noted the impact of social, political, cultural, and economic factors, particularly shifting societal views on mental health and the implications of providing free services in a struggling economy. As a primary duty of practitioners, individual counseling stands out as a prevalent mode of service, with anxiety, family-related concerns, and depression being the most common student issues.

4.2 Positive experiences

This section addresses the following research question: “What positive experiences do mental health professionals face in university counseling centers, and how are these positive experiences shaped by the micro and macro-level contexts in which they operate?”. To explore this, participants were asked about the benefits of working in a university psychological counseling center. Based on their responses, the positive experiences of mental health professionals in university settings were grouped into seven categories: (1) physical working conditions, (2) working with students, (3) personal, (4) structural/managerial, (5) career journey, (6) relational, and (7) financial. Table 4 outlines the subcategories within these positive experiences.

Table 4. Positive Experiences of the Professionals

Positive experiences	<i>n</i>
Physical working conditions	10
Working with students	9
Personal	9
Structural/managerial	9
Career journey	8
Relational	7
Financial	7

4.2.1 Physical working conditions

When participants were asked about the positive aspects of working at a UCC, all ten participants highlighted various dimensions of their physical working conditions. Five participants appreciated the presence of natural areas on campus, and four participants highlighted the advantage of having private offices. Two participants emphasized the benefits of a quiet and well-lit workspace. One participant compared her current setting to alternative environments where mental health professionals work, acknowledging the advantages of her existing conditions. Another participant expressed that having the freedom to make changes to her workspace was beneficial; rearranging the space was recognized as a source of pleasure.

First common element that five participants emphasized among the good aspects of the physical conditions was the natural areas of the campus. The participants mentioned favorable physical conditions such as seeing greenery, hearing birdsongs, and taking walks when needed. Participant 7 mentioned that the natural areas visible from her office window served as a kind of safe space during sessions. She found it helpful to pause occasionally, look outside, and refocus her

attention. Another participant expressed the positive effects of these natural areas on both employees and clients as follows:

The best part is definitely the windows opening to the garden :) The sound of birds—I don't know—it's just something else. We have a garden filled with trees, far from stone buildings, and we look out at that tree-covered garden. The bird sounds... When clients come here, even to that tiny counseling room, they often say, "[Hocam], I feel relaxed, the bird sounds, the nature..." We open the window, and maybe snow falls, or the wind blows, or there's a spring breeze. There are fruit trees, a little pond there. Clients say it makes them feel better, that it helps them relax. And since we also try to spend as much free time there as we can, instead of being stuck inside the buildings, the physical environment is definitely my favorite part, yes, absolutely. (P5, Appendix J, 17)

While access to nature can be a benefit, Participant 2 emphasized that such sources of positive experience is a function of being on campus. She highlighted that working at a university campus itself facilitates access to a number of resources that she could not access if she worked at some other place. She highlighted its advantages with the following statement:

Other than that, yes, we work on campus, and while it's away from the city center, it's a more isolated environment, separated from the public. We've got a pond here, and it's nice to take a walk around it during lunch breaks. If I were working in the city center or a hospital, I wouldn't have this kind of opportunity. (P3, Appendix J, 15)

Another commonly mentioned positive physical condition was having their own separate rooms that was endorsed by four participants. Participant 4 explained why this was beneficial for them as follows: "(...) Having our own individual offices is really a good thing for us. It means we don't have to wait for each other when a client comes in. Everyone can hold their sessions in their own space." (P4, Appendix J, 18).

Similarly, Participant 6 rated the center's location in a relatively quiet area of the campus as a positive feature. Furthermore, two participants mentioned the brightness of their rooms as a particularly positive aspect. Approaching the matter

from a different perspective, Participant 10's response suggested that when it comes to the positive impact of physical environment, it is not just what it is, but also to degree one can engage with it or have freedom to shape it. She expressed the joy of making arrangements in her room, with the following words:

I can arrange it the way I want, and since I spend almost the whole day here—more than I do at home—making this space pleasant or feeling good here is important to me. It's about making the place I'm in as good as possible or arranging it in a way that feels right to me. (P10, Appendix J, 16)

4.2.2 Working with students

When asked about the positive aspects of working in the field of university mental health, 9 out of 10 participants identified working with students as an advantage. Some benefits were attributed to the unique characteristics of the students, while others were related to the professional and personal growth providers experienced through working with this group.

With respect to student characteristics, two participants described university students as the most suitable age group to work with, based on comparisons with other age groups. The following statements of Participant 1 explain this situation well:

I think working with students, particularly university students, is like the ideal target group for a psychologist. They're generally more level-headed and come with a genuine desire for support. They're also more open to what you have to offer. Now, if I were working with teenagers—just to make a comparison—they tend to be more closed off, more arrogant, or prideful. But university students are at an age where that arrogance has started to fade, which makes working with them really enjoyable. (P1, Appendix J, 19)

Due to the influence of the age group, Participant 10 listed the dynamism and vitality of the students among the characteristics that felt good for her. She stated that sessions with students were never monotonous, as they could be very cheerful at times and intensely emotional at others. She enjoyed these emotional fluctuations

and noted that the constant events in students' lives and their tendency to perceive even small incidents as significant sparked her curiosity.

Similarly, Participant 3 defined working with students as working with the part of the society that values education and personal growth. She also expressed that working with this "filtered group" made her feel privileged. Additionally, Participant 9 noted that students' high level of self-awareness and ability to express themselves positively impacted their work, as students were more conscious of their issues and better understood the provided services.

In addition to characteristics of students, personal and professional impact of working with this population was also recognized by the participants as sources of positive experiences. Working with a younger generation, for instance, emerged as one of the contributors. Highlighting the personal impact of it, Participant 7 stated that working with university students allowed her to continuously learn new things and stay updated on recent trends. She shared that despite not being much older than the students, she sometimes felt like an 'aunt'. She mentioned that in sessions, she would occasionally encounter concepts she had never heard before. In such cases, she would ask the students for clarification, which she found both energizing and enriching. Highlighting the professional impact of it, Participant 6 shared that working with a group of similar-aged students in the university setting helped her better understand their evolving priorities and language, especially in the context of rapid mindset shifts driven by social media. Keeping up with these generational changes, in turn, seemed to facilitate her ability to assess the needs of and build rapport with university students.

There were other ways in which working with university students personally benefited the providers. Participant 4 stated that working with students who are

concerned about life and their future is inspiring for her. She emphasized how their resilience and determination, despite challenges, make her work meaningful as in the following words:

Getting into this university isn't easy, and many of the students have made significant sacrifices or faced great challenges to get here. Witnessing that struggle, seeing their journey—it's inspiring. I always dedicate my second sessions to talking about their background, and I'm often deeply moved by their stories. (...) Working with these stories and with individuals who remain functional and motivated to address their issues always gives me a sense of fulfillment. It's something that deeply resonates with me. (P4, Appendix J, 20)

Participant 7 who had mentioned feeling enriched from learning new things from students also stated that working with this population contributed to her motherhood experience and helped her better understand her own children. She illustrated this as follows:

(...) On the other hand, as a mother, it's also a chance for me to reflect on my own parenting. Hearing things directly from a young person's perspective—like "This affects me this way," "I feel this way when my parents act like this," or "Experiencing this among friends has this kind of impact"—it really feeds that side of me as well. It's a way of seeing things more concretely, and it adds to my understanding. (P7, Appendix J, 21)

Participant 10 helped us see that benefit of working with students may not only come from facilitation of growth but also recognition of the current state. She underscored the fluctuating emotional states of the students, and she reported that witnessing this fluctuation helped her recognize and appreciate that she is now in a calmer and more stable state.

4.2.3 Personal

When asked about the benefits of working in a university setting, 9 out of 10 participants shared examples of how their personal lives were positively impacted. Three participants emphasized value-based aspects, while another three mentioned

that the positive impact on them came from the satisfaction they gained through the counseling process. Two participants stated that the working conditions supported their other life roles, making their job personally fulfilling. Additionally, two participants found the prestige associated with their profession uplifting, and one participant expressed that working at the institution where she graduated was personally meaningful.

For some participants, positive aspects of working at a UCC stemmed from the match between their values and work-related actions. Participant 10 stated that although her work is not financially satisfying, it offers an essential opportunity for idealist individuals like herself who have academic goals and aim to gain experience. Similarly, Participant 6 explained that providing this service free of charge was meaningful to her, especially given the current conditions where therapy fees are very high and psychological support is considered a luxury. Participant 8 further elaborated on this point, emphasizing the importance of the accessibility of the services they offered and her role as a potential first therapist for student-clients in the following:

The second thing is just being someone they can reach out to here. Like we talked about earlier, maybe they wouldn't go to someone outside, wouldn't know who to find, wouldn't trust anyone, or wouldn't be able to afford it and would give up. But here, they can easily make an appointment, even if it's a couple of weeks later, and come talk to someone. So, in that sense, being the first person they open up to, maybe their first therapist, or the first person to truly listen to them in this way—it honestly makes me feel good. (P8, Appendix J, 22)

Counseling process and outcomes came out as another source of positive experience for providers working at a UCC. Participant 4 stated that she enjoyed working with self-motivated clients and elaborated with the following words:

In a way, we don't have that kind of pressure here. If someone wants to, they come on their own, make an appointment, and meet with us. Very few come through referrals. So, if they don't want to, they simply don't come. But if

they come and sit across from me, it means they have some expectation, some desire, some motivation. Even if they say, “I don’t know why I came,” once we start talking, that motivation begins to emerge. Discovering these things together always feels very rewarding to me. (P4, Appendix J, 23)

Participants 6 and 8 similarly highlighted the positive impact of observing their clients’ development. Participant 6 elaborated on this, emphasizing the significance of witnessing progress even within the constraints of limited sessions, as follows:

But, you know, even within 8 sessions—as I mentioned, we have that limit—what gives me the most satisfaction is seeing the changes in their emotional states. Seeing that they feel understood, that they trust there’s someone here who gets them. Because, regardless of the issue, whether it’s a neurotic-level problem or even daily life challenges—not talking about psychotic cases here—it’s usually a short time. But seeing them feel, “I’m not alone, there’s someone here listening to me,” and witnessing their relief—it makes me feel really good. (P6, Appendix J, 24)

Participant 8, on the other hand, approached the process from a long-term perspective. She shared that observing the changes and growth in students throughout the process was personally rewarding, as she explained below:

The most rewarding part is trying to accompany a student’s development from their first year to their fourth year—even if not very regularly over those four years. Seeing them come in at the beginning with struggles adapting to school or the city, and then, by their fourth year, dealing with graduation and job-search anxiety, and noticing how they’re able to use the progress they made in previous sessions—it really moves me. (...) seeing those kinds of developments, even unintentionally, feels incredibly rewarding. (P8, Appendix J, 25)

In addition to acting in ways matching with their values and enjoying the counseling process and outcome, support received for other life roles emerged as another source of positive experience for the providers. Participant 2 reflected on the challenges of her job but also highlighted the aspects that made it manageable for her in the context of her own life circumstances. She noted that certain benefits, such as the ability to take leave more easily when needed and having a smaller client load compared to a hospital setting, allowed her to continue working while balancing her

responsibilities as a mother of two young children. Participant 7 also shared that working at the university supported her role as a PhD student.

Personal satisfaction also comes from other sources. Participants 9 and 5 jointly noted that it was personally satisfying to be perceived as good and prestigious in society to work at a university. For Participant 6, the positive experience came from her sense of belonging. She shared that her workplace was also her alma mater and the love she felt for the university made her feel as if she had returned home.

4.2.4 Structural/managerial

Participants were asked about the structural and managerial aspects that contribute to their positive experiences. In response, they highlighted autonomy and flexibility in decision-making (n=8), the absence of external managerial pressure (n=4), the specific hierarchical structures within their centers (n=4), and the characteristics of managers and supervisors (n=2).

Eight out of ten participants reported having some autonomy in decision-making processes at the center have contributed to their positive work experience. Six of them specifically mentioned appreciating the opportunity to organize their working hours, decide their break times, and determine the number of sessions they conduct on their own. Participant 7 even likened this autonomy to having a private office where she could come and go as she pleased and arrange different aspects of her work according to her own preferences.

The lack of management's involvement in work-related processes was identified by four participants as a positive aspect of working at a UCC. Participant 8 highlighted its importance by emphasizing the challenges of external intervention from those outside the field. She shared that professionals in psychology often face

difficulties explaining field-specific concepts to individuals without relevant expertise, which can be exhausting. Based on her previous work experience, she found it particularly tiring when managers without a psychology background frequently requested reports on client numbers and retention rates. Therefore, she viewed the absence of such supervisory pressure as a positive aspect of her current work environment. Similarly, Participant 10 stated that the absence of such external control allowed her to work more freely and feel more comfortable.

For 4 participants differing aspects of the centers' structure, such as hierarchy, staff fluidity, and role clarity, contributed to their positive experiences at work. Participant 4 noted that, having no designated manager among the providers and instead being directly affiliated with the Directorate allowed all psychologists to work as equals, which had a positive impact on the entire team. Participant 5 stated that unlike other centers, there are no permanent employees in the center where she works; the experts come by assignment, and the graduate students work on contract. She explained why she considers this structural aspect as a positive as follows:

(...) we have a friendly environment. It doesn't feel like an official institution; it's more of a collaborative, supportive space where we work together. I'm sure that if it were a setting with civil servants, specialists, or permanently assigned staff, there would be a greater sense of duty. But for us, it's more about the learning mindset, like being in an academic or student-like atmosphere. That could be considered an advantage. Otherwise, if you put a civil servant there to do the same job for years, there might be burnout—or maybe not, I don't know—but there could be a sense of complacency. (...) The flexibility of the structure might be what creates this supportive and genuine atmosphere. (P5, Appendix J, 26)

Participant 9 highlighted the importance of role clarity and the right for boundary setting. She expressed how comforting it was for her that her job description and working hours were clearly defined in her organization. She stated that there were no demands outside her role of providing psychological counseling

and that, even if such a request were made, having the right to refuse it made her feel good.

Regarding the center-specific structural benefits, Participant 6 noted that her center, as a well-established institution providing services since early 1990's, has had a positive impact on her work. She explained that established systems are in place and that students are already familiar with the center's operations. Furthermore, she expressed that the ability to address diverse needs through multiple channels while working within the university context was precious. She elaborated on this with the following words:

When working with someone outside this [university] environment, we can only address their psychological needs. But here, if there's a legal issue, we can connect them with lawyers; if it's a dorm-related problem, we can intervene; and if it's something about their coursework, we can write to their professors. Essentially, we can assist students with almost anything within the campus, which genuinely makes a specialist feel more secure. In a private clinic, this level of support isn't really possible. So, being able to address the diverse needs of students provides a sense of security and fulfillment for both the specialist and the students. (P6, Appendix J, 27)

Manager and supervisor characteristics came out as a source of positive experience for two participants. Participant 6 highlighted the importance of her administrator's interpersonal skills. Noting that her center's administrator was also functioning as their supervisor, she shared that this supervisor's good relations with the larger school administration contributed their work. She said this collaboration allowed students to access various school facilities, which she considered a significant benefit. She also gave examples to how larger administration's being understanding facilitated a positive experience even through difficult moments. She reported appreciating how the management considered her needs, even if a solution could not always be reached. Similarly, Participant 7 praised her supervisor's strong humanist qualities which has become a role model for her. She shared that her

supervisor generally had a supportive attitude and specifically encouraged her to pursue graduate education.

4.2.5 Career journey

Eight participants recognized their work's impact on their career journey as a positive aspect of working at a UCC. Some highlighted the diversity of clients and issues (n=6), while others focused on the variety of professional roles and tasks that mental health providers assume at UCCs (n=5). Additionally, opportunities for training (n=4) and access to resources that facilitate professional growth (n=4) were also emphasized.

Six of the participants stated that they had the opportunity to work with diverse clients and presenting concerns that they would not have access otherwise. Exposure to such diversity seemed to facilitate participants' growth. Participant 10 stated that the most rewarding aspect of her job was meeting so many new people from diverse cultural backgrounds at the university. She shared that this experience helped her develop the ability to adapt her therapy approaches to different cultures. Participant 4 accounts for the richness she experiences at work with the following words:

(...) we work with a group where we see all the characteristics of adulthood. Students from all kinds of departments come to us. It's like we have back-to-back sessions, and one student is from art history, the next from electrical engineering, and then maybe another from agricultural engineering. It's like we're traveling to completely different places, even different cities, through their stories. You know, it reminds me of that Michael Jackson music video—maybe you've seen it—where the faces keep changing constantly ... When I sit with a client, it feels like they're all sitting in the same chair, but the faces and stories keep changing. That's why I feel like I'm not just sitting in one place working; it's as if I'm traveling the world during these sessions. In this sense, the diversity, the cosmopolitan nature, and, as I said, working with genuinely intelligent people—it's something that feels really rewarding. (P4, Appendix J, 28)

Participant 10 also reflected on how continuously providing individual therapy to a diverse population impacted her emotionally and cognitively. She reported that the university environment allowed her to be more courageous in applying the techniques she had learned. She explained that this environment enabled her to test what worked, assess which methods were more effective for different clients, and refine her approach accordingly. Through this process, she felt as though she was building her own mental statistics, which, in turn, helped her become more flexible in her practice.

Participant 5 and Participant 8 specifically stated that working with different problems was effective in terms of facilitating professional development and expanding the boundaries of their competency. Participant 5 explained that, when faced with unfamiliar or less specialized topics, she might have hesitated to engage in another setting. However, in the university context, she did not have the option to choose and had to work with the student. She shared that this necessity pushed her out of her comfort zone and encouraged her to challenge herself.

Participants highlighted that diversity not only applies to clients and presenting concerns but also to the professional roles and tasks they assume at UCCs which further facilitates their career journey. Participant 5 shared how through different mediums working at a UCC helps her advance as a psychotherapy provider. She appreciated the opportunity to see clients, continuously develop her skills, and progress in her career journey. In addition to not having to put extra effort into finding clients, she valued the accessibility of supervisors, believing that having experienced faculty nearby provided significant support for her professional growth. She also considered the connections she made at the center as an important professional network for her career.

Similarly, Participants 1 and 4 stated that they believed the university was the most suitable setting for working as a therapist compared to other institutions.

Participant 4 elaborated on this perspective as follows:

Lately, especially in the past few years, I've realized something: my work environment here is enjoyable and pleasant. Academia isn't what it used to be either—we hear all sorts of positive and negative things about it. When I look at hospitals, the healthcare system has already collapsed. If I worked in a hospital, I think I'd just be a "test administrator," not really a psychologist in the true sense. Then I realized that in the area and unit I'm working in now, I can fully be a psychologist. I conduct my sessions, and if I think it's necessary, I administer tests. Beyond that, I teach classes, participate in projects like TÜBİTAK research, and work on things like writing book chapters or articles. Basically, I'm able to do everything I want to do here. (P4, Appendix J, 29)

While most of the participants reflected on growth facilitated by conducting individual therapy, one participant in particular reported how working at a UCC gave her the flexibility to offer different services. Participant 6 considered trying new approaches with willing participants beneficial for her career.

Now, being able to experience things like, "What if I open a group work on this topic?" or "What if I create content on this subject?" for people who are eager and need it, is a nice thing for my career. It creates an opportunity to try new things. (P6, Appendix J, 30)

With respect to training opportunities, four participants mentioned that working at a UCC gave them the chance to receive new training which in turn advances their careers. Participant 8 explained that she was motivated to pursue self-development and training in new fields in response to emerging needs within the center, as she felt a moral and professional responsibility. She also shared that applying her newly learned skills with university students, most of whom being from psychology and counseling departments, rather than clients in private practice was particularly encouraging for her. She summarized this as follows: "This place not only motivated me to take new steps in my career but also gave me the space to actually take those steps and make progress." (P8, Appendix J, 31).

Participants reported that their career journey was also facilitated through access to different resources that university context provided. For two of the participants this resource was supervision provided by the center which was good for them in the face of the difficulties. For Participant 5 this resource was her thesis advisor. She mentioned that having easy access to her advisor whenever support was needed was a significant advantage. Similarly, Participant 7 emphasized the benefits for her academic career, particularly noting that the flexible work schedule allowed her to dedicate time to her doctoral studies and gave her access to the university's library.

One unique career related advantage of working at a UCC came from Participant 9. Instead of current benefits she focused on the possible future outcomes of having a university setting experience. She stated that working at the university would contribute positively to her future professional life in the following words: "Working within a university might be something that looks prestigious and could benefit my career later on—I imagine it will. That's one of the reasons I wanted to work here." (P9, Appendix J, 32).

4.2.6 Relational

Seven out of ten participants focused on relational aspects when discussing their positive experiences in UCCs. While the majority emphasized the positive aspects stemming from their colleagues' characteristics, one participant highlighted that the university setting offered more opportunities for socialization compared to other work environments.

With respect to colleague characteristics, three of the participants stated they had a sincere friendship with their colleagues. Participant 4 stated that they have an environment where they could have a pleasant time after work:

Knock on wood for that! :) I'm really working with a great team. Right now, our ages are also very close to each other. (...) not only do we have a good professional relationship, but we also keep in touch outside of work—we go out together, do activities, and so on. Maybe the fact that we're at similar stages in life or have similar life paths contributes to this. In that sense, working here feels truly enjoyable, calm, peaceful, and pleasant right now. (P4, Appendix J, 33)

Three participants mentioned that being part of a team with individuals working in the same field and facing similar challenges benefited them. Participant 2 highlighted the high educational level of her colleagues as a positive experience, while Participants 5 and 6 emphasized that sharing experiences with people who had similar concerns made them feel good. Additionally, Participant 5 emphasized that the friendships she formed at the center also improved her interpersonal skills which further contributed to her social wellness.

Participant 7 emphasized that working with diligent and productive colleagues was enriching for her: “Apart from that, there's the benefit of having a network—a dynamic environment where people are constantly working, publishing, and sharing ideas like, ‘Oh, this just came to mind.’ I think it's a very enriching space.” (P7, Appendix J, 34). From a different point of view, Participant 1 highlighted the positive impact of collegial respect, stating that being valued by his colleagues made him feel good.

While mostly colleagues' characteristics were mentioned with respect to relational benefits of working at a UCC, one participant highlighted what this setting offers interpersonally. Participant 9 compared the university to other potential work

environments in terms of social relations and stated that the university provided more opportunities for encounters and interactions.

We can actually build closer connections with the people we interact with, and I think that's a good thing, as you mentioned. If I were working in a private clinic, I'd probably encounter fewer people and have less interaction overall. (...) Being able to share a meal with someone, I think, is an important thing. Because as I said, when you work in an office, you often end up eating alone—session schedules don't align, and you don't know who will be around that day. But for us, if it's, say, 1 p.m., we already know who we're going to lunch with. (P9, Appendix J, 35)

4.2.7 Financial

When participants were asked about the financial benefits of their jobs, they struggled to identify positive aspects. Even if they mentioned a few, they quickly shifted to discussing the negative aspects. Nonetheless, when prompted, five participants shared positive aspects of working at a UCC with respect to finances. A sense of sufficiency, stability, and flexibility were the main themes emerged from their responses.

In response to this follow-up question, two participants stated that their financial earnings were sufficient. Participant 1 attributed this to living in a small town, while Participant 7 noted that their economic situation was adequate to cover basic living expenses with the addition of her spouse's income.

Among the participants who discussed positive financial aspects, five mentioned safeties of having a paycheck every month. Participant 6, comparing it to working conditions outside the university, emphasized the benefits of having a stable income. She elaborated on this by referring to therapists working in private clinics, noting that session cancellations increase during the summer months, reducing the number of sessions and making financial stability harder to maintain. She clarified

that this has not been her personal experience; however, she still acknowledged the potential value of this stability in creating a sense of security for her colleagues.

Similarly, Participant 10 added that the ability to focus on her work without worrying about expenses such as rent, electricity, water, and other office-related bills also contributed to her sense of security. In relation, Participant 8 noted that the center's flexibility in accepting external clients allowed her to compensate for financial losses, which she also considered a positive aspect. Lastly, Participant 4 connected this financial security to having family members in government jobs, expressing it in the following way:

Well, when you grow up as the child of a civil servant, you tend to find stability—or how should I say it, that consistency—more reassuring. In that sense, the security of being a government employee is something that feels good to me. (P4, Appendix J, 36)

The second research question of this study aimed to understand the positive experiences of mental health professionals working at UCCs, exploring both personal and professional benefits. Findings indicated that these professionals experience various advantages pertaining to their physical working conditions, interactions with students, personal fulfillment, structural and managerial aspects, career advancement, relationships with colleagues, and to a lesser degree, financial security. Autonomy in their workplace, access to professional development opportunities, and the supportive nature of their work environment were emphasized by the participants. Additionally, the university setting was considered beneficial for both career journey and personal well-being, with professionals appreciating their structured but flexible roles.

4.3 Challenges

This section addresses the following research question: “What challenges do mental health professionals face in university counseling centers, and how are these challenges shaped by the micro and macro-level contexts in which they operate?”. To explore this, participants were asked about the challenges they faced while working at a UCC. Their responses revealed nine categories of difficulties encountered by mental health professionals in these settings: (1) structural or managerial difficulties, (2) financial concerns, (3) relational challenges, (4) personal issues, (5) emotionally intense or life-threatening situations, (6) physical working conditions, (7) challenges in working with students, (8) the influence of regulations and expectations from higher management, and (9) career-related obstacles. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the subcategories associated with these challenges.

Table 5. Challenges of the Professionals

Challenges	<i>n</i>
Structural/managerial difficulties	10
Financial concerns	9
Relational challenges	9
Personal issues	6
Emotionally intense or life-threatening situations	6
Physical working conditions	6
Challenges in working with students	6
The influence of regulations and expectations from higher management	5
Career-related obstacles	5

4.3.1 Structural/managerial difficulties

When participants were asked about the challenging experiences they faced at work, all of them mentioned issues related to the structure and administration of the center. For some participants, managerial difficulties were so significant that they couldn't

identify any positive aspects in terms of their attitudes and behaviors. Participant 3 specifically stated: “I mean, we are under a management that even considered installing cameras in our rooms, so... I don’t want to answer this question.” (P3, Appendix J, 37), recognizing how challenging this particular category can be. Following factors have emerged from participants’ responses: being misunderstood by administration and stakeholders (n=6), insufficient staffing (n=5), management attitude, flexibility, and support (n=2), level of administrative structure (n=2), and negative impact of providing free services (n=2).

To begin with, being misunderstood by the management and general university emerged as a broad category encompassing a myriad of struggles. One struggle, mentioned by two participants, involved being treated as an emergency service. Participant 8 illustrated her personal experience with this particular issue as follows:

Sometimes we’re expected to act as an emergency service, and I think that’s a significant challenge. But I’m not sure if it’s something inherent to working at a university or if it’s related to how the faculty or staff at our university view psychologists. There have been what I’d consider extreme cases. For example, a student—let’s say, “having a nervous breakdown”—starts screaming, panicking, saying they can’t breathe, and so on. It happens in the cafeteria, and suddenly I get an urgent call: “Where are you? We need you urgently.” And I’m thinking, “What can I even do?” There’s a hospital literally next door; the student could easily be taken there. (...) These kinds of expectations have come up a few times, and they were both strange and challenging. In such situations, there’s very little you can do as a professional. (P8, Appendix J, 38)

Similarly, Participant 10 mentioned facing challenges due to their work being misunderstood by the management. She shared they were being asked to do things that are beyond their level of competency and continued:

I think management-related issues, these kinds of things, really bother me. For instance, if these didn’t exist, I could continue this work happily and without any problems. But it’s the interventions—or perhaps interventions that make no sense—that get to me. It’s the demand for something entirely unreasonable. There were instances, especially early on, where these

situations arose. Over time, we managed to explain our role and convinced them that certain things shouldn't happen anymore. (P10, Appendix J, 39)

Management's focus on quantity over quality, which is about not understanding what the work really is, was also pointed out by Participant 4 as a source of challenge. She elaborated on this as follows:

We still often talk about this among ourselves—how the quality of our work is rarely questioned. What's usually expected from us are numbers: how many sessions we held, how many clients we saw, how many seminars we gave, and so on. It's frustrating that the focus is more on quantity than quality. Or, for example, it's about when you arrived, when you left, whether you signed in or out, and things like that. Encountering these kinds of expectations can be annoying at times, but we've sort of gotten used to it. We just tell ourselves, "Managements come and go; we stay," and carry on. (P4, Appendix J, 40)

Five of the participants also highlighted working hours as a critical challenge stemming from being misunderstood. Three participants mentioned that the management perceived them as more like civil servants, rather than as a psychologist or a healthcare professional. This perception also results in a lack of flexibility in their working hours. Even though their responsibilities differ significantly, these mental health providers have to adhere to the same fixed working schedule as other civil servants working at the university.

There were also responses that focused on challenges of the working hours as a separate issue independent of any misunderstanding. Participant 1 stated that maintaining the therapist role throughout the working hours (8:00 AM–5:00 PM) was exhausting for him, while Participant 9 noted that working full-time was also personally challenging for her. Similarly, Participant 7 described how having to commute to work at the same hours every day made her feel, explaining it with the following statements:

Well, it's not directly related to the unit, but more to being a public servant in general—I have an issue with that. Waking up at the same time and leaving

work at the same time every day feels very robotic to me. (P7, Appendix J, 41)

Moreover, Participant 7 pointed out that their work often extended beyond the officially designated hours, adding that the lack of recognition for this was also a challenge. She illustrated this with the following example:

What we do is often perceived as just “having a session and it’s done.” But in reality, there’s preparation before the session, processing afterward, and sometimes you carry it with you mentally, even at home. You keep thinking and working through it. (...) And I honestly feel like this isn’t understood or acknowledged. People think you’ve just dedicated that one hour, but behind the scenes, you’re continuously engaged—attending trainings, managing both the financial and emotional toll of the work. I really wish this part of our work, the unseen and ongoing effort, was better understood. (P7, Appendix J, 42)

Insufficient staffing came out as another area of challenge for the participants working at UCCs. Three participants highlighted that having insufficient numbers creates difficulties with the high service demand at the center. Participant 6 explained this hardship got even more challenging when engaging in administrative tasks such as report-writing, which can be a concern when it is rotated between only a couple providers in small centers. Also, ethical issues related to providing service to students who know one another was identified as a related concern when there are limited number of providers.

Those who work alone reflected on the isolation they felt and how much they needed a “witness” for their work that is conducted behind closed doors. The need for celebrating successes were also mentioned in the provided response below:

Like I said, one of the challenging aspects here is that the work you do stays confined within these four walls. That’s why I mentioned at the beginning that there’s a need for a “witness” of sorts. Sometimes it’s because you accomplish something really great, but since you can’t exactly write it on your forehead, no one knows about it. Sure, maybe no one needs to know, but as humans, you might expect some recognition at that point. (P8, Appendix J, 43)

Related to the insufficient staffing, lack of psychiatric collaboration was also identified by two participants as a concern especially with clients who need medical attention including high suicidal ideation. Participant 6 expressed that, although having a supervisor in the center provided some sense of security, the absence of a psychiatrist still created significant uncertainty for her.

Another identified challenge was related to management attitude, flexibility and support. Two participants highlighted the lack of support for graduate study as a challenge. While Participant 7 received support from her immediate administrator for her doctoral studies, she still felt discouraged by the broader institutional attitude. She reflected on the discomfort caused by this situation, stating: “It’s like the lack of support from the institution creates this feeling of needing to hide what I’m doing, as if I’m doing something wrong. It’s a strange and uncomfortable place to be, honestly...” (P7, Appendix J, 44). Similarly, Participant 3 shared that the previous administration did not allow them to even pursue graduate studies at all.

With respect to management attitudes, Participant 3 shared an experience of being subjected to mobbing from administration. Similarly, Participant 2 described discomfort with the management’s remarks regarding maternity leave, particularly the comment, “You’re not just giving birth and disappearing, are you?” (P2, Appendix J, 45). Participant 9 also pointed out her manager’s sexist attitudes, noting that while he avoided making eye contact with female employees, he was more engaged and communicative with male colleagues, making the work environment challenging for her. Participant 7, instead of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, highlighted a boundary issue where her managers could occasionally make personal requests on behalf of their acquaintances. The demand on her time and the additional workload were identified as manager related challenges.

Level of administrative structure identified as another source of challenge of working at a UCC. Participant 9 expressed that working in a center without a clearly established system was challenging and that she had to shape everything from scratch, independently. She gave an example on how the absence of a defined session limit made her work difficult as in the following:

The number of sessions is quite limited, to be honest. This can be one of the challenging factors in terms of the therapy process. It's also difficult because there's no clear guideline here. For instance, there's a significant difference between the maximum number of sessions I have in mind and what my colleague considers appropriate. I tend to keep sessions shorter, around 12-15, while my colleague prefers a longer process. As a result, we encounter issues like this: I can take on new clients more quickly because I've already completed sessions with others, while my colleague might still be working with the same clients at a slower pace. (P9, Appendix J, 46)

On the other hand, Participant 6 focused on the downsides of having a well-established system, pointing out that bringing flexibility into a center where procedures were already strictly defined was a challenging and time-consuming effort. She illustrated her experience as follows:

We had talked about the advantages of being an older institution, but this was one of the downsides. Some things are so set in stone—like even where and how tea is made, down to how the cups are handled. It's not just about the work itself but even these kinds of details. (P6, Appendix J, 47)

The last identified challenge came from Participant 1 and Participant 8 who highlighted the negative impacts of providing free services in the university context. They pointed out that this might be especially problematic for students who already have boundary issues. Both participants agreed on the belief that therapy should include mutual commitment and effort from client as well as provider. They expressed concerns that students may not be as invested in the counseling process if they do not make any sacrifices.

4.3.2 Financial concerns

Nine out of ten participants responded to the question regarding financial difficulties of working at a UCC. In fact, these participants had already indicated, when asked about positive financial aspects, that there were not much of a positive side, highlighting that financial issues were challenging for them. Reported financial difficulties related to working at a university included low salaries (n=3), lack of reimbursement for daily expenses (n=3), and personal and professional sacrifices due to financial constraints (n=3). In addition to these common factors, one participant specifically highlighted that the salary they received did not reflect the value of their services, expressing this as follows:

I don't think there's any financial advantage because we're working for salaries that are far below market rates. In my opinion, this place doesn't economically liberate us at all. We continue to stay here fully aware of this fact. I try to overlook these disadvantages by focusing on the other advantages. But if we're looking at it purely from an economic perspective, I don't think there's any advantage at all. (P10, Appendix J, 48)

With respect to working for low salaries, three participants emphasized that they earned the minimum civil servant salary, generally finding this insufficient. For three participants, their salary was inadequate to even cover basic living expenses. Participant 4 explained how their low salary had become increasingly challenging over time due to the economic realities of the country, expressing it as follows:

Apart from that, of course, as you know, the economic conditions in Türkiye have deteriorated so much that purchasing power has significantly decreased. Quantitatively, yes, the salary amount might look substantial—like, compared to 10 years ago, it may seem like a lot. But since the prices of everything have increased proportionally, it has become more of a disadvantage related to the country's overall situation rather than just the conditions here. Otherwise, we used to manage somehow, and it wasn't such a big deal, but now, I think this is the case for all of us. (P4, Appendix J, 49)

The same participant emphasized that psychologists working in other settings earn higher salaries, highlighting that university-based providers like themselves are

currently among the lowest-paid professionals. Similarly, Participant 6 expressed that, given the experience level and client stability she had established prior to working at the center, her current position did not provide significant advantages over being in private practice. She noted that she could earn twice her current salary elsewhere while doing only half the work. Participant 5, working part-time under a different contractual structure as a graduate student, also stated that her salary was considerably low. She also drew attention to the fact that they continued working during the summer months when their contracts were not renewed, despite receiving no payment at all.

Not having any reimbursement for daily needs came out as one of the financial challenges of working at a UCC. Participant 10 stated that even essential items used during sessions, such as tissues in her office, were not supplied by the university and had to be purchased with her own money. Participant 6 further illustrated this point by explaining that she had to personally cover the cost of tea, coffee, and similar items she consumed during the day. Additionally, she pointed out that when an external provider is invited to conduct a workshop or activity for students, no budget has been available—not even for a small gift, let alone a payment. Similarly, Participants 6 and 9 highlighted the financial strain caused by transportation expenses not being reimbursed.

Personal and professional sacrifices including graduate education, personal funds and resting time were also identified among the financial challenges.

Participant 3 shared that she had been forced to quit her graduate studies due to financial strain. Another shared challenge mentioned by participants was the high costs of training and supervision in the mental health field, which their salaries couldn't cover. Four participants stated they had to provide services outside the

center to compensate for this financial gap. Likewise, Participant 10 pointed out this challenge by highlighting how they were forced to work during their time for rest:

Of course, the salary isn't good in this sense. Yes, I'm not earning minimum wage, but I wouldn't say I have a good salary either. It's not sufficient to meet even my basic needs. I think this pushes people toward certain choices, like doing sessions outside of work or working on weekends. I feel the need to do these things to meet my needs, and in a way, I'm compelled to. For example, if I were earning a good salary, I wouldn't work on Saturdays—I'd take the time to rest. In that sense, it's challenging. (P9, Appendix J, 50)

4.3.3 Relational challenges

A number of relational challenges were identified by a total of nine participants. One category appeared to be interpersonal challenges associated with others' expectations and needs from a psychologist (n=4). In addition, interpersonal conflicts with colleagues (n=2), how close relationships are impacted by the participants' exhaustion after a long day at work (n=1), and difficulty of finding someone to socialize with at work (n=1) were identified as relational challenges. Relational concerns with administrators were also shared in response to the question exploring relational challenges; however, those were summarized under structural/ managerial difficulties section.

Four participants described the expectation to maintain their psychologist roles 24/7 as a significant challenge. While this could be a challenge of the profession itself, it seemed to be relevant for those providing services at a UCC as well. Participant 7 expressed her feelings about this issue as follows:

I can easily admit things like, "I'm feeling really down," or "This has made me so angry, I'm losing my mind." And, of course, the immediate response is, "What kind of psychologist are you?" or "You'll figure it out; you can handle it." And I'm like, "No, I can't handle it. My emotions are running high, and this isn't something I can just resolve in a second. Let me feel this first." It's like you're constantly in explanation mode. And there's also this expectation to always be calm, composed, proper, and well-behaved. (P7, Appendix J, 53)

Participant 10 provided a different perspective by sharing an example of how people from various contexts frequently make requests related to her role as a psychologist. She expressed that even during short 10-minute breaks when she just wants to rest, people often ask her psychology-related questions or seek advice about their children's experiences. Similarly, Participant 2 mentioned finding it difficult that her relationships are constantly shaped around her psychologist role, as follows:

Here's the thing: for the past 3 or 4 years, I've stopped saying what profession I'm in. When people ask me what I do, I just say, "I'm a civil servant." If the conversation progresses and I feel like there's a sense of genuine connection, I might say that I'm a psychologist. But honestly, I'm tired of responses like, "Oh, I've been needing a psychologist; God must have sent you to me!" No, God didn't send me to you. I'm here because I also need to socialize, to meet people, and to simply be a social individual. In those moments, I'm not looking to provide anyone with psychological services. Furthermore, I don't want to build friendships based on that dynamic. (P2, Appendix J, 54)

Up to this point, participants have shared the challenges they face due to the expectations of people around them. Interpersonal conflict with colleagues was also mentioned by two participants as a relational challenge faced while working at a UCC. Participant 6 shared an example of interpersonal conflict she experienced with the staff when she first started working at the center. She stated feeling "a kind of resistance" that she elaborated on with the following words:

There's also the issue of the older staff members, who have been here for 20 years or so, back from the times when the team had 10-15 people. Their bonds are very strong, and they've firmly established routines like, "This is done this way here, and that is done that way here." For example, I might have more work experience than someone I'm dealing with, but when I suggest, "Should we do it like this?" they might perceive it as if I'm trying to change or criticize their way of doing things. Our roles are also different, and it can feel like they see my suggestions as unwelcome, wanting to maintain their methods. (P6, Appendix J, 55)

Participant 5 also noted an interpersonal conflict that she has experienced due to dual relationships. She was in a unique situation where her administrator was also

her thesis advisor which impacted their relationship. She explained the role conflict and related struggles as follows:

In personal interactions, we face challenges when your manager or assistant manager is both a university professor and an administrator. This leads to role conflicts. For example, when the role of a manager clashes with the role of an advisor, it can create tension. I might clash with my manager, and that's fine, but I would never want to clash with my advisor in an academic sense. But let's say there's an issue at the center—I might fear it could reflect on my thesis, or if I want to leave, I can't simply walk away because my professor is also there. The overlapping roles make it so difficult to separate them that it creates a significant downside. So, while there are positives I recognize, almost every positive has a corresponding negative lurking in the background. (P5, Appendix J, 56)

Another relational challenge, as described by one participant, was due to the exhausting nature of the job, which requires continuous active listening throughout the day, leaving her with little energy for communications at home. Participant 2 shared that she often feels too exhausted by the end of the day to engage in conversations with others at home.

Last relational challenge related to working in a university setting was highlighted by Participant 8, who pointed out the lack of social interaction, as everyone is occupied with their own offices or sessions. She mentioned that, in contrast to her previous experience in a smaller private counseling center, where colleagues maintained closer communication, her current situation feels socially unfulfilling.

4.3.4 Personal issues

When asked about the personal challenges of working at a UCC, six participants responded. Their answers highlighted several key difficulties related to the nature of the profession, including feelings of being watched or isolated, the pressure to constantly acquire new knowledge, the cognitive effort required to understand clients

and their environments, struggles with maintaining motivation, and concerns about how their professional decisions might impact their future careers.

Two participants stated that they felt constantly under watch in their daily lives, even in minor interactions, which created a sense of pressure due to expectations and judgments. Paradoxically, other three participants described working in an isolated environment, where their efforts remained largely unseen, making them feel unappreciated and invisible.

Participant 5, who had previously described the diversity of client issues as professionally enriching, also admitted that having to work in areas outside her expertise made her feel insecure. She defined the feeling of having to know everything as a significant challenge, explaining it as follows:

Another issue is the variety of cases that come in, which forces me to work on topics I'm not specialized in. This makes me feel less confident and requires me to put in extra effort. Maybe I don't want to read about that particular topic; maybe I don't want to take training in that area. I want to specialize in just one field, but because of the circumstances, we can't say, "I don't know about this," or "We didn't work on this." The expectation to branch out into multiple areas and the feeling of having to know everything is one of the most negative aspects for me. (P5, Appendix J, 51)

Participant 7 highlighted the difficulty of working with people, using metaphors like "working with something vast and limitless like an ocean, human" and "trying to see the whole forest while also striving to understand that tiny tree within it" to illustrate this challenge. She also noted that constantly self-reflecting was another difficult part of the profession:

The challenging aspects, I think, are partly inherent to the nature of the profession itself. As you learn new things, you also start to see parts of yourself—your flaws, the uneven or unresolved areas within you. You think, "Oh, this is here, and that's there." It can also be exhausting in this sense: the parts of ourselves we haven't worked through can surface during sessions. When these unresolved areas are touched upon, they can bring a certain level of fatigue. And if we inadvertently transfer those feelings into the session, it only adds to that exhaustion. (P7, Appendix J, 52)

Additionally, Participant 9 mentioned that over time, she felt more tired and less motivated, saying that after achieving her initial goal of gaining experience, it became harder to find new motivators. Finally, Participant 8 talked about the struggles of being a mental health professional still in training and worried that some decisions she made now might have professional consequences in the future.

4.3.5 Emotionally intense or life-threatening situations

Six participants reported experiencing significant challenges related to emotionally intense or high-risk situations. Three participants gave specific examples of being challenged by actively suicidal or highly disturbed clients. And two participants reflected on the personal and professional impact of these challenges.

Participant 10 described the difficulty of being in the same room with someone high-risk. Recognizing that their offices do not have any alarm systems, she shared that she and her colleagues are attuned to one another especially when there is a potential safety risk. Participant 10 also mentioned when her clients vocalize their intense emotional experiences, others on their floor who may not be mental health professionals can gather by her door. She reported that such curiosity or concern could be challenging.

Participants 1 and 7 highlighted the pressure of working with clients who expressed suicidal thoughts, noting that these clients often expected constant accessibility and sometimes spoke as if delivering their final words. Participant 1 further shared an experience of receiving a late-night email from a client apologizing for their strong desire to die.

With respect to the personal and professional effects of high intensity clinical experiences, Participant 2 reported that due to her theoretical orientation her case

load primarily consisted of trauma issues; when combined with her role as a mother of very young children, high intensity clinical work caused burnout. Participant 4 mentioned how when she first started her career, she was underprepared to manage such intensity. Further facilitated by the fact that she was utilized as an on-call crisis provider for campus emergencies, she received additional training and developed herself as a trauma specialist through additional training.

4.3.6 Physical working conditions

As noted earlier, most participants expressed satisfaction with their physical working conditions; however, six of them also highlighted several concerns. Those can be grouped under the headings of limitations in campus facilities and challenges related to campus location.

With respect to limited campus facilities, Participants 2 and 8 mentioned the restricted dining options. Participant 2 identified another concern related to working conditions. She reported having privacy concerns in her temporary office space due to having a glass door and being located near a restroom.

Campus location was identified as another concern that led to transportation difficulties, including frequent commute, being away, high transportation costs, and traffic. Participant 7 discussed the difficulty of frequently commuting between two campuses, particularly one being at a remote location. Similarly, three participants mentioned the challenge of the campus being far away. Participant 6 complained that the long distance between her home and the campus increased her transportation costs. Living in a small city, Participant 2 talked about the difficulty of the campus being far from the city, saying:

(...) when we have something to do in the city or in the city center, the distance becomes an issue. It's physically tiring to go back and forth. Yes,

there are negative effects on us. There's the transportation issue in the mornings and traffic as well. But of course, it can't be compared to the traffic in Istanbul—our traffic here is nothing like that. (P2, Appendix J, 57)

4.3.7 Challenges in working with students

In response to the follow-up question regarding the challenges of being employed at a UCC that stem from working with students, six participants shared their experiences. These challenges can be grouped into two categories: (a) challenges stemming from students' identities or characteristics (n=5) and (b) challenges related to the campus environment (n=2).

Students' identities and characteristics include their field of study, attitudes and behaviors. Participants 5 and 7 mentioned that students from Psychology department and Guidance and Psychological Counseling programs sometimes seek services out of curiosity about the counseling process. Participant 5 additionally emphasized that this curiosity could complicate the process of goal setting in therapy. Participant 9 reflected that while the range of issues students brought up seemed diverse initially, she noticed that students studying at certain programs such as architecture tend to bring similar presenting concerns. She acknowledged that such repetitive cycles could become challenging over time.

Focusing on a more cognitive characteristics of university students, Participant 6 shared that the high level of self-awareness among students presented unique challenges during therapeutic processes, illustrated with the following example:

At [university name], the students already have a high level of self-awareness. This can sometimes be challenging for us because, in other settings, the insights or observations we share can lead to significant realizations and spark change. But here, the students are already interested in personal development—they've read, watched, and reflected on things. They come in having already noticed certain things about themselves, saying things like,

“Could this be because of that?” or “I saw something like this; I noticed that about myself.” Dealing with that can sometimes be a bit challenging, even overwhelming at times. (P6, Appendix J, 58)

The same participant also mentioned experiencing challenges related to certain student behavior, particularly noticing that students sometimes manipulated the system by indicating suicidal ideation on the initial assessment form to receive earlier appointments. Additionally, Participant 10 highlighted that certain student attitudes and behaviors, possibly attributable to their Generation Z characteristics, pushed personal and professional boundaries, as explained below:

Maybe it’s this: we work with students who are from what you could call Gen Z, and they’re much more comfortable expressing themselves. For instance, they might directly say something like, “I think you’re mad at me, aren’t you?” in a very straightforward manner. Or take another example, which is quite unsettling—say I’m not in my office yet, our session hasn’t even started, but they’ve already entered my room and are sitting there. Then I walk in, and they greet me with something like, “Welcome!” [in a sarcastic tone]. It puts me in this awkward spot, like, “Wait, which one of us is the host here?” These overly bold behaviors are really challenging for me because I’m someone who values boundaries, but I sometimes struggle to set them firmly. I’m naturally very considerate, polite, and try to be kind, so this level of boldness feels like it’s crossing my boundaries. I think this might be something that personally bothers me a lot. (P10, Appendix J, 59)

With respect to challenges related to the campus environment, Participants 5 and 7 expressed that encountering students in common areas was restrictive for them. Participant 5 further noted that students studying Psychology or Psychological Counseling who seek services at the center end up comparing their mental health providers and even at times gossip about them which consequently made their work subject to scrutiny. She highlighted that being in close quarters with students made it easier for students to have such conversations that made the providers uncomfortable.

4.3.8 The influence of regulations and expectations from higher management

In this follow-up question, participants were asked about the challenges posed not by their center administrators but by higher-level management bodies such as the university rectorate, professional associations, and the Council of Higher Education, known as YÖK, which holds decision-making and regulatory authority over universities. We specifically asked participants if they experience challenges in terms of the presence or absence of regulations and expectations from higher levels of management, specifying what that entails. Among the five participants who responded, two addressed difficulties arising from YÖK, while the remaining three focused on the impact of higher-level management within their own institutions. None of the participants indicated a challenge related to professional associations.

With respect to the challenges related to expectations or lack of expectations from higher management, Participant 5 shared a difficult experience where they had to pause ongoing sessions to handle a data collection task assigned by YÖK. Additionally, Participant 2 shared frustration about the unclear role of her work within YÖK. She described a lack of acknowledgement and communication with following words:

Another thing is, I'm not sure if we have a counterpart in YÖK. We are administrative staff, and from the perspective of administrative personnel, I don't feel like we have a clear equivalent in YÖK. Across public institutions in Türkiye, it seems like we're the only ones facing this issue. Other institutions have ministries or some kind of structured system they're connected to. Here, yes, we're under YÖK, but YÖK is primarily focused on academic work. I've been working here for 12 years, and I honestly don't know if the psychological counseling and guidance unit under YÖK has an upper body or organization overseeing it. Nobody has ever reached out to me about it. (P2, Appendix J, 60)

With respect to challenges arising from the attitude of higher management bodies within universities, Participants 3 and 10 pointed out that the administration prioritized quantity over quality in evaluating their work. Participant 3 acknowledged

that they also provided numerical data for monitoring purposes; however, she expressed concern that the administration's exclusive focus on these figures failed to reflect the true quality of their work, negatively impacting her.

Regarding additional challenges posed by higher university management, Participant 9 mentioned that any official document that includes a remark about psychology were forwarded to them without consideration of their actual relevance, leaving she and her colleagues to try and understand what was demanded from them. Lastly, Participant 10 highlighted issues stemming from the administration's lack of follow-up on their work and the absence of clear expectations:

Yes, I can say this: there's no system in place to track what we do. Our managers don't request anything from us. For the past three years, up until about a month ago, I've been keeping track of everything myself—like how many people I see in a month, who I've worked with, and so on. These statistics are purely for my own records; they aren't something anyone has asked me to provide. In my opinion, this is a shortcoming. It's something that should exist. We should be required to present a report. It's an essential part of the process, in my view. (P10, Appendix J, 61)

4.3.9 Career-related obstacles

When participants were asked about the challenges of working at a UCC in terms of their career journey, five participants provided responses, offering insights into different difficulties. Some of these challenges have already been addressed in previous sections. In this section, those challenges will be briefly revisited, followed by a presentation of two different responses that has not yet been covered under another category.

The first challenge previously discussed was the negative impact of working at UCCs on providers' enrollment in graduate studies. Participant 3 mentioned that she was unable to complete her master's degree due to financial constraints, while Participant 5 expressed concerns about the overlapping roles of her center director

and thesis advisor, fearing that this dual role might negatively affect her academic career.

Another challenge previously discussed was the difficulty of dealing with various presenting concerns, which was emphasized by three participants. Participant 4 shared that working with students facing diverse issues created pressure to improve herself in all these areas. Especially in the early stages of her career, she found it truly challenging to read extensively, learn, and effectively handle such a wide range of topics. Approaching the issue from a different perspective, Participants 5 and 7 described the obligation to receive training in areas they were not genuinely interested in as frustrating. They viewed this requirement as an obstacle preventing them from advancing in the fields they were truly passionate about.

An additional challenge that emerged with respect to career journey but not mentioned elsewhere in this section was the difficulty of adapting to the varying emotions and intensities of consecutive sessions. Participant 10 shared that having only 10-minute breaks between back-to-back sessions with clients experiencing depression, anxiety, and emotional outbursts made her feel like she was “being thrown from wall to wall”. She expressed that while she was already exhausted, this aspect of her work became an additional burden.

Another newly addressed challenge was raised by Participant 6. She explained that she typically works with a psychodynamic approach, where she continues sessions with a client for at least two years. However, in the center, sessions with students are limited to a maximum of eight, requiring her to adapt her therapeutic approach to a short-term model. She noted that this adjustment has been the most challenging aspect of working in this setting in terms of her career development.

The third research question of this study aimed to understand the challenging experiences of mental health professionals working at UCCs. Findings indicate that these professionals experience various difficulties related to administrative issues, financial insecurity, emotional exhaustion, relational challenges, physical working conditions, high-risk situations, and to a lesser degree their career journey. Additionally, challenges specific to working with students and the influence of higher management were highlighted by participants. Limited flexibility in work schedules, high workloads, and insufficient institutional support were commonly reported issues. Moreover, financial constraints, lack of professional development resources, and role conflicts added to the difficulties experienced in this setting. The findings also highlight a multilayered set of challenges that are shaped not only by the internal dynamics of counseling centers but also by the broader university context and administrative regulations.

4.4 Needs

This section addresses the following research question: “What needs do mental health professionals working in university counseling centers have, and how do these needs manifest within the micro- and macro-level contexts of their work environment?”. To explore this, participants were asked about their needs while working at a university setting. They identified several areas where support was lacking and emphasized their specific needs. These needs can be categorized into five main areas: (1) professional needs, (2) managerial and structural needs, (3) financial needs, (4) social needs, and (5) personal needs. Table 6 outlines the subcategories within these needs.

Table 6. Identified Needs of the Professionals

Needs	<i>n</i>
Professional needs	8
Managerial and structural needs	4
Financial needs	2
Social needs	2
Personal needs	2

Professional needs included need for training opportunities such as in-service training programs and supervision, need for professional connection, need for working in larger collaborative teams, and need for higher level administrative representation. The most frequently mentioned professional need was the need to have more educational opportunities, as highlighted by seven participants. Both Participants 4 and 7 noted the importance of ongoing education due to the ever-evolving nature of their profession. Participant 4 underlined that their profession requires staying updated regularly, especially considering the characteristics of the age group they work with. She added that this could be achieved by increasing access to training opportunities.

I strongly believe that we need to be constantly updated. We work with such a rapidly changing group of people that, for example, I can't speak the same language with today's university students as I did with those from 15 years ago. I can't approach them in the same way or talk about the same things. Conditions have changed so much—their interests, the areas they focus on are completely different now. If we stayed as we were 15 years ago, it would significantly hinder our ability to connect with them. That's why it's so important for us to receive in-service training—specifically therapy training programs that are incorporated into our ongoing professional development. (...) Being updated is crucial. Perhaps we should even be encouraged to occasionally take courses from other departments. (P4, Appendix J, 62)

While such training programs are needed, they are limited in availability and create a financial burden. Participant 2 emphasized that existing training programs

are often focused on administrative issues or too generic to be helpful, stressing the need for more psychology related in-service training. Participant 6 expressed concern over the high costs of training programs, recognizing while it is not compulsory to attend advance training programs continuously, the financial burden it imposes remains a challenge. Participant 7 shared that since the knowledge she obtains from these trainings translates to her work at the center, the university should ideally cover the costs. Participant 2 suggested the need for a representative within YÖK, believing that such an advocate could help address training-related challenges more effectively.

Training needs can be met by in-service training opportunities as well as supervision. Indeed Participant 9 recognized training and supervision as “key needs”. Moreover, Participant 10 emphasized that addressing the need for training would provide opportunities to connect with other professionals in the field and hence meet another professional need. She highlighted that without such opportunities and environments, they were left to handle everything on their own. And Participant 3 stressed the importance of flexible working conditions to both attend training opportunities and hence stay informed about the field and also maintain communication with other professionals. However, she noted that this flexibility would not be possible if they were to be perceived as civil servants.

Another professional need mentioned by two participants was the need for a larger and collaborative team. Participant 9 simply and clearly stated: “(...) When I think about how it could have been better, I always imagine a larger team.” (P9, Appendix J, 63). Participants 8 and 9 highlighted their need for collaboration.

Final professional need emerged from participant responses was the need for representation at higher level administration. Participant 2 who has mentioned that

YÖK can have a representative overseeing UCC providers' training needs elaborated on her suggestion with the following words:

In terms of needs, I think it would be really beneficial if our unit had a higher-level representative within YÖK—some kind of structured presence. For instance, I'm just making this up, but something like a "Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance Services for Universities" could exist. It doesn't necessarily have to be a full-fledged department, but even having a representative would make a difference. (...) It would allow us to carry out more standardized work. (P2, Appendix J, 64)

With respect to managerial and structural needs, three participants working at private universities shared a common need for structured management. Participant 8 explained that she needed a hierarchical structure to feel more motivated. Similarly, Participant 9 mentioned that while having a manager could be challenging, it could also be beneficial in ensuring accountability and maintaining discipline. Participant 10 also shared that in an environment where expectations from her are high, she feels the need for follow-up on her work through inquiries about what she is doing.

Similarly, in the context of managerial and structural needs, Participant 9 and 10 expressed a shared need for greater clarity regarding their job descriptions. Moreover, Participant 6 emphasized the necessity of increasing resources, explaining that this would allow them to manage various demands and execute different projects despite their already full schedules, stating as follows:

Increasing resources would be a great opportunity. Because then I could move away from the stress of having to take on more students in risky situations and focus more on group work, organize more seminars, invite more external experts to come here and conduct activities. This way, we could actually reach more people. But for now, we're still stuck trying to meet the very basic needs at the bottom of the hierarchy, so we can only turn to these things occasionally, whenever we manage to find the chance. (P6, Appendix J, 65)

With respect to financial needs, Participant 5, who differed from other participants in terms of working conditions and status due to being employed on a contractual basis, identified transitioning to a permanent position as her top priority

to increase her financial security. Additionally, Participant 9 emphasized that economic improvements were the most urgent necessity for the providers working at UCCs. Highlighting fundamental expenses such as food and transportation costs, the participant elaborated as follows:

My primary need is to see some financial improvements. That's the main thing. Because, as I mentioned, the other aspects I used to value and feel motivated by, like gaining experience, have started to take a backseat. So now, I expect different things—things like my basic rights. For instance, meal allowances—honestly, even having to talk about this feels, I don't know, frustrating. But yeah, I just want my meal allowance. I want a full monthly transit card. Let's just say I need my basic human needs to be met. These are the fundamental things I can point out. (P9, Appendix J, 66)

Regarding social needs, Participant 8 emphasized the need for more diverse spaces on campus and increased opportunities for socializing with colleagues. She noted that even limited social interactions revealed shared needs among colleagues, leading her to believe that expanding such opportunities would be beneficial. On the other hand, Participant 7 underscored the importance of feeling safe in the workplace, expressing her need of a humane system, not a perfect one. She further emphasized that the key aspect of a workplace is not its physical conditions but rather the sense of connectedness, and continued as follows:

...this is a basic need—forget about the desk, the computer, and all that. You can sort those out. The real basic need is having a work environment where, at the end of the day, someone can say “Good evening” or “Take care of yourself,” or in the morning when I arrive, someone greets me with “Good morning, hocam,” or says, “Grab a simit on your way, let's make some tea and have a chat.” That's what truly matters. (P7, Appendix J, 67)

Finally, in terms of personal needs, Participant 1 described himself as a disorganized person and expressed a need for support in maintaining order and organization. Participant 8 stated that she needed spaces on campus where she could take a breath, relax, and regain motivation during breaks.

This section's findings indicate that mental health professionals working at UCCs have various unmet needs, including those related to professional development, managerial and structural support, financial stability, social connection, and personal well-being. Increase of educational opportunities was the most frequently cited need, emphasizing the necessity of continuous training and financial support for professional development. Participants also expressed the need for a clearer hierarchical structure, improved job definitions, and increased accountability within their institutions. Financial concerns, particularly regarding basic reimbursements such as meal support and transportation, were raised as pressing issues. In terms of social needs, the importance of workplace connectedness and having spaces to interact with colleagues was emphasized. Lastly, personal needs included support in maintaining organization and the availability of spaces to relax and regain motivation during the workday was brought up as individual instances. These needs emerged within both micro-level contexts, such as daily work routines and interpersonal relationships, and macro-level contexts, including institutional policies and systemic structures.

4.5 Supportive resources

This section addresses the following research question: "What supportive resources contribute to mental health professionals' sense of wellness and effectiveness in university counseling centers, and how do these resources interact within the micro and macro-level contexts in which they operate?". To explore this, participants were asked about the elements that helped them cope with the challenges of working at a UCC. In their responses, participants described various sources of support they relied on, which were grouped into eight categories: (1) thoughts and behaviors, (2) close

personal relationships, (3) support from the center and colleagues, (4) prevalent economic, political, social, or cultural dynamics in society, (5) support from the university, (6) colleagues outside the center, (7) physical conditions, spaces, or the nature of the office or campus, and (8) higher levels of management. Table 7 summarizes the support sources identified by the mental health professionals.

Table 7. Supportive Resources of the Professionals

Supportive resources	<i>n</i>
Thoughts and behaviors	10
Thought processes	9
Behavioral practices	7
Close personal relationships	8
Support from the center and colleagues	8
Prevalent dynamics in society	8
Support from the university	7
Colleagues outside the center	6
Physical conditions, spaces, or nature of the office or campus	3
Higher levels of management	0

4.5.1 Thoughts and behaviors

Participants were asked about the thoughts and behaviors that they rely on in order to cope with challenges in their work. Their responses were analyzed under two subcategories: (1) thought processes and (2) behavioral practices. These two related headings are separated to provide a more clear and in-depth analysis of the participants' diverse responses.

4.5.1.1 Thought processes

In this subsection, the thought processes and patterns expressed by the participants, including the perspectives they adopt and the self-talk they engage in, are explored to understand how these factors support them. Based on participants' responses, common supportive cognitive processes included having a particular mindset (n=5), focusing on the positive aspects of their work while weighing options and balancing positives against negatives (n=4), adopting a value-driven approach to work (n=3), and engaging in self-reflection to strengthen their connection with these values (n=2).

While some cognitive strategies seemed to be intentionally adopted ways of thinking to facilitate coping, others appeared to reflect more inherent cognitive processes of the individuals that provide them with ongoing benefits. An example to the latter came from Participant 4 who shared that she never had a “classic civil servant mindset” and this mindset kept her feeling alive.

With respect to participant mindsets, Participant 4 also shared that the challenges she faced have shaped her, and that having a mentality of “working for the university despite the university itself” serves as an intrinsic source of motivation. Moreover, Participant 1 noted that viewing his work as both a personal responsibility and an ideal has supported him. Additionally, Participant 3 mentioned that being an idealist person in her youth was helpful, adding:

I mean, as long as you're living, you exist, and as long as you're trying, all those questions in your mind eventually turn into answers. I was someone who asked a lot of questions when I was younger—but now, I'm at a stage where I've realized that asking questions is more valuable than chasing after their answers. (P3, Appendix J, 68)

With respect to focusing on the positive aspects of the work, Participants 2, 4, and 6 commonly expressed benefiting from this strategy as a source of support.

Participants 2 and 4 further noted a shared practice of comparing their current working conditions with alternative settings and concluding that the university is advantageous for them. Additionally, Participant 2 said that being a mother affected her evaluation, making her see small-city life as more beneficial. She also highlighted the power of what one chooses to see as a determinant of happiness.

(...) there's this sense of acceptance... We live in this city, and these are the work opportunities available to us. The more we complain and focus on the negative aspects, the more we experience burnout. We've been through those phases. In the past, I asked myself a lot, "What am I doing in this city? What am I doing in this institution?" There was a time when I felt like that, but not anymore. Now, I feel happy here—with my family, with my surroundings—and I've realized that it's up to me to create the conditions to be happy. No one hands these conditions to you on a silver platter. (P2, Appendix J, 69)

Relatedly, some participants expressed that reminding themselves of the enjoyable aspects of their work was supportive for them. For example, Participant 5 shared her love for conducting therapy as a supporting factor. Similarly, Participant 6 emphasized her enjoyment of the university environment, highlighting that the campus life and the dynamism students bring contributed positively to her motivation and well-being.

With respect to participants' value-driven approach to work, Participant 10 highlighted that having a purpose of becoming a better therapist or completing her doctoral studies serves as a fundamental support resource for her. Similarly, Participant 8 mentioned that reminding herself of her purpose for working at the center helped her. Additionally, Participant 6 stated that the public service aspect of her job, her desire to help humans, and the sense of making a difference were crucial support resources for her. She elaborated this perspective as follows:

That's where the strength of working in the public sector lies. Because honestly, many of the students we work with have very limited resources—most of them, really. And you see how essential it is for them to receive help, even though they wouldn't be able to access it otherwise. Professionally speaking, especially in a field like mental health, many of us have this

inherent desire to help people, to be part of something that directly touches lives. And sure, if I were charging, say, 2,500 lira per session, there would still be the element of helping people, no doubt. But there's also the aspect of money and the service being exchanged for it. Here, though, that sense of truly making a difference feels much stronger. (P6, Appendix J, 70)

Another value-driven support was identified by Participant 6 who shared that working at her alma mater gave her a sense of "being at home". She further illustrated how powerful this feeling was as a supportive element in her professional life:

First and foremost, it's about feeling like a part of this place. That sense of "home" is really strong—just like in a family. For example, when there's a difficulty within your family, you don't think, "This doesn't concern me," right? Because we exist with our family; even if it doesn't directly affect me, I still feel it deeply. That's what I feel here. This is a workplace, but I don't have that mindset of "If it doesn't suit me, I'll just leave." Maybe one day this place will no longer be the right fit for me, but that sense of commitment and willingness to contribute will always stay with me. That feeling is very strong for me. (P6, Appendix J, 71)

Lastly, two participants noted that their work facilitated self-reflection, which helps them stay connected to their values. Specifically, Participant 7 mentioned that creating space for herself and taking time to reflect among her busy schedule is beneficial, while Participant 8 emphasized the importance of turning inward and understanding her own needs as a source of support.

4.5.1.2 Behavioral practices

In this subsection strategies and actions that participants identified as supportive in coping with work-related challenges were explored. The analysis revealed several shared practices among participants, such as taking breaks during the workday (n=4), engaging in arts and hobbies (n=4), connecting with nature and animals (n=3), pursuing training opportunities (n=3), and incorporating physical movement into their routines (n=2). Additionally, participating in volunteering activities, breaking

the monotony of work by engaging in teaching, and taking on extra work to meet financial needs were identified by individual participants as supportive behaviors.

With respect to taking breaks during the day, Participant 4 mentioned taking advantage of session cancellations and utilizing this unplanned free time as a source of support. Similarly, Participant 9 shared that taking time for herself on campus during session breaks by having a beverage or listening to music was beneficial. Participants 7 and 10 also found support through engaging in small, enjoyable activities like drinking coffee.

With respect to engaging in arts and hobbies as supportive resources, Participants 8 and 10 mentioned dedicating time for reading. Additionally, Participants 7 and 8 shared they both watch entertaining videos as a source of support. Participant 7 stated that while she previously consumed psychology-related content, lately she preferred watching videos unrelated to mental health topics, specifically those that made her laugh. Moreover, Participant 7, along with Participant 9, highlighted music as a supportive resource; Participant 7 further added that discovering new genres and singing in her free time made her feel good.

With respect to the support derived from connecting with nature and animals, Participant 7 shared that spending time in nature and occasionally having spontaneous family outings to the seaside after work helped her relax. Two other participants commonly mentioned their affection for animals as supportive. While Participant 3 stated that her love for animals and feeding the animals on campus helped her, Participant 6 explained that her cat served as a source of comfort, noting that holding and petting it reduced her stress.

Regarding training as a source of support, both Participants 4 and 10 emphasized that attending training was supportive for them. Additionally, Participant

7 highlighted the importance of having time for her doctoral studies as a strengthening factor.

With respect to the supportive impact of movement, Participant 6 identified exercising as one of her support resources. She explained its effects on her life and job with the following words:

I'm really into sports, and I think it's a very important resource for me. Not only does staying active make me feel better mentally, but it also helps me maintain a structured lifestyle. It's not just about going in and out of sessions; it's also about having time for sports or moments to meet up with friends. These things enrich my day and make me feel good. (P6, Appendix J, 72)

Additionally, Participant 7 explained how she combined her tea/coffee drinking habit with her need for socializing and being physically active: "(...) or sometimes, I just grab my mug and wander around the office, almost like I'm going for some gossip—asking, 'What's up? How's it going?' and trying to move around a bit." (P7, Appendix J, 73). She also mentioned that when she cannot move around the office, she paces back and forth in her own room.

As another type of support, Participant 4 stated that trying something new, such as teaching a course in the department, helped her break the monotony of doing just one type of work that is conducting sessions with students. While Participant 3 mentioned working outside of the center to meet her financial needs as a key support factor, Participant 6 shared that volunteering with various non-governmental organizations and contributing to the development of her own NGO provided her with a sense of strength and connection.

4.5.2 Close personal relationships

When asked whether they received support from their close personal relationships, seven participants identified their families as a primary source. Three of these

participants specifically emphasized receiving considerable support from their spouses, while four participants highlighted the importance of their friendships as a significant source of support.

With respect to family support, Participant 6, who lives with her family, highlighted the importance of mere family presence as a source of support. Her words can be found below:

I live with my family. Their presence is, of course, an important support system for me. I don't usually go to them for support in terms of problems unless it's something major, really major. But just having them there makes me feel good, even without asking for anything. (P6, Appendix J, 74)

With respect to support derived from spouses, three participants highlighted sharing their challenges with their spouses at the end of the day was particularly helpful. Participant 7 also shared that having video calls with her spouse and children during the day, whenever possible, made her feel better.

Four participants also highlighted friends as a significant source of support. Participant 7 noted that talking to her friends felt somewhat like peer supervision, which she found highly beneficial. Likewise, Participant 6 reflected on the support she received from her social relationships, stating:

Social relationships are a very strong source of support for me. I draw a lot of energy from them. It's not necessarily about going to them and saying, 'I had this difficulty at school,' but more about meeting up with them after a tough day. Staying in constant contact with them feels like recharging my battery—it has a huge positive effect on me. (P6, Appendix J, 75)

4.5.3 Support from the center and colleagues

A total number of eight participants provided answer to the follow-up question regarding the support derived from their centers and colleagues who work at there.

An important source of support appeared to be the people with whom the participant

works. The support that colleagues, supervisors, and managers provided seem to be a combination of social and professional support.

With respect to the supportive role of her colleagues, Participant 2 stated that coming to the university and working there gave her an opportunity for social interaction, which helped ease the burden of traumatic cases and the challenges of motherhood. She also appreciated that her colleagues recognized her responsibilities and acknowledged her role as a mental health provider. Participants 6 and 9 emphasized the importance of connecting with individuals who had experienced similar challenges, highlighting how this sense of shared experience provided meaningful support. Participant 9 described this as “speaking the same language”. Similarly, Participant 6 explained that receiving support from those with similar experiences not only offered emotional reassurance but also helped her develop practical solutions to the challenges she faced at work. She further elaborated as follows:

Being able to sit with a colleague in the next room, who is going through something similar, and say, ‘That client you mentioned in supervision the other day—this and that happened, and I felt so sad about it,’ and sharing those emotions feels incredibly comforting. Knowing that they can truly relate—not just listen but actually understand because they’ve been through something similar—is so valuable. Or sometimes, we have conflicts or challenges, and we consult each other. That’s also really meaningful. Maybe they’ve handled a similar case before and say, ‘We approached it this way; maybe this could work for you too.’ That kind of support system is definitely a facilitator—it makes things much easier. (P6, Appendix J, 76)

Participants emphasized the supportive role of having social interactions at the center, even if it involved only a few people or exclusively women. They highlighted that having individuals with whom they could form connections is a valuable source of support. Participant 4 mentioned that she spent more time with her colleagues than with her spouse, considering them her primary social relationships. She expressed that the support she received from them was particularly meaningful.

Reflecting on a period when she was dealing with her father's health issues, she elaborated on how the support from her colleagues impacted her, as detailed below:

(...) it's been a tough period for me. But when I come here after leaving the hospital, the support from my friends—whether it's them cheering me up, chatting together, sitting down for a while to talk about what's been going on, or asking how I'm doing—these are truly valuable things. (P4, Appendix J, 77)

Lastly, the role of supervision and managerial support at the center was also highlighted. Participant 7 described her manager's supportive and encouraging attitude as a significant source of support. Similarly, Participants 5 and 6 emphasized the importance of having access to supervision when needed, considering it a crucial support mechanism. Participant 6 further elaborated on how being able to easily reach out to her manager and ask for support made her feel, as expressed in the following statement:

Being able to immediately call her and say, 'We have this issue,' or 'We're facing a challenge with this student, and it's a concerning situation,' provides a great sense of security. It makes me feel supported, that I'm not alone, and that someone stronger than me is containing the process. Feeling that makes such a positive difference for me. (P6, Appendix J, 78)

4.5.4 Prevalent economic, political, social, or cultural dynamics in society

In response to inquiring about prevalent economic, political, social and cultural dynamics as a source of support, a total of eight participants highlighted two cultural elements that has been helpful. First one was how working at a university has been socially regarded. Six participants mentioned that working at a university is perceived as a prestigious profession. Participant 2 illustrated this with the following words:

(...) and yes, there's also this: when we meet new people outside of work, people who aren't from the university, the first reaction is usually, 'Oh, hello, you're a professor at the university, right?' Of course, I correct them, saying, 'No, I'm not a professor; I'm administrative staff.' But still, that perception,

that perspective people have, does feel flattering in a way. In terms of title or status, I think I'm expressing this correctly—it feels more prestigious to work at a university compared to other institutions. Prestigious is the right word for it. (P2, Appendix J, 79)

Second, one participant noted that more collectivistic culture of a small town has been a source of support. Participant 1 highlighted that in the small town where he works, students can get more support from their families and friends compared to larger cities, where individualism is more common. He mentioned that this relational support makes his work easier.

4.5.5 Support from the university

The ways in which the center itself and the larger university were acknowledged as a source of support by seven participants. Participants 2, 7, and 9 all emphasized the flexibility offered by their centers as a shared source of support, particularly regarding working hours and the number of sessions. Two participants operationalized a unique benefit they receive from the university as a supportive resource: Participant 4 identified the priority given to university employees at the university hospital as a support, while Participant 10 highlighted the benefit of pursuing a doctoral degree at the same institution where she works.

Last but certainly not the least, one participant acknowledged the higher administration in their university as a source of support. Participant 1 pointed out that his university listens to and addresses requests made through the department head, creating favorable conditions for him within the limits of possibility.

4.5.6 Colleagues outside the center

In response to the follow-up question regarding support from colleagues outside the center, six participants identified these relationships and collaborations as beneficial.

At times this support took the form of supervision. Two participants described peer supervision with colleagues from outside their centers as a valuable source of support, while another two emphasized the benefits of receiving professional supervision from a provider in the community. At other times this support took the form of consulting. Participant 8 shared that talking with colleagues was comforting and that she benefited from platforms that foster professional solidarity, especially in the aftermath of the devastating Kahramanmaraş earthquakes in Türkiye in February 2023. She explained that this support alleviated her sense of loneliness in the midst of confusion she experienced.

Participant 4 shared that she built friendships with colleagues she met through various associations and training programs and received support from them similar to that of her colleagues at the center. Lastly, Participant 7 explained that when she faced challenges, whether in her personal life, with her children, or in work-related matters, she sought support from colleagues outside the center who worked in the field. She described how this support made her feel with the following statements:

I reach out to my colleagues for what is essentially peer supervision, but it also turns into venting sessions. We share things like, ‘Oh, I struggled with that too,’ and honestly, it feels so good. Sometimes, forgive my expression, but when you think you’ve made the worst mistake in the world, you find out someone else has made an even bigger one, and you realize it’s not so bad after all. Getting support in those moments feels incredibly valuable to me. (P7, Appendix J, 80)

4.5.7 Physical conditions, spaces, or nature of the office or campus

When reflecting on the positive aspects of working at a UCC, most of the participants stated they were satisfied with their physical working conditions and appreciated the natural spaces offered by their universities. However, fewer participants specifically identified these spaces as a source of support. In response to

a follow-up question about whether the campus's physical features, natural environment, or specific locations were supportive, three participants answered affirmatively. Participant 1 shared that the beautiful nature of the campus where he works and being able to take walks there had a positive effect on him. Similarly, Participant 8 shared her appreciation for the school's garden, explaining that spending time there by reading a book or having tea or coffee on pleasant days was a supportive resource for her.

Among all participants, Participant 6 praised the natural environment and facilities of her campus the most. She mentioned using different natural spaces, enjoying the historical features, and finding the campus's aesthetic appearance of the campus uplifting. She expressed her feelings further in the following words:

(...) It holds such an important place for me; it makes me feel good, relaxes me. I never feel like, 'I need to get out of here as soon as possible; I'm mentally drained.' Instead, I try to stay, even in the evenings. I spend as much time here as I can. On days when I work online, I make the most of my time here by staying longer on the days I'm on campus. That's something I really enjoy about this place. In the spring, when the cherry blossoms and Judas trees bloom, each one brings a fresh sense of renewal, and that feeling is truly priceless. (P6, Appendix J, 81)

4.5.8 Higher levels of management

Another follow-up question asked participants whether they had received any support from higher administrative bodies such as YÖK or similar institutions. None of the participants reported receiving support from such authorities. With response to this inquiry, Participant 10 expressed a strong desire to receive such support, which was in line with the sentiments of Participant 2 who expressed a need for higher administrative representation as covered under the Needs section. Participant 10 reflected on the impact of the absence of higher administration support with the following words:

No. No, I mean, for example, I would have wanted a training, like opening a training or maybe meeting and talking at regular intervals, having conferences... I would have expected things like that—it would've been nice, why not—but the fact that there's nothing at all makes us feel very scattered, like we're just trying to deal with things somehow. And nothing concrete comes out of it. For them, we're just a number. That many sessions, this many people—okay, like fine, they did it. So then, I guess—or at least this is how I see it—when there's nothing concrete coming out of it, it becomes something that doesn't really mean much, just something that's kind of running in the background. That's maybe why they want these trainings, workshops, like 'let's explain something,' so that there's something visible and concrete. But we don't need that. (...) Yeah, I mean, at the very least, knowing that there's a place to support us with the things we're lacking could've felt good. (P10, Appendix J, 82)

The last research question of this study aimed to explore the supportive resources that contribute to mental health professionals' sense of wellness while working at UCCs. Findings revealed that professionals benefit from various supportive resources, including internal strategies such as mindset and behavioral practices, as well as external factors like close personal relationships, colleagues, and supervision. Components of the physical and social environment, such as natural campus spaces, opportunities for professional development, and the prestige of the profession, were also identified as supportive. The support from higher administrative bodies appeared to be absent. Findings highlighted how both micro- and macro-level elements can be a resource for providers working at UCCs.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This section delves into the findings of the current study in relation to previous research on the experiences of mental health providers working in various contexts including university counseling centers (UCCs). Additionally, the study's limitations are addressed, and suggestions for future research are provided.

This study explored the experiences of mental health providers working at UCCs in Türkiye. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten professionals who volunteered to participate in the study. The data gathered from these interviews was analyzed using content analysis. The findings revealed several shared experiences among participants, while also highlighting differences, particularly in relation to their work conditions and the support resources they utilized.

In this section, the findings are presented in accordance with the research questions and the theoretical framework guiding this study. Each theme is discussed with reference to participants' voices and contextual nuances that emerged throughout the analysis.

5.1 Discussion of findings

This section will discuss the findings of the current study under the following headings: (1) work conditions, (2) positive experiences, (3) challenges, (4) needs, (5) supportive resources, (6) experiences of the providers from the lens of the ecological system approach, and (7) implications for counseling. The findings of the current study are explored in light of the literature. Similarities are highlighted, and differences are further discussed to deepen our understanding.

5.1.1 Work conditions

The findings of the current study contribute to the literature by shedding light onto work conditions of mental health providers employed in UCCs in Türkiye. In addition, approaching it from a holistic manner and recognizing the various layers of context in which the centers exist can give us a richer understanding of their work conditions. Accordingly, the findings related to participants' work conditions are discussed under the following headings which are presented in the same order that was asked during the interviews: (1) center's structure and organization, (2) provider's physical working conditions, (3) providers' additional social rights and benefits, (4) center's relationship with the university, (5) prevalent dynamics affecting the center's work, and (6) provider's roles and responsibilities within the center. For this section specifically, the sequence of information under each subheading also mirrors the flow of follow-up questions posed to participants during the interviews.

5.1.1.1 Structure

The findings of the current study suggest that the structure and organization of mental health services provided at Turkish universities show variation. This aligns with Gizir's (2011) findings, which suggest that differences in university counseling services stem from variations in the organizational structures of the institutions to which they are attached. Structural differences, as emphasized by Türküm (2009), are primarily reflected in the naming of the centers. Among the various names under which these services are provided in the study's sample, the most commonly used name is "Psychological Counseling and Guidance Unit." Furthermore, consistent with Ercan's (2019) findings, it was observed that the majority of these centers

operate under the “Department of Health, Culture, and Sports,” while some function directly under the rectorate.

Another significant variable shaping the working conditions of university mental health providers is the number of mental health professionals working at these centers. All participants expressed dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of staff numbers. Among the centers included in the study, only one employed eight providers, while most had only two or four providers, and two participants reported working alone.

The number of staff was also found to directly impact the division of labor within the centers. Those working alone handled all tasks themselves, while in centers with multiple providers, tasks were seemingly shared based on availability without a defined role distribution. One of the participants, who works as a part-time graduate student at the center, stated that students like herself are responsible for non-clinical tasks (e.g., admissions, client support, room management). Brunner et al. (2014) emphasize that in Western contexts, conducting research and training graduate students are important functions of these centers. The fact that only one participant mentioned this role in the current study highlights a significant difference in UCC practice in Türkiye.

Additionally, none of the participants’ descriptions of their own centers aligned with the typologies in Whiteley et al.’s (1987) classification of UCC types, namely macro-centers, career planning and placement centers, counseling orientation centers, general-level service centers, and minimal service centers. This observation supports the concerns raised earlier in this study’s literature review regarding the limited relevance of this classification to the context of Türkiye.

5.1.1.2 Physical working conditions

All participants in the study reported having private rooms suitable for conducting therapy sessions under appropriate physical working conditions. Half of them stated that the centers were located in places that were easily accessible for students, while also ensuring privacy by not being overly conspicuous. A study conducted by Şensoy et al. (2018) in Türkiye revealed that students preferred these centers to be in accessible locations, ideally within the buildings where they receive their education. Our findings enriched Şensoy et al.'s (2018) findings by suggesting that centrally located, easily accessible, private and inconspicuous locations are a preference of the providers as much as they seem to be the preference of the students. And it seems this preference on the part of the providers goes beyond meeting student demand and meets personal needs of the providers as well.

5.1.1.3 Additional social rights and benefits

Interviews revealed that university mental health providers do not have additional rights or benefits that can be found at the private sector. Participants highlighted that, at the very least, they receive their salaries on time and regularly. While the majority mentioned having access to free or low-cost meals, only a small number noted receiving transportation assistance. As noted in the literature review, there is no available data to compare these findings and while our study sheds some light onto the matter, the need to examine the conditions of these professionals in more depth remains.

5.1.1.4 Center's relationship with the university

The findings of this study indicate that UCCs collaborate with various components of the university, such as the administration and dormitories. This suggests that the UCCs included in the study are consistent with the findings of Hewitt and Wheeler (2004), who emphasized that these centers operate not only with student clients but also in coordination with diverse stakeholders, including administrative bodies and university personnel.

While a previous study conducted in Türkiye reported that students and faculty were often unaware of the existence of counseling centers at their universities (Şensoy et al., 2018), our results revealed that most participants emphasized their active engagement within their universities. In fact, four participants highlighted that their personal relationships with academic faculty facilitated these collaborations, which were often in the form of individual consultations. Additionally, several participants mentioned collaborating with different units within their universities by providing training to staff members. Other examples of collaboration included involvement in addiction commission work and support for disaster coordination efforts within their universities.

While our findings may seem at odds with Şensoy et al.'s (2018) findings at first glance, it is possible for both to coexist. Providers at UCCs may be actively working with certain faculty members and programs; however, the rest of the university population—those who are disconnected from the center—may not be aware of its presence. Collaborations limited to specific departments may not be enough to ensure campus-wide visibility. This issue may even go unnoticed by the providers themselves, as their active engagement might give the impression of broader institutional integration. Therefore, it is quite possible that while providers

do collaborate with faculty and staff, their presence remains visible only to a select few.

5.1.1.5 Prevalent dynamics affecting the center's work

There is limited research focusing specifically on the work conditions of mental health professionals working in university counseling centers, especially in relation to how broader contextual factors—such as cultural, economic, and societal dynamics—shape these conditions. Participants in this study also discussed the influence of such dynamics on their work conditions at the centers.

Cultural impact emerged as participants reflected on the size of the city in which their university is located, which influenced both their exposure to cultural diversity and the extent of mental health stigma. Experts working in larger cities described these locations as cosmopolitan and highlighted the cultural diversity they encountered among their clients. While they acknowledged the challenges this posed, they also emphasized the enriching aspects of such diversity. In contrast, those working in smaller cities spoke about the societal stigma surrounding psychological support and its impact on their work.

Economic impact emerged with respect to the importance of providing free psychological services, particularly in the face of the country's ongoing financial difficulties. Some participants emphasized that offering free services was crucial for ensuring access; however, they also noted that increased accessibility does not always translate into positive therapeutic outcomes. This concern is consistent with findings by Feeny et al. (2024), who pointed out that while free services reduce barriers to mental health support, they also strain existing counseling resources and may limit the depth of interventions. Similarly, Guo et al. (2024) emphasized that

when services become more accessible, without a proportional increase in resources, it can overwhelm providers and affect the overall quality of care. This shift toward affordability has contributed to rising application rates, further adding to providers' workload. Some participants also observed that students did not always value free services as much, which they believed affected engagement levels. Supporting this, Yorgason et al. (2008) found that students may perceive free counseling services as less valuable, contributing to lower engagement and higher no-show rates.

Societal impact emerged through major events that have shaped the field of mental health in recent years. Major events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes in Türkiye, also seem to influence work conditions at the centers. The pandemic brought significant changes, including the adoption of technology and the transition to online sessions, while also exacerbating the severity of psychological problems. This finding is consistent with Lee's (2020) study, which suggests that the measures taken during the pandemic, particularly school closures, disrupted daily routines and contributed to the deterioration of mental health issues. Similarly, the earthquake shaped work conditions by prompting various volunteer psychosocial activities and prioritizing affected students. This pattern aligns with previous research indicating that mental health providers often experience role overload, emotional strain, and increased burnout risk when responding to major crises and disasters (Brooks et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021; Webber & Mascari, 2018). Particularly during post-disaster psychosocial interventions, mental health workers may face elevated client demands and shifts in work priorities, contributing to altered work conditions and heightened professional challenges.

Another key societal change was the evolving societal perception of psychology and psychological support. Some participants mentioned that the

increasing popularity of psychology has led to a rise in applications, significantly adding to their workload. This observation is in line with Feeny et al. (2024), who noted that university counseling services have faced higher demand as psychological support became more normalized. In a similar vein, Medina (2025) pointed out that the growing public awareness after the pandemic also played a major role in increasing the need for mental health services.

5.1.1.6 Duties and responsibilities at the center

All participants indicated that their primary responsibility at the center was conducting individual sessions with students. Half of them also mentioned organizing seminars or psychoeducational activities but noted that low attendance often demotivated them from continuing these initiatives. Similarly, nearly half of the participants reported engaging in group counseling sessions, while fewer mentioned taking part in orientation activities for new students.

These findings align with studies conducted in Western contexts. As demonstrated in the current study, the primary role of UCCs is to provide psychological counseling or psychotherapy services to students experiencing psychological challenges or difficulties in areas such as development, academics, or other domains (Brunner et al., 2014; Newhart et al., 2021; Owen et al., 2007). A study conducted in Türkiye further supports our findings, indicating that individual counseling, emergency psychotherapy for students, and consultations with management and academic staff were the most common services offered (Güneri, 2006). The same study found that group therapy, outreach activities, orientation programs, and research activities were also conducted, though to a lesser extent,

which aligns with the responsibilities of the professionals described in the present study.

Only a few participants reported taking on additional responsibilities beyond clinical work, such as teaching courses or contributing to the center's outreach materials. This is in line with the findings of Cooper and Archer (2002), which noted that despite the potential for research and development activities, these are less frequently pursued in UCCs.

Gizir identified several barriers to research activities in UCCs in Türkiye, including prioritization of other services, lack of incentives for conducting research, limited financial resources, and insufficient time. Participants highlighted resource limitations and time constraints as the primary reasons for prioritizing individual sessions, which is consistent with Gizir's (2011) findings.

When asked about the most common issues students sought help for, participants reported a wide range of concerns. Anxiety was identified as the leading presenting issue by 80% of participants. This was followed by family-related problems (70%), often linked to relational challenges within the family context, and depression (60%). Relational problems beyond family ties (50%) were also frequently mentioned, alongside less common issues such as trauma, eating disorders, and panic-related problems.

Studies from the US provide useful points for comparison. Brunner et al. (2014) and Newhart et al. (2021) identified anxiety, depression, academic concerns, stress, and relationship issues as the most common presenting problems in American UCCs, with family-related concerns ranking lower. While anxiety and depression seem to be common concerns globally, the greater prominence of family issues in our sample may reflect specific cultural dynamics. Şensoy et al. (2018) conducted a

study in Türkiye with academics, reporting that romantic relationship problems, family issues, and career-related concerns were the most common reasons for student applications. While this partially mirrors our findings, it can be noted that our participants emphasized anxiety more strongly.

Taken together, the results highlight both shared and context-specific patterns. While anxiety emerges as a global concern, the high prevalence of family-related problems among students in Türkiye may be influenced by cultural factors. In traditional family structures, young adults often remain closely tied to their families, and adjusting relational boundaries during emerging adulthood can pose particular challenges (Arnett, 2000; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007). In collectivistic societies like Türkiye, strong family ties tend to persist into adulthood, making individuation and autonomy processes more complex compared to more individualistic cultures.

Overall, participants' work conditions were explored under the following headings: the center's structure and organization, the provider's physical working conditions, additional social rights and benefits of the providers, the center's relationship with the university, prevalent dynamics affecting the center's work, and the provider's roles and responsibilities within the center. Understanding these conditions provides important context for interpreting the experiences of mental health providers working at UCCs in Türkiye. These findings largely align with the existing literature on work environments in similar settings. In the following section, we shift our focus to the second research question, which explores the positive aspects of working at a UCC in Türkiye as a mental health provider.

5.1.2 Positive experiences

The findings of this study indicate that mental health practitioners working within the university context have positive experiences that can be grouped under various headings. The categorization of positive work experiences was guided by the overall structure of the interview questions, which were developed with reference to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Bioecological Systems Theory and Bone's (2015) adaptation of the model to the workplace. The discussion of the study's findings regarding positive work experiences is organized under the following headings accordingly: (1) physical working conditions, (2) enriching experiences of working with students, (3) personally rewarding aspects, (4) positive structural/administrative factors, (5) contributions to career development, (6) relational dynamics, and (7) economic benefits. These headings are presented in order of their prominence, based on how frequently they were mentioned by participants, rather than the order in which the related interview questions were asked.

5.1.2.1 Physical working conditions

Among the positive experiences of university mental health providers, physical working conditions stand out. These conditions can be examined in three aspects: the overall physical environment of campuses, the natural surroundings, and the availability of private rooms. Participants highlighted the advantages of working in university campus settings away from the city and crowds, noting that this was a unique opportunity not readily available in other work environments. Additionally, the natural spaces on campuses were emphasized for their calming effects and therapeutic utility. This was also mentioned in Bratman et al. (2015), who showed that being in natural environments can help reduce stress and overthinking. Similarly,

Stratton and Stannard (2024) emphasized that nature-based spaces on campus can positively contribute to mental well-being.

Having private rooms where they could conduct sessions without interruptions or conflicts was mentioned as a positive aspect. Participants also appreciated that these rooms were bright and could be arranged based on their own preferences. Being able to personalize the workspace may support counselors' well-being and job satisfaction (Knight & Haslam, 2010). Kay (2010) similarly noted that features like natural light and privacy help create a more supportive environment in counseling settings. Parashakti et al. (2020) also found that physical conditions such as wall color, lighting, and humidity can positively affect employee motivation and performance.

5.1.2.2 Enriching experiences of working with students

The findings regarding the positive aspects of working with students suggest that practitioners view this age group as ideal for therapy, believing their energy contributes to a sense of dynamism for the practitioners themselves. Participants of the current study noted that working with students provided a continuous learning experience, allowing them to stay updated on evolving concepts and trends. Additionally, the high level of awareness and well-developed communication skills of this group were highlighted as factors that enhance the effectiveness of the counseling process. Similarly, a study conducted in Canada found that counselors working at UCCs reported that the positive characteristics of their clients served as a source of motivation for continuing their profession (Kadambi et al., 2010). In parallel, Sim et al. (2016) emphasized that the broader campus atmosphere, including student interactions, could foster a sense of professional fulfillment, especially

among early career psychologists. These findings collectively highlight how interactions with university students can contribute to counselors' sense of meaning, engagement, and motivation in their work.

5.1.2.3 Personally rewarding aspects

Participants who compared working at a university with other environments highlighted the flexibility provided by their current setting as a positive aspect. This flexibility was seen as important not only for balancing personal and professional responsibilities but also for staying motivated and committed to the job. Supporting this, research shows that flexible work arrangements can enhance engagement and reduce turnover intention among counseling professionals (Bakker et al., 2014).

They also emphasized the personal enjoyment of working with clients who are open to change and driven by intrinsic motivation. Witnessing progress and transformation in their clients was described as particularly rewarding. This aligns with Moss et al. (2014), which reported that experienced counselors feel a deep sense of satisfaction when they observe their clients grow and reach their goals. Similar findings were reported by Farber and Heifetz (1981), who emphasized that seeing clients improve is one of the most fulfilling aspects of therapeutic work. In a similar vein, Oberleitner et al. (2021) found that strong therapeutic relationships foster a deeper sense of professional meaning and personal reward for university counselors.

Some participants also mentioned the fulfillment derived from offering accessible mental health services. Given that a study conducted in Türkiye found that students expressed concerns about the costs of counseling services (Yelpaze & Ceyhan, 2019), it can be inferred that providing free services at UCCs can improve

student access and become a source of intrinsic motivation for the providers working there.

Beyond professional gains, some counselors described unexpected personal benefits. One participant, for example, reflected on how interactions at the center had positively influenced her approach to parenting. This aligns with existing research suggesting that engaging in emotionally meaningful counseling work may also contribute to personal growth (Christopher & Maris, 2010). This is further supported by Kramen-Kahn and Hansen (1998), who highlighted that the counseling profession often fosters self-reflection and personal development in the practitioners themselves. Additionally, the perception of their profession as respected by society was said to contribute to counselors' well-being, a finding supported by studies linking professional identity and perceived prestige to greater job satisfaction and counselor retention (Darcy & Abed-Faghri, 2013). Practitioners also expressed that working with diverse clients and addressing a broad range of issues helped them push their boundaries and realize their potential. While this theme appears less emphasized in the current literature, it may represent an important area for future research on personal growth within the counseling profession.

5.1.2.4 Positive structural/administrative factors

The interviews revealed that most participants were satisfied with the autonomy they were granted in decision-making processes at their centers. Some participants described this experience as similar to working in their own private practice despite being part of a university structure. This finding aligns with research by Holman et al. (2019), which indicates that counselors perceive school environments more negatively when they are excluded from decision-making processes.

Additionally, participants emphasized that the non-hierarchical structure of their centers and the absence of interference—particularly from individuals without a background in psychology—had a positive impact on their work. This nuance, which has not been extensively discussed in the literature, emerged as a notable finding in the present study.

5.1.2.5 Contributions to career development

In the present study, the majority of participants emphasized that working in a university setting, particularly in centers offering free services, provided them with the opportunity to work with a far more diverse range of clients than in other settings. They viewed this as an advantage for their professional development and career growth. Additionally, participants noted that the flexibility offered by their universities in learning new therapeutic approaches, combined with the ease of applying these newly acquired skills with their clients, further contributed to their professional advancement.

The high client flow at these centers seems to allow professionals to gain practical experience with new techniques, while the academic environment provides additional support for their career progression. These findings are consistent with broader literature emphasizing that university-based resources and campus counseling structures can support not only student growth but also the professional identity development of counselors working in these settings (Novella & Dobson, 2024). Although this topic has not been widely studied in Türkiye, the present study helps to better understand how counselors experience professional development in this context.

5.1.2.6 Relational dynamics

In the interviews, some participants stated they had a sincere friendship environment with their colleagues. Emphasizing that the relational aspect of their work benefited them, participants highlighted that sharing the challenges they experienced with their colleagues was particularly meaningful because they worked in the same field and encountered similar difficulties. One participant also mentioned that working within the university and as part of a team provided opportunities for socialization, and while they might have felt isolated in another setting, this was different from their current experience.

These findings appear to be consistent with the results of studies conducted in the US and Canada. Sim et al. (2016) conducted a study with career psychologists working at universities in the US, and the findings similarly indicated that professional satisfaction was influenced by the positive environment within their centers and the broader campus community. Supportive and collaborative relationships with colleagues were important in increasing job satisfaction. Another study consistent with these findings was conducted by Kadambi et al. (2010) with university counselors in Canada. This study revealed that forming meaningful relationships was among the key factors motivating counselors to continue their profession.

5.1.2.7 Economic benefits

In the university context, the financial benefits of working have been an area where participants found it difficult to highlight positive aspects. Nevertheless, half of the participants mentioned that receiving a regular and fixed income provided a sense of security. Some participants noted that, as part of their family culture, they also

valued this stability. Others stated that they considered their salary sufficient since it covered their basic living expenses. It was also pointed out that working at a university could be seen positively because it eliminated the need to consider certain additional expenses.

Although financial gain is clearly not a primary motivation for providers working in university counseling settings, the participants evaluated it from multiple perspectives, considering various cultural influences and the broader conditions of the country. This presents a unique contribution of the current study, as such a perspective has not been adequately explored in the existing literature, both due to the limited number of studies and the culturally specific evaluations it includes. However, broader research suggests that even when financial rewards are not the central motivation for mental health providers, financial stability remains an important factor contributing to job satisfaction and retention, particularly when salaries meet essential living standards (Eaton, 1998).

Overall, participants shared a variety of positive experiences related to their work in UCCs, which were explored under the following themes: physical working conditions, the enriching nature of working with students, personally rewarding aspects, supportive administrative structures, contributions to career development, relational dynamics, and economic benefits. These experiences reflect a generally favorable perception of the university counseling setting and were found to be largely consistent with the existing literature from international contexts. Although Türkiye-based studies remain limited, the findings of the current study offer a culturally grounded contribution that aligns with global trends regarding counselor well-being and professional satisfaction. In the next section, we turn to the

challenges encountered by mental health providers, shedding light on the difficulties they face in sustaining their roles within these settings.

5.1.3 Challenges

The results of the study indicate that participants face numerous challenges while providing mental health services at UCCs. Consistent with the previous sections, the categorization of challenging experiences was guided by the overall structure of the interview questions, which were developed with reference to the study's theoretical frameworks (Bone, 2015; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The discussion of the study's findings regarding challenges will be organized under the following headings accordingly: (1) structural/administrative challenges, (2) economic difficulties, (3) relational problems, (4) personal struggles, (5) challenges arising from working with emotionally intense or life-threatening situations, (6) physical working conditions, (7) difficulties related to working with students, (8) challenges concerning regulations and expectations from higher management, and (9) career-related obstacles. The order of these sub-categories reflects their relative frequency in participants' responses, starting from the most commonly reported challenges to those mentioned less frequently.

5.1.3.1 Structural/administrative challenges

Participants commonly emphasized that the heavy workload stemming from insufficient staff numbers was one of the most significant structural challenges in their centers. Given the high psychological needs among students, providers expressed difficulty in managing their caseloads effectively. This challenge is consistent with findings from Western literature, where increasing demands in

university counseling settings have been identified as a major source of stress (Briggs, 2006; Stone & Archer, 1990). This issue has also been noted in previous studies, which describe the supply-demand imbalance in UCCs as a long-standing and growing concern (Mull et al., 2018; Walls, 2023). In Türkiye, similar concerns have been raised by Dost and Keklik (2012), who reported that high student numbers place a considerable burden on mental health providers.

Another frequently mentioned issue was the existence of long waiting lists for students seeking support. Participants explained that despite prioritizing urgent cases, they struggled to meet the broader demand in a timely manner. This mirrors Davis et al.'s (2001) findings, which highlight long waiting lists as a persistent challenge for counseling centers. In the Turkish context, Gizir (2011) noted that centers often respond to limited capacity by restricting the number of sessions per client, a practice echoed in participants' responses. They found this limitation to be a barrier to providing continuous and effective psychological support.

Participants also reported a lack of collaboration with psychiatrists, which limited their ability to offer comprehensive care. This aligns with findings by Güneri (2006), who identified the absence of interdisciplinary cooperation as a structural limitation in Turkish university counseling services. The lack of adequate staffing also contributed to participants feeling isolated in their work. This sentiment aligns with Sim et al.'s (2016) findings, which revealed that early-career therapists often experience loneliness and isolation in their roles, contributing to burnout. In our study, two participants described experiencing such isolation, and notably, both were in the early stages of their careers. What they shared illustrates how limited collegial support and excessive demands can particularly affect less experienced professionals.

Lastly, participants shared that they often felt misunderstood in their roles by university stakeholders. They were frequently called upon as crisis responders, even in situations outside their professional scope. This finding reflects Dost and Keklik's (2012) observation that university staff working in counseling centers often face challenges due to unclear job descriptions and limited awareness among institutional actors about their professional responsibilities.

5.1.3.2 Economic difficulties

Another significant issue frequently mentioned by participants was financial concerns. The majority expressed dissatisfaction with their salaries, stating that their compensation was far below market rates and did not adequately reflect the value of the services they provided. This dissatisfaction aligns with Sim et al.'s (2016) findings, which indicate that salary levels significantly influence counselors' experiences of burnout.

Participants also emphasized the financial challenges of pursuing professional development in their field. They noted that their inadequate salaries made it challenging to allocate resources for costly training programs. This concern is also reflected in existing research. Okamura et al. (2018) highlight that the financial burden associated with evidence-based therapy trainings can be considerable, with costs varying based on the type and delivery of the program. Importantly, therapists are often expected to cover these expenses themselves, which may discourage ongoing professional development.

Some participants reported having to work additional sessions during weekends—time they would otherwise use for rest—to supplement their income, which they found exhausting. One participant assessed their financial situation in

light of the country's worsening economy and declining purchasing power, noting that these factors have made their circumstances even more problematic. This observation represents a unique detail not commonly found in the existing literature. The limited number of studies conducted so far have not adequately tracked the effects of such large-scale economic changes over short periods.

5.1.3.3 Relational problems

The findings of the current study suggest that university mental health providers face certain relational challenges in their work. Some participants mentioned the expectation to carry their professional roles into their personal lives and be available 24/7. Some participants shared that they felt constantly observed in their personal relationships, with people scrutinizing their reactions to everyday events. They described this as an uncomfortable experience. Notably, similar or supportive findings regarding these relational experiences were not addressed in the existing literature, highlighting a unique contribution of this study.

It was observed that work-related stress and emotional exhaustion extended beyond the professional domain, negatively affecting participants' personal lives. One participant shared that after spending an entire day actively listening to others, she felt drained and unable to give attention to her family, which strained her personal relationships. This finding echoes Briggs' (2006) observation that emotional demands from therapeutic work can spill over into therapists' private lives, potentially leading to relational strain.

5.1.3.4 Personal struggles

The current study showed that working in university counseling brought different emotional and mental challenges for each participant. Some found the monotony of a bureaucratic work style difficult, while others struggled with being expected to handle a wide range of issues outside their expertise. A few participants said that working in isolation made them feel invisible, and the lack of recognition for their work lowered their motivation over time.

When we examined the experiences of mental health professionals closely, we noticed that such challenges can be often overlooked in common quantitative studies or surveys. This highlights the importance of the current study, which focuses on the experiences of university mental health professionals and adds their voices to the academic discussion.

5.1.3.5 Challenges arising from emotionally intense or life-threatening situations

Participants reported facing challenges when working with emotionally intense and life-threatening issues, such as clients dealing with trauma or suicidal thoughts. Some noted that, in addition to the emotional burden, an added difficulty was being contacted by these students at unexpected hours. Sim et al. (2016), in their study on university career psychologists, emphasized that clinical responsibilities involving high-risk situations, such as trauma and suicide, are significant factors contributing to burnout among professionals.

5.1.3.6 Physical working conditions

Although participants generally stated that they were satisfied with their physical working conditions, they also mentioned some negative aspects. However, it was not

possible to group these negative experiences under a common theme, as each participant highlighted different shortcomings related to their specific circumstances. That said, two participants did mention a shared difficulty: the inadequacy of campus facilities and the challenge of their campuses being far from where they lived and from the city center. The lack of sufficient physical resources has also been suggested as a significant challenge experienced by university counseling staff in Türkiye, as noted in a study by Güneri (2006).

5.1.3.7 Difficulties related to working with students

The interviews revealed certain challenges associated with working with students. Two participants mentioned that encountering students in shared spaces felt restrictive. Another two participants noted that Psychology students as well as students from Guidance and Counseling programs often sought counseling not because they were experiencing problems but out of curiosity about the process, which negatively impacted the therapeutic process.

While Sim et al. (2016) emphasized that working with challenging client behaviors can cause counselors to develop burnout, studies specifically examining experiences related to working with students, specifically students from certain departments or programs, remain limited. How student behavior becomes a challenge for UCC providers might also be explored from the perspective of generational differences, such as those attributed to Gen-Z characteristics.

5.1.3.8 Challenges concerning regulations and expectations from higher management

During the interviews, it was observed that both the presence and absence of regulations and expectations from upper management levels caused various problems. Participants generally emphasized that management prioritized numerical metrics over the quality of their work, imposed unclear or even inappropriate expectations for their roles, and sometimes demanded time-consuming tasks. Due to the structural differences in Türkiye compared to other countries, no studies in the international literature address this specific situation. Similarly, studies in Türkiye seem to lack a focus on how upper management and university counseling professionals interact.

Holman et al. (2019) found that counselors' perceptions of their institutions were negatively influenced when they received inadequate support alongside high expectations. In this study, while some participants viewed the lack of excessive control positively, others highlighted that having high expectations without sufficient follow-up or clear guidance from managers was a notable shortcoming.

5.1.3.9 Career-related obstacles

The challenges participants faced in their careers could be grouped into a few main categories. The first was the lack of support or approval from management, which hindered their progress in academic careers. Additionally, some participants mentioned that due to limited resources and time, they were unable to attend training sessions that were critical for their professional development. Finally, the need to work on a wide variety of student issues prevented them from specializing or focusing on the areas they were genuinely interested in. Studies conducted in Türkiye

(e.g., Gizir, 2011; Güneri, 2006) have similarly highlighted that activities like supervision and training are often given less importance in counseling centers, supporting the present study's findings.

The findings discussed in this section indicate that mental health professionals working in UCCs face a wide range of challenges shaped by both the institutional context and the emotional demands of their role. These challenges were grouped under the following categories: structural and administrative issues, financial difficulties, relational tensions, personal struggles, emotionally intense cases, physical working conditions, challenges related to working with students, institutional expectations, and career-related barriers. While some of these issues echo earlier research, others—particularly those rooted in the specific dynamics of university settings in Türkiye—offer new insights into the day-to-day realities of these professionals. In light of these challenges, the next section turns to the needs expressed by participants. It explores how these needs emerge within different levels of their work context and what professionals consider essential for their well-being and effectiveness.

5.1.4 Needs

The findings of this study revealed that university mental health professionals experience a variety of unmet needs within their institutional contexts. These needs fall into five categories—professional, managerial and structural, financial, social, and personal—based on how frequently they were expressed by participants, from the most to the least commonly mentioned. Understanding these areas can help clarify the conditions that support or hinder professionals' well-being and effectiveness in university counseling centers.

Participants most frequently emphasized the need for ongoing professional development, particularly training and supervision, to stay updated with the evolving needs of university students. Several participants highlighted that they felt professionally stagnant without regular access to relevant, psychology-specific educational opportunities. These findings align with both international and national literature that underscore the importance of growth-related needs. For example, Guo et al. (2024) found that growth needs, including learning and development opportunities, were the most frequently cited professional needs among Chinese counselors. Similarly, Baştamur and Uçar (2022) reported that in Türkiye, access to meaningful therapeutic training was a strong predictor of professional empowerment, while supervision alone did not seem to yield the desired impact—echoing the concern that supervision in its current structure is often inadequate.

In addition, financial barriers related to training costs were a common concern. Participants expressed that while attending these programs is not mandatory, the absence of institutional funding makes it inaccessible. This is not unique to the Turkish context. Medina (2025) showed that job resources such as access to training and supervisor support significantly predicted work engagement among Filipino counselors, while job demands (e.g., workload) had no meaningful impact unless they were paired with such resources. This highlights the crucial role of well-structured institutional support systems. Furthermore, the study by Bengisoy and Özdemir (2019) revealed that many Turkish counselors viewed in-service training programs as insufficient, both in number and in quality, calling attention to the need for more practical and specialized educational content.

Another professional need raised was the desire to work in larger, more collaborative teams. Participants mentioned the isolating nature of their work and

how collaboration would enhance both service quality and morale. This is supported by Adam et al. (2021), who found that collegial interaction was a significant predictor of professional satisfaction. In addition, participants expressed a clear desire for representation at higher levels of decision-making bodies such as YÖK. This specific issue has not been widely addressed in the literature, making it a noteworthy contextual contribution of this study. The absence of such representation seems to be linked to limited advocacy for their developmental needs and contribute to feelings of invisibility within the institutional hierarchy.

Managerial and structural needs were also prominently discussed. Several participants emphasized the ambiguity of their job descriptions and the lack of a formal managerial structure. These issues hinder both role clarity and institutional accountability. Similar concerns were documented by Bengisoy and Özdemir (2019), whose participants also noted that unclear expectations and role conflicts were major sources of professional dissatisfaction. The lack of a unified understanding of the counselor's role within schools or universities often results in unrealistic expectations from colleagues or administrators, further complicating professional identity. Moreover, the need for increased institutional resources—ranging from physical infrastructure to staffing—was mentioned as critical for expanding outreach, managing caseloads, and implementing preventive services. These findings mirror Medina's (2025) conclusion that job resources (e.g., autonomy, development opportunities, supervisor support) significantly contribute to vigor, dedication, and absorption in counseling work.

Financial needs were most frequently expressed by participants in precarious employment conditions. The request for transportation and meal allowances, and especially the desire for permanent contracts, speaks to the importance of economic

security in enabling long-term commitment. Chong and Khong (2018) argue that financial security must be treated as a foundational requirement, especially in emotionally intensive professions. Guo et al. (2024) also found that financial or existence needs—such as adequate pay and affordable training—were key drivers of dissatisfaction among counselors, especially those in non-public institutions. These findings underscore how the absence of such basic support erodes motivation, regardless of professional passion or dedication.

Participants also highlighted the importance of workplace connectedness and informal social interactions. Some described how a simple greeting or shared break created a sense of belonging and emotional support. These findings resonate with Budie et al. (2018) and Adam et al. (2021), who emphasized the role of social interaction in workplace well-being and retention. Guo et al. (2024) also identified relatedness needs as a critical dimension of counselor well-being, especially among those lacking family support or working in socially isolated environments.

Finally, individual-level personal needs were noted, such as finding quiet spaces to decompress or receiving support in organizing daily tasks. While less frequently mentioned, these needs reflect the complex interplay between personal coping strategies and institutional support. As Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2011) note, personal resilience is a vital but often overlooked element in the long-term sustainability of helping professionals.

Overall, these findings offer an initial understanding of the types of needs that mental health professionals working at UCCs may experience. It is somewhat surprising that fairness and justice, which are often emphasized in the literature as key aspects of workplace well-being (Adam et al., 2021), did not emerge clearly in participants' responses. This may indicate that such needs were either less salient in

their current work environments or were overshadowed by more immediate concerns, such as access to training and financial stability. Another possibility is that participants may not have felt entirely safe or comfortable expressing views on these topics during the interviews.

Taken together, the needs identified by participants span multiple levels—from individual to systemic—and highlight the importance of investing in institutional mechanisms that ensure both personal and professional sustainability. While many of these needs align with previous international research, the emphasis on national structural deficits (e.g., lack of YÖK representation, limited job security, supervision ineffectiveness) makes a unique contribution to the literature. Addressing these issues can be very important for enhancing both the well-being of practitioners and the quality of services delivered within university counseling settings in Türkiye. The following section explores the sources of support that participants found helpful in sustaining their work despite their expressed challenges.

5.1.5 Supportive resources

The findings of the current study suggested that professionals working in UCCs receive support from a variety of sources. The discussion below follows the order of how often each source of support was mentioned by participants, starting with the most frequent.

In the current study, participants described drawing on internal resources, particularly cognitive strategies, to cope with challenges at work. These included maintaining a focus on positive aspects, reframing difficulties as opportunities for growth, and staying committed to their professional values. They also engaged in behavioral self-care activities such as pursuing hobbies, attending training sessions,

and enjoying small pleasures in daily life. A few also mentioned engaging in physical activity or even attending therapy themselves as forms of self-care, consistent with previous findings that highlight these strategies as important for mental health professionals' well-being (Gil-Beltrán et al., 2020; Mahoney, 1997; Seo & Huh, 2022). These findings are also in line with Sim et al.'s (2016) study on university career psychologists, which emphasized the role of cognitive-behavioral coping mechanisms and self-care practices in managing occupational stress. Additionally, the present findings resonate with the arguments of Panneerselvam and Balaraman (2022), who suggested that employees increasingly assess their jobs not solely based on external rewards like salary but also through broader psychological frameworks that influence their sense of meaning and satisfaction at work.

Another important point raised by participants was the role of social support in their well-being. Many emphasized the value of close personal relationships, particularly with family and friends, as a way to cope emotionally with the demands of their work. These accounts are in line with the literature that underscores the buffering role of supportive social ties (Halbesleben, 2006; Schultheiss et al., 2001). Support from colleagues also stood out, both through structured peer supervision and more informal moments of sharing. These relationships helped participants feel understood and less alone in their experiences. Similar patterns were observed by Sim et al. (2016), who noted that university professionals often rely on social ties during periods of stress. This is further supported by Holman et al. (2019), whose research with school counselors showed that a lack of collegial support was linked to greater fatigue and a higher risk of burnout.

Moreover, the current study highlighted additional sources of support not commonly addressed in the limited literature on university counseling professionals.

These included shared societal dynamics, institutional support from their universities, and the natural campus environment. Even if studies on mental health professionals working at UCCs do not extensively cover these specific sources, broader literature supports our findings with respect to nature and institution being a source of support. For instance, Williams (2017) emphasizes the restorative effects of nature on stress reduction and emotional well-being in high-demand professions. Similarly, Eisenberger et al. (2002) suggest that perceived organizational support is strongly linked to improved job satisfaction and reduced burnout in human service settings. Interestingly, none of the participants reported receiving any support from higher management levels, such as the Higher Education Council (YÖK), which stands out as a noteworthy finding.

The findings presented in this section reveal that mental health professionals receive support from a range of sources, spanning from internal coping strategies to interpersonal and institutional resources. Participants highlighted the importance of cognitive and behavioral strategies, close relationships, collegial interactions, and the broader university environment in sustaining their emotional well-being and professional functioning. While some of these sources align with well-documented patterns in the literature, others—such as nature or institutional climate—have received relatively less attention in previous research. To better understand how these providers' experiences are situated within broader contextual layers, the next section draws on the ecological systems approach.

5.1.6 Experiences of the providers from the lens of ecological system approach

It is also essential to examine the findings of our study from the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems approach and Bone's adaptation of this model

to the working life, on which the research questions and the interview protocol was based, may provide a deeper understanding of the results. The experiences of university mental health providers, which is the focus of this study, appear to be addressed in fragments in the literature. With the current research, not only have these different aspects, such as positive and negative experiences, needs, and sources of support, been examined together but also from a unified ecological perspective.

As Bone (2015) suggests, at the center of this model lies the employee, whose experiences are shaped by factors at home, in the workplace, and within broader societal and cultural contexts. Drawing from Bronfenbrenner (1979), it is highlighted that employees not only are influenced by their environment but also affect it (Bone, 2015). Building on these theoretical foundations, the current study adopts the ecological systems model to examine the experiences of university mental health providers in Türkiye.

As explained in the literature review section, the ecological systems model consists of five interrelated sub-layers: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this section, the university mental health providers are placed at the center of the model, and the findings obtained will be discussed through the lens of this approach. Different layers of the ecological model were acknowledged by the participants, and each will be introduced below per research questions. Figure 2 below, created by the researcher, illustrates the adaptation of Bone's (2015) model for university mental health providers, taking into account the current study's findings.

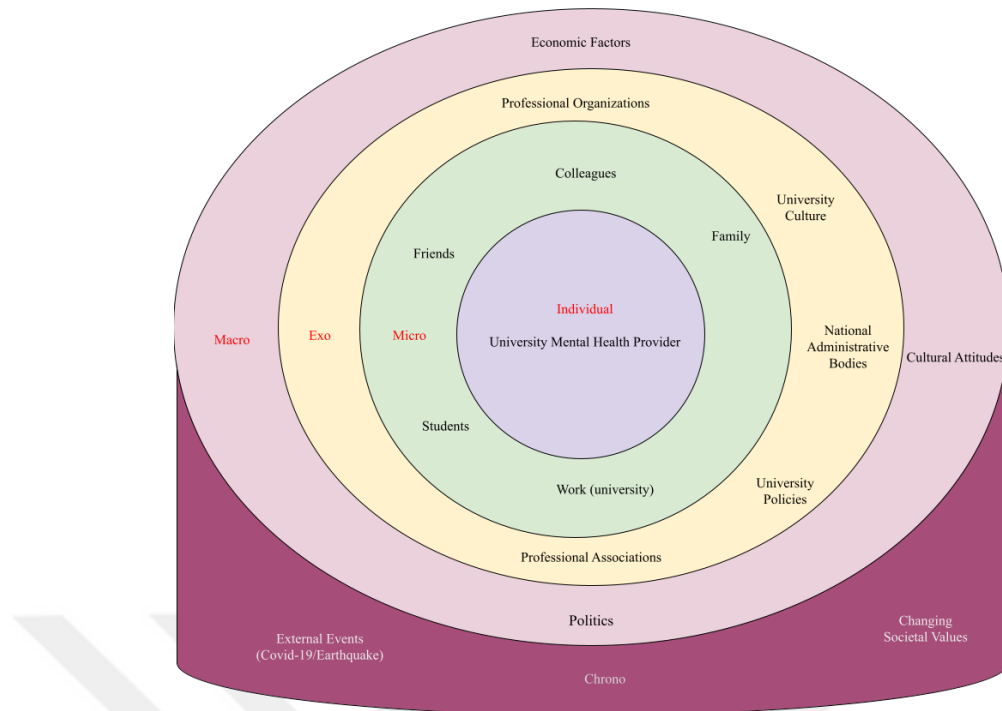


Figure 2. Adaptation of Bone's (2015) model of workplace health and well-being management to university mental health providers
Note: Model created by the main researcher

An analysis of mental health providers' reflections on work experiences at UCCs reveals the influence of micro, exo, and macro layers within the ecological system. Consistent with Bone's (2015) adaptation, it is evident that micro-level factors like the structure of the centers where they work, their physical working conditions, the students they serve, and relationships with family and colleagues within their immediate environment significantly impact their work experiences. Another layer, the exosystem, encompasses indirect environmental factors such as university policies and existing social rights and benefits, which also influence providers. At the macro level, the bioecological model accounts for political, economic, and cultural factors (Bone, 2015). This study found broader socio-cultural dynamics, particularly societal views on mental health in Türkiye, significantly shape professionals' experiences. Some participants also mentioned social stigma, which can be categorized as a macro-level influence. Furthermore, consistent with Bone's

(2015) adaptation, the country's economic conditions were another macro-level factor affecting work experiences.

An analysis of mental health providers' reflections on positive aspects of working at UCCs reveals the influence of microsystem and chronosystem elements. The majority of mental health providers working at UCCs sharing positive reflections on their work experience, highlighted the role of physical conditions, relationships with students, the structuring and management of their centers, and their relationships with colleagues—all elements of their microsystem. Notably, participants with more years of experience pointed to how societal and student attitudes have evolved over time. This dynamic falls under the chronosystem and illustrates the interaction between time, change, individuals, and ecological layers. Additionally, some participants referenced global events such as COVID-19 and the positive aspects they experienced during this period, revealing another chronosystem influence.

An analysis of mental health providers' reflections on challenging aspects of working at UCCs reveals the influence of micro, exo, macro and chronosystem. Microsystem challenges included high caseloads, emotional fatigue, structural and management-related issues, difficulties in personal and professional relationships, challenging physical working conditions, and difficulties associated with working with students. Decisions and demands from university management, which indirectly affected their work, represented exosystem challenges. Meanwhile, macro and chronosystem-level problems were linked to broader events and changes, such as economic conditions contributing to financial struggles. Participants also noted how initial societal prejudice toward psychological support transitioned into increased

demand and unrealistic expectations from clients as societal views evolved and the popularity of psychology increased.

An analysis of mental health providers' reflections on their needs related to working at UCCs reveals the influence of micro, exo and macrosystem.

Improvements in working conditions are required at the microsystem level for university mental health professionals. Participants also expressed unique needs tied to their individual circumstances. At the exosystem level, need for representation at the Council of Higher Education was acknowledged. At the macrosystem level, the need for enhanced educational opportunities linked to the country's economic conditions emerged as a notable issue.

Lastly, an analysis of mental health providers' reflections on sources of support when working at UCCs reveals the influence of micro and macrosystem. When exploring sources of support, peer support and supervision from colleagues within their centers stood out as significant. These, along with support from family, friends, and personal resources, form part of their supportive microsystem. Moreover, participants highlighted the importance of macro-level support, such as societal recognition of their profession as prestigious and worthy of respect.

Not only what came out in responses with respect to ecological system layers but also what is missing can be informative. As Bone (2015) notes, exosystem-level policies not only influence employees' well-being but also produce practical outcomes that impact their work experiences. Yet, this study found that professional and national organizations within the participants' exosystem were not fulfilling a supportive role. Interestingly, macro level elements did not emerge in mental health providers' reflections on positive aspects of working at UCCs. While cultural and economic aspects seemed to impact their work experience in general and their

challenges in particular, they seemed to be missing as a contributor of what they appreciate at work. Political aspects were the least acknowledged of all macrosystem layers.

In conclusion, our findings reflect how different layers of context shape mental health providers' experience at UCCs and hence highlight the importance of examining the experiences of university mental health providers through a comprehensive conceptual framework. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory offers a valuable lens for in-depth understanding of these professionals' experiences, encompassing their positive encounters, challenges, needs, and resources at both individual and contextual levels.

5.1.7 Implications for counseling

University counseling centers function within larger institutional and societal contexts that affect their practices and effectiveness. While the current study focuses on experiences of mental health providers working at UCCs, our findings also have implications for counseling in general and counseling practice and training in particular. More specifically, our findings have the potential to inform (1) the support these providers receive from the larger mental health community, (2) counselor training and professional development, and (3) advocacy efforts.

Mental health providers working outside of the university context play an important role for professionals working at UCCs. Some of these professionals reported having undergone their own therapy, and many indicated receiving supervision or engaging in consultation. Increasing mental health providers' knowledge about UCCs and the experiences of the professionals working there can positively influence the service and support they offer to this population. Moreover, a

deeper understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by professionals at UCCs can lead to developing more effective strategies to address their challenges and support their needs, which in turn can help them improve the quality of their services. Using the ecological model approach in understanding professionals' experiences highlights the significance of both personal factors and the broader context influencing these experiences. Counselors can adapt this model to bring a new perspective to the field of employee well-being.

Same can apply to counselor training and professional development efforts. Having a better understanding of the positive and challenging aspects of working at a UCC, along with what resources seem to be supportive of the providers, can inform counselor educators with respect to preparing their students to thrive in similar settings. Even the recognition of how personal and broader context shapes counselors' work experience can inform teaching on subjects such as self-care, professional development and self-advocacy. These insights can be beneficial for both prospective and present university counseling practitioners. Practitioners who are interested in working in the university counseling field would benefit from knowing what to expect in the field before starting their careers; they can develop strategies to manage potential challenges or maybe make more informed decisions as they explore their options. Simply knowing what to inquire about when starting a certain job can serve the mental health providers just beginning their careers at a UCC. Needs that were identified by the current study may also inform the professional development journey of mental health providers currently employed at UCCs. Input on what their colleagues at other UCCs appreciate about their work or what support elements they utilize may give professionals a different way to see their

work or new ways to receive support, which in turn has the potential to inform their wellness as well as the quality of the work they provide.

Last but not least, supporting potential advocacy efforts can be recognized as an important implication of the current study. Advocacy is a crucial component of counseling and should be incorporated into counselor training and professional practice (ACA, 2020). This study may help increase administrators' and various stakeholders' awareness of the working conditions and challenges faced by professionals in the field, while also enabling these professionals to utilize this knowledge for advocacy purposes. Mental health providers' active involvement in advocacy efforts is expected to contribute to systemic changes, such as increasing the number of staff in centers, enhancing resources, raising salaries to adequate levels, and improving physical working conditions. Ultimately, this study provides professionals with a helpful tool to engage in both self-advocacy and colleague advocacy. With the help of these advocacy efforts, attempts to establish better support systems for mental health providers may gain momentum.

This study can also promote a more supportive workplace culture by emphasizing the importance of relational dynamics, particularly the role of colleague support. Examining employees as agents within a system—both influenced by and actively shaping it—can provide practical insights for higher education systems and work/education policies.

This section discussed the broader implications of the study's findings for the counseling field, with a specific focus on professionals working at UCCs. The findings offer insights into enhancing support from the wider mental health community, improving counselor education and training, and advancing advocacy efforts. By adopting an ecological perspective, the study emphasizes the importance

of addressing both individual and systemic factors shaping practitioners' experiences. Building on these implications, the next section outlines the limitations of the study and offers a critical reflection on the scope and boundaries of its findings.

5.2 Limitations of the study

There are aspects of the current study that limits the findings' generalizability and trustworthiness. In this section, five distinct limitations of the study are highlighted. First, as with any qualitative study, caution is needed before attempting to generalize the findings. The shift in the sampling method further warrants attention. Participants were initially reached out through professional connections and then through recommendations of initially interviewed participants. While the study reached a group of participants who shared meaningful and relevant insights, general limitations associated with convenience sampling still applies. Additionally, using the snowball sampling method means that some participants were recruited based on recommendations from others, which may have influenced the diversity of perspectives. Therefore, the findings should be seen as an initial exploration rather than a representation of all UCC professionals' experiences. This study offers a valuable starting point for further research in this underexplored area.

Second, the sample shows an uneven distribution in terms of certain characteristics. All participants, except for one, are women and work in metropolitan areas, which presents a limitation. As a result, there is limited insight into the experiences of male professionals and those working at universities in smaller cities. Furthermore, only three out of ten participants work at private universities, and two of them are employed at the same institution. For this reason, insufficient data were

gathered to identify similarities and differences between experiences at public and private universities. Additionally, all participants were employed as practitioners in their respective centers. Therefore, the study does not include the perspectives and experiences of directors.

Another limitation stems from the timing of the interviews, which were conducted during the summer period when counseling sessions were less frequent, and workloads were relatively lighter. It is possible that participants may not have fully conveyed the pace and demands of the academic term, as they were not experiencing the same scheduling pressures at the time of the interviews.

Fourth, member checking could not be performed due to time constraints during the data collection and analysis phases. The lack of participant validation may have limited opportunities to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations.

Lastly, although Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory was adopted as the theoretical framework, the study did not incorporate the PPCT model (2005), a later extension of this theory. This may be considered a limitation in terms of not fully capturing the dynamic and developmental aspects emphasized in the extended version of the framework.

5.3 Future recommendations

The current study intended to amplify the voices of mental health providers working in UCCs. Insights into their experiences and needs offer valuable implications for mental health professionals, policymakers, and researchers. In this section, we present and explain certain recommendations directed at these groups.

5.3.1 Recommendations for mental health professionals

As highlighted in the literature and reflected in the study's findings, the emotional and professional support university counseling professionals receive from their colleagues plays an essential role in their well-being. To improve the quality of their support, mental health professionals should enhance their knowledge, awareness, and skills related to this specific field. Furthermore, these professionals can contribute to advocacy efforts aimed at increasing awareness of the unique challenges and needs of this group, providing support from a different perspective.

In efforts to raise awareness, it is essential to emphasize the context-specific experiences of UCC professionals while also highlighting the critical importance of their roles for students and other university staff. Additionally, these professionals can take an active role in establishing professional associations, which could collectively address challenges, advocate for better working conditions, and make improvements in their field. Such associations would also foster connections among practitioners and promote a sense of unity and solidarity.

Finally, professionals in this field can utilize self-care practices to manage the challenges they face, such as attending therapy, seeking supervision, or engaging in personally beneficial routines. Addressing work-related stress and burnout is equally important, and tailored intervention methods, such as group sessions or mindfulness practices, could be developed to meet the specific needs of university mental health practitioners.

5.3.2 Recommendations for policymakers

According to Bronfenbrenner and Bone's conceptualizations, laws and policies at the macrosystem level have a significant shaping effect on the experiences of

professionals working in the field of university mental health. As revealed by this study, mental health professionals in university settings face numerous challenges. Systemic improvements would help ease these challenges and make support resources more accessible in this context.

The findings indicate that counseling centers face multilayered issues due to resource limitations, resulting in increased workloads for the professionals. Prioritizing mental health services and allocating more resources through policymaker initiatives could enhance the quality of these services. Additionally, funding research and education in this field would create the necessary conditions for further development.

Lastly, participants in this study pointed out the lack of shared standards across the field. Professionals' experiences are largely shaped by the conditions of their individual centers. Developing national standards, with input from experts, to establish minimum requirements and ensure consistency across centers would be a significant step forward in improving professionals' experiences.

5.3.3 Recommendations for researchers

This study used a qualitative research method with a small number of participants to gain insights into the experiences of mental health professionals working in UCCs in Türkiye. Future studies should involve a larger sample size to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Data obtained from such studies could contribute to the development of interventions that better address the needs of professionals in this field.

In addition to reaching to larger samples, ensuring sample heterogeneity should be a priority. This would make it possible to explore the experiences of

professionals working under diverse conditions—such as where the university is located (rural vs. urban), the number of professionals employed at the center (from single counselors to large teams), the size of the university in terms of student population (small, mid-sized, or large), how the university is funded (public vs. private), and how long the counseling center has been established (newly founded vs. long-standing). Expanding the scope of research could also involve examining how individual characteristics such as age, gender, educational background, and professional roles (e.g., having administrative duties or serving as the director) shape these professionals' experiences. Including such variation would help reveal context-specific experiences, challenges, and needs, thereby enabling the design of more tailored and effective interventions.

Moreover, in this study, participants were interviewed only once during the summer, a period that does not fully reflect their typical workload or the intensity of their responsibilities during busier academic terms. Conducting longitudinal studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding by capturing how varying levels of workload intensity and different career stages impact these professionals' experiences over time. In addition, future research could explore how mental health professionals' experiences in UCCs influence the quality and effectiveness of the services they provide. Understanding this relationship may offer important insights for improving service delivery in university settings.

Professionals in the mental health field are known to be susceptible to concerns such as secondary traumatization and compassion fatigue (Figley, 1995; Mathieu, 2007). While the current study did not specifically inquire about the mental health implications of working at a UCC, participants did not refer to such concerns when reflecting on their work-related challenges. Future research could explore in

what ways this particular group of professionals experience these issues in relation to their work. Investigating the extent to which mental health providers at UCCs face secondary trauma or compassion fatigue, and whether contextual factors or institutional resources act as protective elements, may help deepen our understanding of their experiences and needs.

Throughout the interviews conducted for the current study, macrosystem factors inquired through clarifying questions that combined cultural, economic and political influences. Yet, while participants reflected on cultural and economic factors, they did not provide answers regarding political influences. This may be the result of combining different macrosystem factors together in one question or sensitive nature of the topic. Whatever the reason might be, future studies may benefit from exploring the impact of political climate and experiences on mental health providers' work experiences. Making specific inquiries may facilitate our understanding.

While the current study mainly focused on the micro- and macro-level contexts of UCC professionals, future research could also explore the chronosystem. Looking into how broader historical events or long-term institutional changes—such as evolving student profiles or shifts in university policies—affect these professionals may offer a deeper understanding of their work. Considering the significant changes in Türkiye's higher education system in recent decades, including state interventions and reforms impacting university autonomy and academic freedom (Hünler, 2025), it would be valuable to examine how such developments influence the everyday experiences of mental health providers working in university settings.

Finally, future research could take a closer look at the university years themselves as a unique developmental period. This phase is often filled with academic, social, and emotional transitions that shape how students cope, seek help, and engage with mental health services (Duffy et al., 2019; Hotez et al., 2021). Exploring how UCC professionals experience and respond to these transitions in students' lives might offer important insight—not just into student needs, but also into the evolving responsibilities and emotional demands placed on practitioners working in these settings.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of mental health professionals working at UCCs in Türkiye through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The findings revealed that these professionals faced various challenges, like resource limitations, high workloads, and a lack of shared professional standards. At the same time, participants highlighted positive aspects of their work, including professional satisfaction and meaningful client relationships. Their expressed needs, such as clearer role definitions, increased institutional support, and improvements in economic conditions, further pointed to areas for development. Overall, both individual factors and contextual influences shaped their experiences, highlighting the complex nature of their work environments.

The study also revealed that mental health professionals utilized various sources of support to cope with the challenges of working at a UCC. Support from colleagues and personal relationships, supervision, thought processes, and self-care practices were emphasized as critical resources. Furthermore, the study suggested

that advocacy efforts, including raising awareness about the challenges faced by these professionals, could contribute to systemic changes, such as better working conditions, increased resources, and improved professional networks.

Upon examining the current study's findings within the context of existing literature, similarities were identified between the experiences of mental health professionals in Türkiye and those in other parts of the world. Nonetheless, specific difficulties relevant to the cultural and institutional context of Türkiye were recognized, including insufficient institutional support from governing entities such as YÖK and the contextual differences in working conditions among universities.

In accordance with Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework, the results demonstrated the influence of microsystems, such as close relationships, alongside broader systems, including mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems. The connection among various systems was apparent in the results, highlighting the necessity of implementing a comprehensive framework to understand professionals' experiences in future research better.

Finally, the current study's findings may provide valuable insights for mental health professionals, policymakers, and researchers. By giving voice to the experiences and needs of university counseling professionals, this research emphasizes the importance of recognizing and supporting their work. It also discusses the implications for systemic advocacy, improved training opportunities, and the development of targeted interventions to address the challenges faced and needs expressed by these professionals.

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM (ENGLISH)

Demographic Information Form

The psychological counseling center I work at is affiliated with a state university.	☐ Yes ☐ No
The university that the center is affiliated with is located in a major city.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Our psychological counseling center has been operating for at least five years.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Name - Surname	
Phone number	
E-mail address	
Preferred way of communication	☐ Phone ☐ Message ☐ E-mail
Age	
Gender	
Marital status	☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐ Separated ☐ In a relationship ☐ Single ☐ Prefer not to answer
Professional title	
Name of the undergraduate program	
Name of all graduate programs attending or graduated, if applicable	
Year of graduation from the latest degree	
Highest degree obtained	☐ Bachelor's degree ☐ Master's degree ☐ Doctorate
Specialty areas (you can select more than one). <i>If your specialty is not listed, please feel free to write it down.</i>	☐ Addiction / Substance Abuse ☐ Career Counseling ☐ Clinical Psychology ☐ Psychological Counseling ☐ Child and Adolescent ☐ General Population ☐ Adult ☐ University Counseling ☐ Community Mental Health ☐ Crisis and Trauma ☐ Eating Disorders ☐ Marriage and Family Therapy/Counseling ☐ Academic Concerns ☐ Preventive Services ☐ Social Assistance

	☐ Other
If your specialty area is not listed above and you would like to add it, you can write it here.	
How many years of practice/psychological support experience do you have?	
How many years of experience do you have in a university counseling center?	
Approximately how many students are studying at the university where your center is located?	
How many mental health professionals are working at the university counseling center where you work?	
What is the total number of employees, including management and administrative staff, at the university counseling center where you work?	
How long have you been working at this university counseling center?	
What is your current role at the center? (If you hold a leadership position, please specify).	
Which of the following mental health-related services do you currently provide as part of your role? (You can select all that apply).	☐ Individual counseling ☐ Group therapy/group counseling ☐ Providing information during the orientation process ☐ Presentations/trainings ☐ Emergency assistance/crisis management ☐ Consultation with administrative and/or academic staff ☐ Referrals to different mental health services ☐ Other
If you conduct individual sessions at your center, what is the average number of individual clients you see per week?	
If there are other practitioners working at the center, what is the average total number of individual clients served by the center in a week?	
Please specify the official committee or commission work you are currently involved in.	
Please specify any additional training you have received related to your professional role and responsibilities. <i>(We kindly ask you to focus on training programs lasting at least one day or longer when answering this question.)</i>	

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM (TURKISH)

Demografik Bilgi Formu

Çalıştığım psikolojik danışmanlık merkezi bir devlet üniversitesine bağlıdır.	☐ Evet ☐ Hayır
Merkezin bağlı olduğu üniversite bir büyükşehirde yer almaktadır.	☐ Evet ☐ Hayır
Psikolojik danışmanlık merkezimiz en az beş yıldır faaliyet göstermektedir.	☐ Evet ☐ Hayır
İsim- Soy isim	
Telefon numarası	
E-posta adresi	
Tercih edilen iletişim kanalı	☐ Telefon ☐ Mesaj ☐ E-posta
Yaş	
Cinsiyet	
Medeni durum	☐ Evli ☐ Boşanmış ☐ Dul ☐ Ayrılmış ☐ İlişkisi var ☐ Bekar ☐ Belirtmeyi tercih etmiyorum
Profesyonel unvan	
Mezun olunan lisans programı	
Varsa, devam edilen veya mezun olunan tüm lisansüstü programların adı	
En son aldığınız derece için mezuniyet yılı	
Alınan en yüksek derece	☐ Lisans ☐ Yüksek lisans / master ☐ Doktora
Uzmanlık alanları (birden fazla seçeneği işaretleyebilirsiniz) <i>Uzmanlık alanınız listede yer almıyorsa, lütfen yazmaktan çekinmeyin.</i>	☐ Bağımlılık / Madde Kötüye Kullanımı ☐ Kariyer Danışmanlığı ☐ Klinik Psikoloji ☐ Psikolojik Danışmanlık ☐ Çocuk ve Ergen ☐ Genel Popülasyon ☐ Yetişkin ☐ Üniversite Danışmanlığı ☐ Toplum Ruh Sağlığı ☐ Kriz ve Travma ☐ Yeme Bozuklukları ☐ Evlilik ve Aile Terapisi/Danışmanlığı

	☐ Akademik Kaygılar ☐ Önleyici Hizmetler ☐ Sosyal Yardım ☐ Diğer
Uzmanlık alanınız yukarıdaki listede yer almıyorsa ve eklemek isterseniz buraya yazabilirsiniz.	
Kaç yıllık uygulama / psikolojik destek verme deneyiminiz bulunmakta?	
Kaç yıllık üniversite danışmanlık merkezi deneyiminiz bulunmakta?	
Merkezinizin bulunduğu üniversitede yaklaşık kaç öğrenci öğrenim görmektedir?	
Çalıştığınız üniversite danışmanlık merkezinde kaç adet ruh sağlığı çalışanı bulunmaktadır?	
Çalıştığınız üniversite danışmanlık merkezinde yönetim ve idari kadrolar dahil toplam çalışan sayısı kaçtır?	
Ne kadar süredir bu üniversite danışmanlık merkezindeki çalışmaktasınız?	
Merkezde şu andaki rolünüz nedir? (Liderlik pozisyonunuz varsa lütfen belirtiniz).	
Aşağıdaki ruh sağlığıyla ilgili hizmetlerden hangilerini şimdiki rolünüz kapsamında sunmaktasınız? (Size uyan her seçeneği işaretleyebilirsiniz).	☐ Bireysel görüşme ☐ Grup terapisi / grup danışmanlığı ☐ Oryantasyon sürecinde bilgilendirme ☐ Sunum / eğitim ☐ Acil durum yardımı / kriz yönetimi ☐ İdari ve / veya akademik kadroyla konsültasyon ☐ Farklı ruh sağlığı hizmetlerine yönlendirme ☐ Diğer
Çalıştığınız merkezde bireysel görüşme yapıyorsanız, haftalık gördüğünüz bireysel danışan sayısı ortalama olarak kaçtır?	
Merkezde çalışan başka uygulamacılar da varsa, merkez toplamında bir haftada ortalama kaç bireysel danışana hizmet sunulmaktadır?	
Lütfen güncel olarak katıldığınız resmi komite veya komisyon çalışmalarını belirtiniz.	
Lütfen mesleki rolünüz ve sorumluluklarınızla ilgili olarak aldığınız ek eğitimleri belirtiniz. (Bu soruyu cevaplarken en az bir gün veya daha uzun süreli eğitim programlarına odaklanmanızı rica edeceğiz.)	

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (ENGLISH)

As part of the interview date scheduling process, the participant will have provided written consent and answered demographic questions. At the beginning of the interview, the participant will have confirmed that they understand their rights and responsibilities regarding the research. At the start of the interview, participants will receive information about their basic rights, such as confidentiality and the ability to stop participation at any point. Verbal consent will then be obtained again, reminding participants of the necessary information for audio recording. With the participant's consent, the following questions will be asked, and clarifying questions may be asked to enrich the data collection process when necessary.

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe the unit in which you are currently working in detail: What is the structure of the unit? Who do you work with? How is the division of labor done?

- a. Can you tell me about your physical working conditions and social rights?

Clarifying question:

Do you have facilities like transportation, shuttle service, food, etc.?

- b. How is the relationship of the center to the rest of the university? Are there departments you work with? What kind of collaborations do you have?
 - c. What are the economic, political, social, and cultural dynamics affecting the center's work?
2. What are your duties and responsibilities at the center?

- a. What are the services you spend the most time on?
 - b. (To be asked to those who currently see clients) What are the student goals and needs you work with most often? What topics do you work with most of the time?
3. What are the benefits of working at a university psychological counseling center for you?

Clarifying questions:

- a. Are there any personal benefits for you?
 - b. Are there any financial benefits for you?
 - c. Are there any benefits for you from a relational point of view, arising from the people you interact with, work with, or provide services to?
 - d. Are there any benefits for you in terms of the way the center is structured/managed?
 - e. Are there any good aspects for you that come from working with students?
 - f. Are there any professional benefits for you regarding your career path?
 - g. Are there any benefits for you in terms of your physical working conditions?
4. What are the challenging aspects of working in a university counseling center for you?

Clarifying questions:

- a. Are there any personal challenges for you?
- b. What are the financial challenges of working in a university counseling center? Are there any financial challenges for you?
- c. Are there any challenges for you from a relational perspective arising from the people you interact with, work with, or provide services to?
- d. Are there any structural/managerial challenges for you?

- e. Are there any challenges for you in terms of working with students?
 - f. Are there any challenges for you that stem from emotionally charged or life-threatening experiences (e.g., suicide, substance abuse, trauma)?
 - g. Are there any challenges for you in terms of your career journey?
 - h. Are there any challenges for you in terms of the presence or absence of regulations and expectations from higher levels of management, such as the Higher Education Council or professional associations?
 - i. Are there any challenges for you arising from your physical working conditions?
5. Considering the challenges you mentioned, or looking from a broader perspective, what are your needs as a university counseling center employee? Who do you think can meet these needs, and in what ways? It could be your immediate circle, your colleagues, the administration, higher levels of management such as the Higher Education Council, or professional associations.
6. What are the supportive elements that make it easier for you to cope with the challenging experiences of working in a university counseling center?

Clarifying questions:

- a. Are there any thoughts and behaviors that support you in dealing with work-related challenges?
- b. Is there any support you receive from your close circle/relationships in dealing with difficulties?
- c. Is there any support you receive from the center and your colleagues in dealing with challenges?
- d. Is there any support you receive from the university you work at in dealing with challenges?

- e. Is there any support you receive from professional colleagues outside the center where you work, including relevant professional organizations, in dealing with challenges?
 - f. Is there any support you receive from higher levels of management, such as the Council of Higher Education or professional associations, in dealing with the challenges?
 - g. Is there any support you receive from the physical conditions, spaces, or nature of the office or campus in dealing with the challenges?
 - h. Is there any support you receive from the prevalent economic, political, or cultural dynamics in society when dealing with challenges?
7. Do you have anything to add about your experience as a psychologist/psychological counselor working in a university counseling center?
- Is there anything we haven't covered?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (TURKISH)

Görüşme tarihinin belirlenmesi sürecinin parçası olarak katılımcı yazılı onam vermiş ve demografik soruları cevaplamış olacaktır. Görüşmeye başlarken katılımcı araştırmaya dair hak ve sorumluluklarını öğrendiğine dair onam vermiş olacaktır. Bununla birlikte görüşmenin başında katılımcılara temel hakları (gizlilik, katılımı istediği noktada durdurma gibi) bilgisi verilecek, ardından görüşmenin sesli olarak kaydedilmesi için gerekli bilgiler hatırlatılarak tekrar sözlü izin alınacaktır. Katılımcının onayı ile aşağıdaki sorular sorulacaktır. Gerekli görüldüğünde açıcı sorular da sorularak veri toplama süreci zenginleştirilecektir.

Görüşme Soruları

1. Şu anda çalıştığınız birimi ayrıntılı anlatabilir misiniz: Birimin yapılanması nasıldır, kimlerle çalışmaktasınız? Nasıl bir iş bölümü vardır?
 - a. Fiziksel çalışma koşullarınızdan ve sosyal haklarınızdan bahseder misiniz?Açıcı soru:

Ulaşım, servis imkânı, yemek gibi imkanlarınız var mıdır?

 - b. Merkezin üniversitenin geri kalanıyla ilişkisi nasıl? Birlikte çalıştığınız departmanlar var mı? Ne tür iş birlikleri yapıyorsunuz?
 - c. Merkezin çalışmasını etkileyen ekonomik, politik, toplumsal ve kültürel dinamikler nelerdir?
2. Sizin merkezdeki görev ve sorumluluklarınız nelerdir?
 - a. En çok vakit ayırdığınız hizmetler nelerdir?
 - b. (Aktif danışan görenlere sorulmak üzere) Sıklıkla çalıştığınız öğrenci hedef ve ihtiyaçları nelerdir? Çoğunlukla hangi konularla çalışıyorsunuz?

3. Üniversite danışmanlık merkezinde çalışmanın size iyi gelen yanları nelerdir?

Açıcı sorular:

- a. Sizin için kişisel açıdan iyi yönleri var mıdır?
- b. Sizin için maddi açıdan iyi yönleri var mıdır?
- c. Sizin için ilişkisel açıdan, etkileşimde olduğunuz, beraber çalıştığınız ya da hizmet sunduğunuz kişilerden kaynaklanan iyi yönleri var mıdır?
- d. Sizin için merkezin yapılandırılışına/yönetimine dair iyi yönleri var mıdır?
- e. Sizin için öğrencilerle çalışıyor olmaktan kaynaklanan iyi yönleri var mıdır?
- f. Sizin için kariyer yolculuğunuza ilişkin mesleki faydaları var mıdır?
- g. Sizin için fiziksel çalışma koşullarınız açısından iyi yönleri var mıdır?

4. Üniversite danışmanlık merkezinde çalışmanın sizin için zorlayıcı yanları nelerdir?

Açıcı sorular:

- a. Sizin için kişisel açıdan zorlayıcı yönleri var mıdır?
- b. Bir üniversite danışmanlık merkezinde çalışmanın maddi olarak zorlayıcı yönleri nelerdir? Sizin için maddi açıdan zorlayıcı yönleri var mıdır?
- c. Sizin için ilişkisel açıdan etkileşimde olduğunuz, beraber çalıştığınız ya da hizmet sunduğunuz kişilerden kaynaklanan zorlayıcı yönleri var mıdır?
- d. Sizin için yapısal/yönetimsel kaynaklı zorlayıcı yönleri var mıdır?
- e. Sizin için öğrencilerle çalışıyor olmaktan kaynaklanan zorlayıcı yönleri var mıdır?
- f. Sizin için duygusal açıdan yüklü ya da hayati risk taşıyan deneyimlerden kaynaklanan zorlayıcı yönleri var mıdır? (İntihar, madde kullanımı, taciz, travma gibi)
- g. Sizin için kariyer yolculuğunuz açısından zorlayıcı yönleri var mıdır?

- h. Sizin için YÖK ya da meslek birlikleri gibi üst yönetim kademelerinden gelen düzenleme ve beklentilerin varlığı ya da yokluğu açısından zorlayıcı yönleri var mıdır?
- i. Sizin için fiziksel çalışma koşullarınızdan kaynaklanan zorluklar var mıdır?
5. Bahsettiğiniz zorlukları göz önünde bulundurduğunuzda ya da daha geniş bir perspektiften baktığınızda, bir üniversite danışma merkezi çalışanı olarak ihtiyaçlarınız nelerdir? Bu ihtiyaçları kimler ne şekilde karşılayabilir diye düşünüyorsunuz? Yakın çevreniz, meslektaşlarınız, yönetim, YÖK veya meslek birlikleri gibi daha üst düzey yönetim kademeler olabilir.
6. Üniversite danışmanlık merkezinde çalışmanın zorluklarıyla başa çıkmanızı kolaylaştıran destekleyici unsurlar nelerdir?

Açıcı sorular:

- a. İşle ilgili zorluklarla başa çıkmanıza destek veren düşünce ve davranışlar var mıdır?
- b. Zorluklarla başa çıkarken yakın çevrenizden/ ilişkilerinizden aldığınız bir destek var mı?
- c. Zorluklarla başa çıkarken çalıştığınız merkezden ve çalışma arkadaşlarınızdan aldığınız bir destek var mı?
- d. Zorluklarla başa çıkarken çalıştığınız üniversiteden aldığınız bir destek var mı?
- e. Zorluklarla başa çıkarken ilgili meslek kuruluşları da dahil olmak üzere çalıştığınız merkez dışındaki profesyonel meslektaşlarınızdan aldığınız bir destek var mı?
- f. Zorluklarla başa çıkarken YÖK veya meslek birlikleri gibi üst yönetim kademelerinden aldığınız bir destek var mı?

- g. Zorluklarla başa çıkarken ofisin ya da kampüsün fiziksel koşullarından, mekanlarından ya da tabiatından aldığınız bir destek var mı?
 - h. Zorluklarla başa çıkarken topluma hâkim olan ekonomik, politik ya da kültürel dinamiklerden aldığınız bir destek var mı?
7. Sizin üniversite danışmanlık merkezinde çalışan bir psikolog/psikolojik danışman olma deneyiminize dair eklemek istediğiniz var mı? Kapsamadığımız bir konu kaldı mı?



APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Supporting Institution: Boğaziçi University

Title of the Study: Being a Mental Health Provider at a University Counseling

Center: Experiences, Challenges, and Sources of Support

Principal Investigator: Dr. Gizem Toska

Email Address:

Phone:

Researcher: Esma Adem

Email Address:

Phone:

Dear Participant,

Purpose: This study aims to understand the work experiences of professionals working at university counseling centers, the challenges they face, and the sources of support they utilize to cope with these challenges.

Duration: Participation in this study will involve three phases, lasting a total of 65–75 minutes. If you decide to participate after reading this information form, you will be asked to spend approximately 4–5 minutes filling out a demographic information form, 50–60 minutes for an online interview, and 10–12 minutes reviewing a summary of your contributions and providing feedback.

Participant Rights and Responsibilities: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. There is no monetary compensation or reward for participating. By reading and approving this form, you indicate your agreement to participate in the study. However, you have the right to decline participation or withdraw at any time during the study. If you decide to withdraw after beginning the study, the data you have provided up to that point will not be included in the study and will be securely deleted.

Potential Risks and Benefits: Participation in this study does not pose any risks. By answering the research questions, you may benefit from reflecting on your professional experiences, assessing your current challenges and support resources, and increasing your awareness of your professional journey.

Confidentiality and Data Protection: This research is conducted for scientific purposes, and participant confidentiality is prioritized. Audio recordings will be made during the interviews, and participant identities will be protected by using numbers instead of names in these recordings. The audio recordings will be stored on an encrypted computer during the research project and will only be accessible to the researcher conducting the interviews. At the end of the research, all personal data, including audio recordings, will be securely deleted. Personal information will be

anonymized and used in an aggregated form. Your personal information will not be shared with any third parties or institutions. Data collected through the Demographic Information Form and information about your name or workplace will be stored separately. During data storage, analysis, and the publication of the thesis, your workplace name and personal information will not appear in written form.

Contact Information: If you would like additional information about the research project, please contact the psychological counselor conducting this study, Esma Adem, using the contact information provided above. For inquiries regarding your rights in this study, you may also contact Boğaziçi University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

“I have read the above information, which must be provided to participants prior to the study. I understand the scope, purpose, potential risks and benefits, and the voluntary nature of the study, including my rights and responsibilities as a participant. I am assured that my personal information will be handled with care. I understand who I can contact if necessary. By checking the box marked ‘Yes’ below and providing my name, I voluntarily agree to participate in this study under the stated conditions, without any pressure or coercion. I confirm that the information I provide belongs to me.”

☐ Yes, I agree with the statements above.

“I have read the above information, which must be provided to participants prior to the study, regarding the audio recording of interviews. I am assured that these recordings will be handled with care. I understand who I can contact if necessary. By checking the box marked ‘Yes’ below and providing my name, I voluntarily consent to audio recordings in this study under the stated conditions, without any pressure or coercion. I confirm that the information I provide belongs to me.”

☐ Yes, I agree with the statements above.

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM (TURKISH)

KATILIMCI BİLGİ VE ONAM FORMU

Araştırmayı destekleyen kurum: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi
Araştırmanın adı: Üniversite Psikolojik Danışmanlık Merkezi'nde Ruh Sağlığı
Çalışanı Olmak: Deneyimler, Zorluklar ve Destek Kaynakları
Yürütücüsü: Dr. Gizem Toska
E-posta adresi:
Telefonu:
Araştırmacının adı: Esmâ Adem
E-posta adresi:
Telefonu:

Sayın Katılımcı,

Amaç: Bu çalışma ile üniversitelerin psikolojik danışmanlık merkezlerinde çalışan uzmanların iş deneyimleri, karşılaştıkları zorluklar ve bu zorluklarla başa çıkarken faydalandıkları destek kaynaklarının anlaşılması amaçlanmaktadır.

Süre: Araştırmaya katılım üç ayrı aşamada gerçekleşecek ve toplamda 65-75 dakika sürecektir. Bu bilgilendirme formunu okuduktan sonra çalışmaya katılmaya karar vermeniz halinde doldurmanız gereken demografik bilgi formu için yaklaşık 4-5 dakika, çevrimiçi yapılacak mülakat için 50-60 dakika ve paylaşımlarınızın özetinin üzerinden geçip geribildirim vereceğiniz kısa görüşme için 10-12 dakika ayırmanızı rica etmekteyiz.

Katılımcı hak ve sorumlulukları: Bu çalışmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Çalışmaya katılma durumunuzda herhangi bir ücret veya ödül söz konusu değildir. Bu formu okuyup onaylamanız, araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz anlamına gelecektir. Ancak, çalışmaya katılmama veya katıldıktan sonra herhangi bir anda çalışmayı bırakma hakkına da sahipsiniz. Çalışmaya başladıktan sonra bırakmaya karar vererseniz, o zamana kadar paylaştığınız veriler çalışmaya dahil edilmeyecek ve güvenli olarak silinecektir.

Muhtemel risk ve faydalar: Çalışmaya katılmak potansiyel olarak herhangi bir risk taşımamaktadır. Araştırma sorularının yanıtlanması ile çalışma deneyimleriniz üzerine düşünme, mevcut zorluklarla birlikte destek kaynaklarınızı değerlendirme ve mesleki yolculuğunuz üzerine farkındalığınızın artması gibi faydalar elde etmeniz mümkündür.

Gizlilik ve verilerin korunması: Bu araştırma bilimsel bir amaçla yürütülmekte olup katılımcı bilgilerinin gizliliği esas tutulmaktadır. Görüşmeler sırasında ses kaydı alınacak; ses kayıtlarında katılımcı kimliklerini korumak için isimler yerine numaralar kullanılacaktır. Ses kayıtları araştırma projemiz süresince şifreli bir bilgisayarda saklanacak ve kayıtlar yalnızca sizinle mülakatları gerçekleştiren

araştırmacının erişimine açık olacaktır. Araştırma süresi sona erdiğinde ses kayıtları da dahil olmak üzere bütün kişisel veriler güvenli bir şekilde silinecektir. Kişiyi dair bilgiler anonimleştirilmiş ve birleştirilmiş olarak kullanılacaktır. Kişisel bilgilerinizin başka şahıs ya da kurumlarla paylaşılması söz konusu değildir. Demografik Bilgi Formu ile alınan bilgiler ve isim-çalışılan kurum bilgileri ayrı bir şekilde saklanacaktır. Veri saklama, analiz ve tezin yayınlanma aşamalarının hiçbirinde çalıştığınız kurum adı ve kişisel bilgileriniz yazılı olarak geçmeyecektir.

İletişim: Araştırma projesi hakkında ek bilgi almak isterseniz lütfen bu tez araştırmasını yürüten psikolojik danışman Esma Adem ile iletişime geçiniz. Kendisinin erişim bilgileri yukarıda yazılıdır. Bu çalışmadaki haklarınızla ilgili olarak Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimler İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'na da danışabilirsiniz.

“Yukarıda yer alan ve araştırmadan önce katılımcıya verilmesi gereken bilgileri okudum. Katılmam istenen çalışmanın kapsamını, amacını, muhtemel risk ve faydalarını ve gönüllü olarak hak ve sorumluluklarımı anladım. Kişisel bilgilerimin özenle korunacağı konusunda yeterli güven verildi. Gerekirse kimlerle iletişime geçebileceğim netleştirildi. Aşağıda yanında ‘Evet’ yazan kutuyu işaretleyerek ve ismini yazarak bahsedilen koşullarda söz konusu araştırmaya kendi isteğimle, hiçbir baskı ve telkin olmaksızın katılmayı kabul ediyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin şahsıma ait olduğunu teyit ediyorum.”

☐ Evet, yukarıda yazan ifadelere katılıyorum.

“Yapılacak görüşmelerde ses kaydı alınacağına ilişkin yukarıda yer alan ve araştırmadan önce katılımcıya verilmesi gereken bilgileri okudum. Bu kayıtların ihtiyatla korunacağına dair yeterli güven verildi. Gerek olduğunda kimlerle iletişime geçebileceğim bildirildi. Aşağıda yer alan ‘Evet’ yazan kutucuğu işaretleyerek ve ad-soyad yazarak belirtilen koşullarda söz konusu araştırmada ses kaydının alınmasını kendi rızamla, hiçbir baskı olmaksızın kabul ediyorum. Vermiş olduğum bilgilerin şahsıma ait olduğunu onaylıyorum.”

☐ Evet, yukarıda yazan ifadelere katılıyorum.

APPENDIX G

INFORMATIVE E-MAIL SHARED WITH POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

(ENGLISH)

Dear [Recipient],

My name is Esma Adem, and I am a master's student in the Psychological Counseling and Guidance program at Boğaziçi University. I am currently in the data collection phase for my thesis titled "Being a Mental Health Provider at a University Counseling Center: Experiences, Challenges, and Sources of Support."

With this study, I aim to shed light on the experiences of valued professionals like yourself who work at university counseling centers, where resources can often be limited and demand exceptionally high. By doing so, I hope to contribute to the limited body of knowledge in this field.

Under the supervision of my thesis advisor, Dr. Gizem Toska, I am conducting a qualitative study involving online interviews with mental health professionals. My goal is to reach professionals working at university counseling centers that are located in metropolitan cities, affiliated with public universities, and have been in service for at least five years. If you work at a center that meets these criteria, I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in the study involves three stages. In the first stage, after reviewing the informed consent form and giving your consent to participate, you will gain access to a Demographic Information Form, which will take about 4–5 minutes to complete. In the second stage, we will schedule a 50–60 minute interview via Google Meet, during which we will explore your experiences of working at a university counseling center, the rewarding and challenging aspects of this profession, and the resources you rely on to cope with those challenges. In the third and final stage, we will have a brief 10–12 minute meeting to hear your feedback on the summary of our interview.

Only audio recordings of the interviews will be taken, and these recordings will be securely stored on my password-protected personal computer. I will be the only person with access to these recordings and to the data matched with your identity. Ensuring the confidentiality of the data and your personal information is of utmost importance to us, and the measures we have taken to protect this information are detailed in the informed consent form.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please click the link below to access the informed consent form, where you can find detailed information about the study and the rights and responsibilities of participants.

LINK: _____

Thank you in advance for supporting this study, which we believe will make a significant contribution to the limited literature on university counseling in our country. I wish you success in your work.

Best regards,
Esma Adem



APPENDIX H

INFORMATIVE E-MAIL SHARED WITH POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

(TURKISH)

Merhabalar,

Ben Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Psikolojik Danışmanlık ve Rehberlik yüksek lisans programı öğrencisi Esmâ Adem. “Üniversite Psikolojik Danışmanlık Merkezi’nde Ruh Sağlığı Çalışanı Olmak: Deneyimler, Zorluklar ve Destek Kaynakları” başlıklı yüksek lisans tezim için veri toplama aşamasındayım.

Kaynakların oldukça sınırlı, talebin de bir o kadar yüksek olabildiği üniversite danışmanlık merkezlerinde çalışan siz değerli profesyonellerin deneyimlerine ufak da olsa ışık tutarak bu alandaki sınırlı bilgi birikimine katkıda bulunmayı hedefliyorum.

Tez danışmanım Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Gizem Toska gözetiminde nitel bir çalışma yapmaktayım. Ruh sağlığı çalışanları ile çevrimiçi olarak mülakatlar yapıyor olacağım. Büyük şehirlerde, devlet üniversiteleri bünyesinde bulunan ve en az 5 yıldır hizmet vermekte olan üniversite danışmanlık merkezlerinde görev alan ruh sağlığı çalışanlarına ulaşmayı hedeflemekteyim. Bu belirtilen özellikleri taşıyan bir üniversite danışmanlık merkezinde çalışıyorsanız sizi bu çalışmaya katılmaya davet etmek isterim.

Araştırmaya katılım üç aşamada gerçekleşiyor olacak. İlk aşamada, bilgilendirilmiş onam formunu inceleyip çalışmaya katılmak için onam verdiğiniz takdirde 4-5 dakika içinde cevaplayabileceğiniz Demografik Bilgi Formuna erişeceksiniz. İkinci aşamada müsaitliğinize göre belirlenen vakitte Google Meet platformu üzerinden buluşup üniversite psikolojik danışmanlık merkezinde çalışma deneyimi, bu mesleğin keyifli ve zorlayıcı tarafları ve bu zorlayıcı deneyimlerle baş ederken destek alınan kaynakları keşfetmek üzere 50-60 dakika sürecek bir görüşme gerçekleştireceğiz. Üçüncü ve son aşamada, görüşmelerimizin özetine dair yorumlarınızı duymak üzere 10-12 dakikalık kısa bir görüşme yapıyor olacağız.

Bu görüşmelerin yalnızca ses kaydı alınacak, kayıtlar benim kişisel şifre ile korunan bilgisayarımda tutulacak ve bu kayıtlara ve verdiğiniz cevapların kimlik bilgilerinizle eşleştirilmiş haline yalnızca benim erişimim olacaktır. Toplanan verilerin ve kişisel bilgilerinizin gizliliği bizler için son derece önemlidir ve bu verileri korumak için aldığımız tedbirler bilgilendirilmiş onam formunda detaylandırılmıştır.

Bu bilgiler ışığında katılımcı olmayı düşünürseniz aşağıdaki linke tıklayarak bilgilendirilmiş onam formuna ulaşabilir, çalışmamızın konusu ve katılımcıların hak ve sorumluluklarına dair detaylı bilgiye ulaşabilirsiniz.

LİNK: _____

Ülkemizde üniversite danışmanlığı alanındaki kısıtlı alan yazına önemli bir katkı sunacağına inandığımız bu çalışmaya desteğiniz için şimdiden teşekkür eder, çalışmalarınızda başarılar dilerim.

Esmâ Adem



APPENDIX I

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL



T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (Sbinarek)



Sayı : E-84391427-050.04-181729
Konu : 2024-15T Kayıt Numaralı Başvurunuz
Hakkında

28.05.2024

Sayın Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Gizem TOSKA

Tez danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz öğrenciniz Esmâ Adem'in "Working as a Mental Health Provider in a University Counseling Center: Experiences, Challenges, and Supportive Resources" başlıklı projesi ile Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (SBİNAREK)'e yaptığınız 2024-15T kayıt numaralı başvuru 23.05.2024 tarih ve 2024/04 sayılı kurul toplantısında incelenmiş ve projeye etik onay verilmesi uygun bulunmuştur.

Bu karar tüm üyelerin toplantıya on-line olarak katılımıyla ve oybirliği ile alınmıştır. Onay mektubu tüm üyeler adına Komisyon Başkanı tarafından e-imzalanmıştır. Bilgilerinizi rica ederiz.

Saygılarımızla,

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Işıl ERDUYAN
Kurul Başkanı

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Belge Doğrulama Kodu : 0ED9-HKK7-0KO1 Belge Doğrulama Adresi : <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/bogazici-universitesi-ebys>

Adres: 34342 Bebek-İSTANBUL

Telefon No:

e-Posta:

Kep Adresi: bogaziciuniversitesi@hs01.kep.tr

Fax No:

İnternet Adresi: www.bogazici.edu.tr

Bilgi için: Nurşen MUNAR

Mühendis

Telefon No:



APPENDIX J

QUOTATIONS (TURKISH)

1. (...) gitgide kiři sayısı azalıp başvurular arttıka- bizim bir gönüllü uzman ağıımız da var. Dıřarıdan hizmet veren, dođrudan ücretsiz bizim sistemimiz gibi yüz yüze için ofise de gelip burada (merkez adı)'i kullanan. Sonra bu uzmanlardan işte biz bir de ücretli ama öğrencilerin düşük, işte verebilecekleri ücretlerde destek alabilecekleri kontenjanları alıp onları bir de işte buradaki sırayı beklemek istemezlerse onlara yönlendiriyoruz. Böyle de bir uzman ağıımız var yani. (P6)
2. Hepimizin ayrı ayrı odaları var hani bu gerçekten önemli. Ee bazen psikologların odaları dahi olmuyor hastanelerde görüyoruz. Hepimizin özel alanları var. (P3)
3. Hem de bizim katımız biraz daha böyle bir bloğun en üst katında ve daha köşede kalıyor. Öyle olunca çok kalabalıktan uzak, çok göz önünden uzak bir nokta olunca insanlar daha kolay gelebiliyorlar, tercih edebiliyorlar. (P10)
4. Maalesef herhangi bir yan hak yok yani sadece maaş alıyorum. Düzenli alıyorum maaşıımı. Bazı iş yerlerinde hani bu da sıkıntı olabiliyor, geç yatırıyorlar, eksik yatırıyorlar vesaire. Onunla ilgili bu zamana kadar çok şükür bir sorun yaşamadım ama ekstra hiçbir hakkımız yok. (P9)
5. Yani en yoğun şekilde rektörlük ile, yurtla ve birimlerdeki hocalarla da temas halindeyiz. Onlara da hatta işte riskli bir durumdaki öğrenciyi nasıl tanırlar ve ne yapabilirler ile ilgili de bir kitapçık oluşturduk ve şimdi de onu işte dijitalle dökeceğiz falan. (P6)
6. (...) Öğrencilerden gelen yoğun bir talep varmış danışmanlık almakla alakalı. Öyle olunca doğrudan zaten benim takvimim dolmaya başladı ve o şekilde ilerledi. Sonrasında da açıkçası biraz şimdi de öğrencilerin çoğunu hani terapist rolüyle tanıdıktan sonra onlarla başka rollerde iletişim kurmakla ilgili benim de bazı çekincelerim oluştu. Dolayısıyla sadece bu odanın içerisinde kalmış oldu yani o ilişki birazcık. (P8)
7. Yani buradan hizmet almakla ilgili öğrencilerin ön yargıları mevcut. Ön yargılar dışında hani bu ön yargıları kırıp geldiklerinde de çözümsüzlük yaşayabiliyoruz. Yani onları psikolojik açıdan güçlendirme çalışması yaptığımızda güçlendirmeye hani yanıt alamadığımız durumlar oluyor.

Çünkü bir yaşadıkları hani dönecekleri hayatın, 4 yıllık süreçten sonra ya da 5 yıllık süreçten sonra, dönecekleri o aile profilinde “hocam ben bu söylediklerinizin hiçbirini yapamam” şeklinde geri dönüşler oluyor. O yüzden hani bazı vakalarda evet, çözümsüzlük yaşadığımız oluyor. (P2)

8. Aslında böyle son dönemde çığ gibi büyüyen bir psikolog, psikoterapist popülaritesi var. Yani hani böyle herkesin psikoloğu olmalı ve herkes çocukluk travmalarını çözmeli falan gibi bir mindset yerleşti ve onun tabii ki de etkilerini görüyoruz. (P6)
9. Bu öğrenciler de zaten yani hani belli düzeydeki öğrenciler ve kendilerine dair görmek istedikleri, merakları, soruları, varoluşsal sorgulamaları var. (...) aslında mesela ekip küçülüyor ama tanınırlığı da süreçte artıyor gibi gördüğüm kadarıyla. Bu da biraz o ihtiyaçla bağlantılı. İşte insanların artan bir kendini tanıma, anlamlandırma, var olan meselelerini görmeye çalışma... Bu bazen hakikaten işte bir semptom üstünden geliyor ama bazen de bu böyle biraz daha psikoterapinin işte merak uyandıran, cazibeli görüntüsüyle de olabiliyor. (P6)
10. (...) Bu şu açıdan da bize yardımcı oldu. Önceden öğrencilerin şehir dışında yaşayan öğrencilerimiz özellikle hani yaz tatili geldi mi giderlerdi. Yaz sonunda da tekrar dönerlerdi. Aradaki o 3 ay ne yapıyorlarsa hani haberimiz olmazdı. Hani anca mail atıyorsa ona yanıt vermek kadar olabiliyordu ama şimdi artık onlar gidiyor ama gittikleri yerden de bize online olarak bağlanabiliyorlar. Yaz tatillerinde de görüşmeleri bu şekilde sürdürebiliyoruz onlarla. Ha bu bizim yaz yoğunluğumuzu arttırmış oldu tabii ki ama bir yandan da hani öğrencilerin süreçten kopmaması adına da önemli bir katkısı oldu. (P4)
11. (...) Bu anlamda terapistle kurulan ilk teması biraz kolaylaştırıyor diye ben düşünüyorum. (P8)
12. Ya aslında ben cevap verdiğim gibi öğrencilere işte öyle şey lisenin PDR hocası vardır ya ben de üniversitenin osuyum işte diyebilirim. Aynı işte daha öğrencilere danışmanlık, psikolojik danışmanlık yapıyorum. (P1)
13. Sadece biz saat başı terapi görüyoruz. (P3)
14. Tabii ya insan sayısı kadar sorun var bildiğimiz gibi ve hakikaten üniversite örneklemini de o genel popülasyonu çok güzel temsil ediyor. Yani aşağı yukarı her sorun sanıyorum geliyordur. (P4)

15. En iyi gelen yanı şey bahçeye açılan camları :) yani şey kuş sesleri bilmiyorum yani. Evet, böyle bir şey var işte bizim ağaçlarla kaplı bir bahçe, taş binalardan uzak, ağaçlarla kaplı bahçeye bakıyoruz o kuş sesleri, yani danışanların oraya geldiklerinde o küçücük danışma odasına “Hocam rahatladım, kuş sesleri, doğa” ee camı açıyoruz e bir kar geliyor. E bir rüzgâr esiyor, bir bahar havası işte bir meyve ağaçları bir havuzumuz var orada. Danışanlara iyi geliyor, rahatlıyorum diyebiliyorlar. Biz de boş zamanlarımızda olabildiğince işte orada geçirdiğimiz için o binalara kapanıp kalmadığımız için fiziksel şartları benim en sevdiğim yanı, evet hıhı. (P5)
16. Onun dışında kampüste evet, hani baktığımız zaman şehir merkezinden uzakta çalışıyoruz ama hani kampüste daha izole bir ortam var, halktan izole bir ortam. Burada göletimiz var, göletin etrafında hani öğlen aralarında yürüyüş yapmak keyifli hani bir şehir merkezinde çalışıyor olsaydım ya da bir hastanede çalışıyor olsaydım böyle bir imkân olmayacaktı. (P2)
17. (...) yani her birimizin birer odasının olması bizim için gerçekten iyi, güzel bir şey. Ya hani şey değil yani bir danışan gelince birbirimizi beklemek zorunda değiliz. Herkes kendi görüşmesini kendi odasında yapabiliyor. (P4)
18. (...) istediğim gibi düzenleye de biliyorum. Ve hani bütün gün burada olduğum için, neredeyse evden daha fazla buradayım, o yüzden burayı güzelleştirmek ya da burada kendimi iyi hissetmek benim için de önemli. Var olduğum noktayı iyi hale getirmek ya da kendi gözümün iyi göreceği şekilde yani elimden geldiğince... (P10)
19. Bence öğrencilerle çalışmak yani üniversite öğrencileriyle hani en böyle şey ideal şey psikolog için hedef kitle diyebilirim. Hani şeyler ee gerçekten daha akli başında ve gerçekten taleple geliyorlar ve hani şeyler hani nasıl söyleyeyim açıklar biraz hani senden gelene. Şimdi mesela ergenler olsa şimdi kıyas olarak söylüyorum şeyler, nasıl söyleyeyim? Ergenler gelse biraz daha ya kapalılar ya ukalalar ya daha işte kibirliler ama o kırılmış bir çağda tam şey oluyor. O ukalalığın kırıldığı bir çağdaki insanlarla çalışıyorum, o güzel. (P1)
20. Hakikaten bu üniversiteyi kazanmak kolay değil ve birçoğu çok büyük fedakarlıklar yaparak ya da çok zorluklar yaşayarak buralara gelmiş durumda ve o mücadeleyi görmek buna tanıklık etmek o yollardan hani şey yapıyoruz ya- yani ben ikinci oturumlarımı hep şöyle bir arka planı konuşmaya ayırıyorum ve çok etkilenirim birçok hikâyeden. (...) Ve bu hikayelerle çalışıyor olmak, işlevselliği süren kişilerin kendi sorunlarını, çalışma konusundaki motivasyonuyla çalışmak bana her zaman çok iyi gelir. (P4)

21. (...) bir taraftan hani anneyim aynı zamanda hani kendi çocuklarım bağlamında da aa bir dakika ne neydi, ne hani bunu somut olarak görmek, bir gencin ağzından bunun çıkması işte bu beni böyle etkiliyor, ben böyle hissediyorum. Annem babam böyle davrandığında böyle arkadaşlar arasında işte şu şunu yaşamak böyle etkiliyor duymak o tarafımı da besleyen bir yer aslında. (P7)
22. Bir ikincisi de birazcık daha böyle onların ulaşabileceği biri olarak burada var oluyor olmak. Yani belki işte az önce konuştuğumuz gibi işte dışarıda gidemeyecek, arayacak bulacak kime gidecek, güvenemeyecek veya bütçe ayıramayacak ve vazgeçecek gibiyken burada hani çok rahat bir biçimde 2-3 hafta sonrasına bile olsa randevu alıp gelip görüşebiliyoruz. O yüzden de o anlamda böyle belki bir şeyleri ilk defa açtığı kişi olmak, belki onun hayatındaki ilk terapisti olmak, onu ilk bu anlamda dinleyen kişi olmak bana iyi geliyor açıkçası. (P8)
23. Bir yanıyla da bizde öyle bir zorlama yok yani eğer ki kişi bunu istiyorsa gelip kendisi randevu alıp bizimle görüşmeye geliyor. Hani yönlendirmeye gelen çok azdır. O yüzden de hani istemiyorsa zaten gelmez. E gelip karşıma oturuyorsa demek ki bir beklentisi var, bir isteği, bir motivasyonu var. O motivasyonu bazen niye geldiğimi bilmiyorum dese bile hani biraz konuştuğumuzda o çıkmaya başlıyor. Bunları birlikte keşfediyor olmak bana çok iyi gelir her zaman. (P4)
24. Ama hani 8 seansta dahi, bizim öyle bir limitimiz olduğundan bahsetmiştim, o duygu durumlarındaki değişimi görmek en çok bana tatmini sağlayan şey beni burada anlayan biri var güvenini duyduklarını görmek. Çünkü hani yine de ne olursa olsun 8 seansta var olan bir işte nevrotik düzeyde bir problem, psikotiğe zaten gelmiyorum ama nevrotik düzeyde bir problem ya da günlük yaşam problemleri de olsa genellikle az bir süre ama hani yalnız değilim, burada beni dinleyen biri var hissini aldıklarını görmek... Onların o rahatlamasını yaşadığını görmek bana çok iyi hissettiriyor. (P6)
25. En iyi gelen yanı, bir öğrencinin birinci sınıftan dördüncü sınıfa kadar, yani 4 yıl boyunca çok düzenli bir şekilde olmasa da o gelişimine eşlik etmeye çalışmak, özellikle en başta işte okula veya şehre adapte olmakla ilgili sıkıntılarla gelip artık dördüncü sınıfta işte mezun olma ve iş bulma kaygısıyla başa çıkmaya çalıştığını görmek ve aslında orada da ciddi gelişimler, yani daha önceki çalışmalarındaki gelişimleri kullanabildiğini görmek mesela beni çok duygulandırıyor. (P8)
26. (...) yani biz şey samimi bir ortam var. Resmi bir kurum gibi değiliz de birbirine yardımcı ... birlikte çalışabilen bir ortam var. Eminim işte memurların, uzmanların ya da çakılı kadrolu birilerinin olduğu bir ortam olsaydı onların daha görev bilinci olurdu. Biz daha çok öğrenme bilinciyle

hani o akademi- öğrenciymiş gibi ilerliyoruz. O avantaj sayılabilir yoksa eminim oraya işte bir memur, yıllar boyunca bunu yapacak birini koysaydık, onun bir tükenmişliği olabilirdi. Ya bir rehavet olabilirdi, belki de olmazdı bilmiyorum (...) Teşkilatlanmanın esnek olmasının işte o samimi ve destekleyici yönü bu olabilir belki. (P5)

27. Dışarıda birisiyle çalıştığımızda onun farklı kanallardaki ihtiyaçlarına temas edemiyoruz. Sadece işte psikolojik taraftan bir destek verebiliyoruz ama burada hukuki bir ihtiyaç varsa işte avukatlarla görüştürüyoruz, yurtla ilgili bir sorun varsa, işte dersle ilgili bir şey olduğunda hocalara yazıyoruz. Yani okul, kampüs içerisinde olan her şeyde biz bir şekilde yardımcı olabiliyoruz öğrenciye ve bu hakikaten bir uzmana da kendini daha güvende hissettiren bir şey. Ama bir klinikte seans verirken bunlar çok mümkün değil. Dolayısıyla o böyle hani biraz daha güvende ve iyi hissettiren bir şey oluyor öğrencilerin farklı ihtiyaçlarına da temas edebiliyor olmak. (P6)

28. (...) yetişkinlik döneminin bütün özelliklerini gördüğümüz bir kitleyle çalışıyoruz. Çok farklı farklı bölümlerden öğrenciler geliyor. Yani art arda birkaç görüşme yapıyoruz. Biri sanat tarihinden biri elektrik elektronik mühendisliğinden diğeri ne bileyim ziraat mühendisliğinden hani farklı farklı yerlere gidiyoruz. Farklı farklı şehirlere gidiyoruz o hikayelerle birlikte. Ben bazen şeyi bilir misiniz bilmiyorum. Michael Jackson'ın bir klibi vardı böyle sürekli olarak yüzler değişirdi ... Şimdi işte danışanla karşılıklı oturduğum zaman tamamen o şeyde sandalyede aynı sandalyede oturuyorlar ve yüzler değişiyor, hikayeler değişiyor sürekli. O yüzden şey diyorum hani ben tek bir yerde oturuyor ve çalışıyor gibi hissetmiyorum kendimi, sürekli olarak sanki dünya üzerinde dolaşıyor gibiyim bu görüşmeleri yaparken. Bu anlamda hani o kozmopolitlik, o çeşitlilik ve dediğim gibi gerçekten zeki insanlarla çalışıyor olmak. Bu çok iyi gelen bir şey. (P4)

29. Sonra eee son özellikle yani birkaç yıldır sanıyorum bir şeyi fark ettim: Yani burada aslında çalışma ortamım keyifli, güzel. Akademi de artık eski akademi değil, orada da hani olumlu olumsuz bir sürü şeyler duyuyoruz. Hastaneye bakıyorum, sağlık sistemi zaten göçtü. Orada da çok beni hani sanıyorum hastanede çalışsam testör olacağım. Çok da hani psikolog psikolog olmayacağım. Sonra baktım ki gerçekten şu an çalıştığım alanda, çalıştığım birimde hem psikolog olarak evet görüşmelerimi yapabiliyorum. Test uygulayacaksam, ben uygun görüyorsam uyguluyorum. E onun dışında işte derslere gidiyorum. Ne bileyim projelerde işte TÜBİTAK projesi vesaire gibi hani çalışmalarda yer alıyorum. İşte kitap bölümü yazıyorum, makale yazıyorum. Hani aslında yapmak istediğim her şeyi ben burada yapıyorum. (P4)

30. Şimdi öyle bir heves duyan ve buna ihtiyaç duyan kişilere kendi istediğim- işte şu konuda bir grup çalışması açsam nasıl olur, şu konuda bir içerik

oluştursam nasıl olur dediğim şeyleri deneyimleyebiliyor olmak benim kariyerim için de güzel bir şey. Yeni şeyleri deneme fırsatı oluşturuyor. (P6)

31. (...) beni hem kariyerimle ilgili yeni adımlar atmaya motive etti hem de o adımlarla ilgili birazcık daha böyle bir şeyler yapabilmem ile ilgili alan açtı burası. (P8)
32. Yine bir üniversite bünyesinde belki çalışıyor olmak prestijli duran ve sonrasında iş hayatında işime yarayacak bir şey olabilir diye tahmin ediyorum. Bu açıdan da istemiştım... (P9)
33. Tahtalara vurayım o konuda :) Yani çok gerçekten keyifli bir ekiple çalışıyorum. Yaşlarımız da birbirine çok yakın şu anda. (...) Ee ama şu an hani hem arkadaşlığımız yani iş dışındaki zamanlarda da iletişimimiz devam ediyor işte birlikte dışarı çıkarız, etkinlikler yaparız vesaire. Ee dediğim gibi belki yaşamın benzer dönemlerinde oluyor oluşumuz işte hayat yollarımızın benzerliği vesaire, hani bunlar da buna etki ediyor olabilir. Bu anlamda keyifli gerçekten şu anda burada çalışmak, sakın dingin ve keyifli geliyor. (P4)
34. Onun dışında şey var tabi hani böyle bir networkünüzün olması, sürekli etrafınızda şey var yani harala gürele çalışan, yayın yapmaya çalışan, işte aklıma şu geldi falan diyen bir network var ve bence bu çok besleyici bir yer. (P7)
35. Etkileşimde olduğumuz kişilerle aslında daha yakın temas kurabiliyoruz. Bence bu açıdan iyi bahsettiğiniz gibi. Yani dışarıda bir klinikte çalışıyor olsam muhtemelen daha az kişiyle karşılaşacağım ve temasım daha az olacak muhtemelen. (...) Birileriyle yemek yiyebiliyor olmak bence önemli bir şey yani. Çünkü dediğim gibi bir ofiste çalıştığında insan genellikle tek başına yemek yiyor. Çünkü seans saati denk gelmiyor, o gün kimin olacağı çok belli değil. Bizim işte saat diyelim ki bir olduysa kimle yemeğe gideceğimiz de belli. (P9)
36. Şöyle, şimdi tabii insan memur çocuğu olunca o bir kere hani sabitliği ya da nasıl diyeyim o tutarlılığı hani belki daha güvenli buluyor. O anlamda, yani devlet memuru olmanın ee güvencesi bana iyi gelen bir şey. (P4)
37. (...) yani odalarımıza kamera koymak dahi istedikleri bir yönetimdeyiz o yüzden ee bunu bu soruyu cevaplamak istemiyorum. (P3)
38. (...) böyle acil servis muamelesi bazen görmemiz gerekebiliyor. O bence büyük bir zorluk ama bu hani üniversitede çalışmanın getirdiği bir şey midir, yoksa bizim üniversitemizdeki hocaların ya da personelin psikoloğa

bakış açısıyla mi ilgilidir? Onu çok bilemiyorum. Yani şöyle uç örnek, yani bana göre uç örnekler, yaşandı. İşte bir öğrenci, tırnak içinde işte, sinir krizi geçiriyor, işte çılglık kıyamet işte bağılıyor işte nefes alamıyorum falan diye. Kantinde ama böyle bir anda acil acil diye beni arıyorlar. İşte neredesiniz, hani ne yapabileceğim yani? Hani yan tarafımız hastane mesela hani çok rahat bir şekilde götürülebilir. (...) Hani böyle bu tip beklentiler de oldu mesela birkaç kez ve tuhaftı ve zorlayıcıydı yani. Çünkü orada bir meslek elemanı olarak yapabileceğiniz çok bir şey yok. (P8)

39. Bence yönetsel sıkıntılar, bu tür şeyler beni çok rahatsız ediyor. Yani mesela bunlar olmasa ben mutlu mesut bu hayata devam edebilirim, sıkıntı yok ama bir müdahale ya da hiç anlaşılmayan bir müdahale belki beni rahatsız ediyor olabilir. Yani hiç olmayacak bir şeyin istenmesi. Ee işte bilmiyorum, yani ilk zamanlar vardı, şimdi onu şey yaptık, yani anlattık ve artık olmayacağına ikna ettik işte. (...) Bu da işte o bizim alanımızla ilgili hiçbir fikrin olmamasıyla ilgili olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bu durumlar beni zorladı. (P10)
40. Hani hâlâ şeyi kendi aramızda çok konuşuruz işte, mesela bizim yaptığımız işin kalitesi çok sorgulanmaz genelde sayı isterler bizden. İşte kaç tane görüşme yaptınız, kaç tane danışan geldi, kaç tane seminer verdiniz filan hani. Nitelikten çok nicelik ile ilgileniliyor olması can sıkıcı oluyor birçok zaman ya da işte kaçta girdiniz, kaçta çıktınız, imzanızı attınız mı yok kaçta gittiniz falan filan. Hani bu tip şeylerle karşılaşılıyor olmak can sıkıcı oluyor zaman zaman. Bunlar da artık alıştığımız şeyler deyip yönetimler gider biz kalırız deyip devam ediyoruz yani. (P4)
41. Ya şey var aslında hani doğrudan birimle alakalı değil de genel itibariyle memur olmakla alakalı benim bir derdim var. Yani hep aynı saatte kalkıp aynı saatte işten çıkmak çok bana robotik geliyor. (P7)
42. Yaptığımız şey gibi görülüyor ya görüşüyorsun bitiyor gibi. Ama aslında seans öncesi hazırlık var, seans sonrası var, onu bir taraftan bazen eve taşıyorsun zihninde, onu hâlâ düşünmeye, çalışmaya devam ediyorsun. (...) Ve hani bunun anlaşılmadığını, bilinmediğini düşünüyorum açıkçası. Hani sadece o hani o anki bir saat ayırmışsın gibi ama aslında işte eğitimler alıyorsun bir taraftan, arka planda o hem maddi hem manevi yükün devam ediyor ve buraların bilinmesini mesela çok isterdim. (P7)
43. Yani dediğim gibi hani buradaki zorlayıcı yönlerden bir tanesi yaptığınız işin 4 duvar arasında burada kalıyor olması. O yüzden insan hani bir göze ihtiyaç duyuyor dedim en başta da söylerken. O tip bir şeyi olabiliyor çünkü bazen çok güzel bir şey başarıyorsunuz mesela ve bunu alnınıza yazamayacağınıza göre hani kimse bilmiyor. Ya evet, hani belki bilmesi de

gerekmiyor ama insanoğlu yani hani bir takdir bekleyebilirsiniz bu noktada. (P8)

44. Hani şey oluyor hani oranın desteklemiyor oluşu hakikaten böyle bir gizleme isteği hani sanki yanlış bir şey yapıyormuşum gibi bir yer... (P7)
45. “Doğurup doğurup gelmiyorsun”. (P2)
46. Ee seans sayısı az açıkçası. O da biraz, belki terapi süreci açısından zorlayıcı faktörlerden birisi olabilir. Burada net bir şey olmadığı için şu açıdan da zorlayıcı oluyor. Benim zihnimdeki maksimum seans sayısı ile ekip arkadaşımın arasında büyük bir fark var. Ben daha kısa tutuyorum, arkadaşım daha uzun tutuyor. Böyle olunca da mesela nasıl bir sorunla karşılaşıyoruz biliyor musunuz? Yeni danışanı daha hızlı ben alabiliyorum çünkü ben bitirmiş oluyorum diyelim ki 12-15 seansta, o biraz daha yavaş gitmiş oluyor. (P9)
47. Yani eski olmasının artı yanlarını konuşmuştuk eksi yanı da buydu. Çok oturmuş bazı şeyler yani çayın nereden nasıl yapıldığına kadar hani işler bir yana bardaklar da böyledir falan gibi hani her şeyde. (P6)
48. Maddi olarak bir iyi yanı yok bence çünkü piyasanın çok altında fiyatlara çalışıyoruz. Yani çok bence ekonomik olarak bizi özgürleştiren bir hali yok buranın. Zaten bunu bilerek burada olmaya devam ediyoruz. Yani diğer avantajlara bakarak bu tür dezavantajları görmezden gelmeye çalışıyorum aslında. Çünkü eğer ekonomik tarafından bakarsak bence hiçbir avantajı yok. (P10)
49. Onun dışında tabii ki hani Türkiye koşulları biliyorsunuz artık hani alım gücü o kadar azaldı ki. Hani şey olarak nasıl diyeyim niceliksel olarak evet miktar çok görünüyor. Atıyorum 10 yıl öncesine göre ooo ne kadar çok bir para gibi görünüyor ama her şeyin fiyatı ona göre arttığı için. Hani bu biraz daha hani buranın koşullarından çok ülkenin koşullarıyla ilgili bir dezavantaj haline geldi. Yoksa hani bir şekilde hallediyorduk hani çok da mesele değildi ama şu an hani hepimiz için sanıyorum geçerli bu durum. (P4)
50. Tabii yani var maaş bu anlamda iyi değil tabii ki. Evet, asgari ücret almıyorum ama hani iyi bir maaşım da yok. En azından benim temel ihtiyaçlarımı karşılayabilecek ölçüde değil. Bu da şöyle bir yere bence insanı yönlendiriyor olabilir, işte dışarıdan seans yapmak olabilir, hafta sonu çalışmak olabilir çünkü ihtiyaçlarımı karşılamak için böyle bir şeye ihtiyaç duyuyorum. Bir taraftan mecbur kalıyorum aslında ama örneğin iyi bir maaş

alıyor olsam cumartesi günü çalışmam yani, dinlenirim. O açıdan zorluyor. (P9)

51. Bir de çok çeşitli vakaların gelmesi, uzmanlaşmadığım yerde çalışmak zorunda olduğum konularda o da kendimi biraz daha güvensiz hissettirmesi ve beni daha çok çalıştırması. Yani belki ben o konuda okuma yapmak istemiyorum, ben o konuda eğitim almak istemiyorum. Tek bir konuda uzmanlaşmak istiyorum ama mecbur olduğum için hani bilmiyorum diyemiyoruz. Ben bu konuyu bilmiyorum, biz onunla çalışmadık diyemiyoruz. Yani birçok alana dallanıp budaklanması her şeyi bilmek zorundaymışız hissi benim en çok olumsuz gördüğüm yerler. (P5)
52. Yani zorlayıcı tarafları tabii aslında şey var. Hani mesleğin bence kendi doğasının bir handikabı bu, yeni şeyler öğrendikçe kendi kişisel taraflarınızı da görüyorsunuz, yamuk yumuk taraflarınızı, aa burada bu varmış, burada bu varmış ya da yorucu tarafı yani şöyle kendi kendimizde halletmediğimiz yerleri zaten hani seanslarda bir yerde dokunabiliyor. Hani orada transfer ettiğimizde zaten hani orada getirdiği bir yorgunluk olabiliyor. (P7)
53. Ben bir de şeyi çok rahat söylerim yani hani böyle depresif hissediyorum, şu anda şu beni çok kızdırdı, çileden çıktım falan diyorum. Hemen tabi şey geliyor hani “Nasıl psikologsun sen?” falan “Halledersin sen”. Yok diyorum halledemiyorum yani :) Duygu bu kadar böyle yüksek durumda, halledilebilecek durumda değil, bir dakika bunu yaşayacağım ben falan gibi... Sürekli böyle bir açıklama modunda ve hani dediğim gibi hani böyle ee akıllı başlı uslu bilmem ne falan olmak, düzgün olmak falan gibi bir şey var. (P7)
54. Şöyle bir durum var, ben artık son 3 yıldır ya da 4 yıldır hangi meslek grubunda olduğumu söylemiyorum. Bana ne iş yapıyorsunuz dediklerinde ben memurum diyorum. Hani böyle muhabbet ilerlerse ve hani biraz daha böyle samimiyetin ilerleyeceğini hissedersen evet, psikolog olduğumu söylüyorum. Çünkü ben artık yani şundan yoruldum. Aa benim psikoloğa ihtiyacım vardı sizi bana Allah gönderdi. Hayır beni size Allah göndermedi. Yani hani benim de sosyalleşme ihtiyacım var, buna yönelik hani birileriyle tanışıyorum. Ve hani sadece ben orada sosyal bir birey olma çabasıdayım yani orada ben kimseye psikologluk yapmak istemiyorum. Ki hani bunu yaptığım zaman hani bunun üzerinden bir arkadaşlık kurmak istemiyorum. (P2)
55. Bir de eski personeller yani 10-15 kişi oldukları dönemlerden. Hepsi işte 20 sene burada çalışmış işte falan hani bağı da çok kuvvetli. O şeyi de çok oturtmuşlar, bu burada böyle yapılır, bu da burada böyle yapılır falan gibi. Mesela karşımdaki kişiden benim çalışma deneyimim daha fazla. O da benim bunu böyle mi yapsak dediğimde şeye anlayabiliyor ya da işte şey

kadrolarımız farklı. Hani onu böyle biraz daha beğenmeyip değiştirmek istiyor gibi görebiliyor. (P6)

56. İkili ilişkilerde şöyle sıkıntı yaşıyoruz, yani müdürünüz ya da oradaki müdür yardımcınız hem üniversite hocamız hem de idarecimiz olduğunda roller çatışabiliyor. Yani müdür rolüyle danışman rolü çatıştığında- ki ben müdürümle çatışabilirim ama danışman rolüyle çatışmasını hiç istemezdim. Ama işte diyelim ki merkezde bir sıkıntı olduğunda bunun benim tezime yansıyacak şekilde korkmak, korku ya da işte ayrılmak istediğimde işte hocam orada, onu bırakıp ayrılamam. Yani ayrılma, ayrılamayacağımız kadar rollerin çakışması, çok büyük bir olumsuzluk diyebiliriz. Yani olumlu saydığım her şeyin arka planında yeri geldiğinde bir de olumsuzluk var. (P5)

57. (...) şehirde bir işimiz olduğu zaman şehir merkezinde bir işimiz olduğu zaman hani git gel sıkıntı oluyor fiziksel açıdan uzaklık. Evet bizi olumsuz etkilediği yönleri de var. Ulaşım problemi oluyor sabah saatlerinde, trafik oluyor. Onun dışında tabii hani İstanbul'daki trafikle kıyaslanamaz yani hani bizim buradaki trafik ama. (P2)

58. Şimdi bir de [okul adı] Üniversitesi öğrencilerinin zaten farkındalık seviyeleri iyi oluyor. Bu bazen challenging bizim için, çünkü işte normalde başka seviyelerde çalıştığımızda söylediğimiz ve işte fark ettiğimiz şeyler bile o kişide çok büyük bir aydınlanma oluşturabiliyor ve bir değişim başlatabiliyor. Ama burada öğrenciler zaten kişisel gelişim ile ilgileniyorlar, zaten okumuş izlemiş falan. Kendisiyle ilgili bir şeylerin farkına varıp gelmiş oluyor. İşte şu şundan mı, bu bundan mı, görmüştüm şunu, fark etmişim falan gibi. Onunla mücadele etmek biraz hatta bazen zorlayıcı bile olabiliyor. (P6)

59. Şöyle olabilir belki hani şimdi tamam, biz bu öğrencilerle çalışıyoruz ve tam böyle hani z kuşağı denebilecek bir noktada ve çok daha rahat bir şeyleri söyleyebiliyorlar. Belki onlarla karşılaşıyor olmak, işte ne bileyim "Siz bana kızdınız herhalde..." Böyle çok net bir şekilde ya da ne bileyim işte ya da atıyorum mesela bu da çok rahatsız edici bir şey. Mesela ben yokum ve daha henüz saatimiz gelmemiş ama odama gelmiş, oturmuş. İşte ben odaya giriyorum ve bana böyle "Hoş geldiniz!" [imalı bir ses tonu ile] hani falan. Hani hangimiz hoş geldik falan gibi böyle bir durumda kalmak, böyle çok daha cüretkâr davranışlar beni çok daha zorluyor. Çünkü ben çok sınırlı, sınır koymaya çalışan, zorlanan biraz sınır koymakta ve şey daha böyle çok ince düşünen, kibar olmaya çalışan bir tipim ve bu kadar cüretkârlık bana çok sınırlarım aşılmış hissiyatı veriyor. Belki bu beni çok rahatsız ediyor olabilir, kişisel olarak. (P10)

60. Bir diğey şey yani ben YÖK'te karşıladığımız var mı bunu bilmiyorum. Yani bizler idari personeliz, idari personel açısından baktığım zaman ben YÖK'te karşılığımızı bulamıyorum ve hani bütün Türkiye genelindeki kamu kuruluşlarında bu problemi yaşayan yine tek personel bizleriz. Çünkü diğey kurumların bir bakanlıkları var ya da işte bağılı oldukları bir sistem var. Yani biz burada evet YÖK'e bağılıyız ama YÖK daha çok akademik odaklı çalışmalar yapan bir birim. Yani ben burada 12 yıldır çalışıyorum YÖK'te psikolojik danışma ve rehberlik biriminin hani bir üst kuruluşu var mı bunu bilmiyorum. Çünkü kimse benimle iletişime geçmedi. (P2)
61. Evet, şöyle bizi şimdi takip eden bir şunu diyebilirim, takip eden hiçbir şey yok. Yani şimdi yöneticilerimiz bizden hiçbir şey talep etmiyorlar. Son bir aya kadar falan, şu ana kadar 3 yıldır tamamıyla kendim yaptığım işte aylık şu kadar insana bakıyorum, işte şu kişilere bakıyorum falan benim kendi istatistiki durumlarımdan- bu benim için, aslında benden sorulan bir şey değıl. Bence bu bir eksiklik, olması gereken bir şey bana kalırsa. Bizim bir rapor sunuyor olmamız lazım. Olması gereken bir şey bu. (P10)
62. Ben kesinlikle bizlerin hep güncel tutulması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Çünkü o kadar değışen bir kitleyle çalışıyoruz ki yani şimdi ben düşünüyorum 15 yıl önceki üniversite öğrencisiyle bugün benim karşıma gelen üniversite öğrencisine aynı dili konuşamam. Aynı şekilde hitap edemem. Aynı şekilde aynı şeyleri konuşamayız. Yani koşullar o kadar değıştı ki işte alanları, sevdikleri şeyler o kadar değıştı ki şu anda hani bizim 15 yıl önceki halimizle kalmamız buraya hitap etmemizi çok engeller. E o yüzden hani bir bizim gerçekten hakikaten o hizmet içi eğitimleri yani daha doğrusu hizmet içi eğitim haline getirilecek olan terapi eğitimlerini almamız çok önemli. (...) Bizim güncellenmemiz önemli belki zaman zaman mesela bölümlerden ders almaya teşvik edilmemiz gerekir. (P4)
63. (...) daha iyi nasıl olabilirdi diye düşündüğümde hani hep daha büyük bir ekip hayal ediyorum. (P9)
64. Ya işte ihtiyaçlar açısından yani YÖK'te aslında bizim birimimizin bir üst temsilcisi olsa yani orada bir yapılanma olsa mesela işte atıyorum, şu an ismini kendim uyduracağım ama yani üniversiteler işte psikolojik danışma ve rehberlik hizmetleri daire başkanlığı olur ya da illa bir daire başkanlığı olmasına gerek yok ama hani bunun bir temsilcisi olsa. (...) Yani kalite süreçleri açısından baktığımda da daha standardize çalışmalar yapabiliriz bir. (P2)
65. Kaynakların arttırılması çok güzel bir fırsat olur. Çünkü o zaman ben de riskli durumda daha fazla öğrenci almalıyım stresinden çıkıp işte grup çalışmalarına daha fazla yer verebilirim, daha fazla seminer açabilirim, daha fazla dışarıdan uzman davet edip onlara burada bir şeyler yaptırabilirim ve

aslında daha da çok kişiye ulaşır ama bizde işte hala şey çok o ihtiyaçlar hiyerarşisinde en altı tamamlamaya çalıştığımız için sürekli oralara böyle arada, böyle fırsat bulursak falan gibi dönebiliyoruz. (P6)

66. İhtiyaçlarım özellikle maddi olarak bazı iyileştirmelerin sağlanması. En başta bu. Çünkü dediğim gibi benim avantajlı gördüğüm, istekli olduğum diğer meseleler biraz daha alt sıralara inmeye başladı. İşte tecrübe gibi. O yüzden daha farklı şeyler bekliyorum işte haklarım neyse yemek hakkı- işte bunları konuşmak bile bence bilmiyorum, çok can sıkıcı bir şey ama hani yemek- yemek hakkımı istiyorum yani. İşte aylık tam akbilimi istiyorum. Böyle temel insani ihtiyaçlarımın karşılanması diyeyim. Bunlar en temelde söyleyebileceğim şeyler. (P9)
67. (...) temel ihtiyaç bu, bırak masayı, bilgisayar falan. Onları halledersin. Temel ihtiyaç gerçekten günün sonunda sana iyi akşamlar diyebilecek, kendinize iyi bakın diyebilecek, sabah gittiğimde günaydın hocam ya da gelirken bir simit al, çay koyalım içelim falan diyebilecek bir iş ortamının olması aslında. (P7)
68. Yani ee yaşadığın sürece varsın, ee denediğin sürece o kafadaki bütün sorular cevaba dönüşüyor. Yani bütün soruların -ben de çok soru soran bir gençtim- ee ama soruların cevaplarıyla koşturmaktansa soru sormanın ben kıymetli olduğunu anladığım bir evredeyim. (P3)
69. (...) yani bizlerde bir kabulleniş var ... Biz bu şehirde yaşıyoruz ve çalışma olanaklarımız bunlar. Hani bundan şikayet ettikçe bunun olumsuz tarafına odaklandıkça tükenmişlik yaşıyoruz. Bu dönemleri yaşadık. Hani geçmiş yıllarda ben kendime çok sordum ya ben bu şehirde ne yapıyorum? Ben bu kurumda ne yapıyorum? Ee bunları yaşadığım bir dönem vardı ama şu anda hayır. Yani ben bu şehirde evet, ailemle, çevremle mutluyum ve mutlu olmak için zaten bu koşulları benim yaratmam gerekiyor. Bu koşullar kimseye altın tepsiyle sunulmuyor. (P2)
70. İşte kamu çalışması olması çok güçlü bir yerde. Çünkü hakikaten yani çalıştığımız öğrencilerin imkanları çok düşük oluyor, birçoğunun öyle. Ve hani başka türlü o bir yardım alamayacak ama yardım alması onun için ne kadar elzem bir yerde bunu görüyoruz. Mesleki anlamda çünkü hani böyle ruh sağlığı ile ilgili bir alan seçelim. Hakikaten içinde çoğunlukla çoğumuzda bu oluyor yani o insan yardım, insana yardım etmek, insana temas eden bir şeyin içinde olmak arzusu ve onu işte 2.500 lira seans ücreti aldığım yerde biraz daha hani şey var. Para ve karşılığındaki hizmet var. Tabii ki insan yararı var, yok değil ama burada o daha da kuvvetli bir yerde var. (P6)

71. Öncelikle yani bu buranın bir parçası gibi hissetmek. Yani o home bilinci kesinlikle çok çokça- yani ailem mesela ailenin içerisinde bir zorluk olduğunda beni ilgilendirmez diye hissetmeyiz ya çünkü ailemizle varız yani bana dokunmasa bile bir o kadar içimde hissederim. Burada onu hissediyorum. Burası bir iş yeri, benim için uygun değilse güle güle gibi bir his hiç duymuyorum. Bir gün hani benim için ömrünü tamamlayabilir ama yine de o gönüllülük hissim her zaman benimle kalacak bir his. O çok güçlü bir yerde benim için. (P6)
72. Çok sporla ilgiliyim, bence o da benim için çok önemli bir kaynak. Yani hem böyle beni daha ruhen de iyi hissettiriyor sürekli spor yapıyor olmak hem de bir yaşam düzeni bakımından hani giriyorum seanslara çıkıyorum gibi değil de bugünün bir de sporu var, bugünün bir de işte arkadaşlarımla bir araya gelme anı var falan. Bunlar böyle zenginleştirerek iyi hissettiriyor. (P6)
73. (...) ya da bazen işte fincanımı alıp böyle kurumda şey gibi geziyorum, dedikodu yapmaya gider gibi böyle işte ne yapıyorsunuz ne ediyorsunuz falan diye biraz böyle hareket etmeye çalışıyorum. (P7)
74. Ailemle yaşıyorum ben. Onların oradaki varlığı tabii ki benim için önemli bir destek mekanizması. Genelde böyle majör, çok majör bir şey olmadıkça onlara gidip de onlardan hani sorun anlamında bir destek istemem ama sadece orda olarak bile bana iyi hissettiriyorlar tabii ki. (P6)
75. Benim için sosyal ilişkilerim çok güçlü bir yerde kaynak olarak. Oradan çok beslenirim. Hani gidip orada okulda şöyle bir zorluk yaşadım gibi anlatmak gibi değil ama zor bir günümün arkasından onlarla bir araya gelmek, hep onlarla temas halinde oluyor olmanın üzerimde bir batarya etkisi oluyor çok fazla. (P6)
76. Yani aynı şeyi, benzer şeyi yaşayan bir yan odada meslektaşım ile hemen bir arada oturup ya bu geçen süpervizyonda konuştuğunuz şu danışan şöyle şöyle oldu, çok üzuldüm. İşte hani o duyguları paylaşabiliyor olmak, onun da o karşılığı olduğunu onda da bir karşılığı olduğunu görmek, yani sadece beni dinleyen biri değil, benzer bir şeyden geçen birinin bunu dinlemesi gerçekten çok iyi hissettiriyor. Ya da bazen bir conflict oluyor, bir şey yaşıyoruz. O zaman da birbirimize danışıyoruz ve bu da kıymetli oluyor. Benzer bir vakası olmuş oluyor önceden, ya biz onu şöyle çözmüştük, şu şekilde bir yol izlemiştik, belki hani senin için böyle bir yol iyi olabilir falan gibi... Kolaylaştırıcı kesinlikle o destek mekanizması. (P6)
77. (...) Hani zorlandığım bir dönemdeyim ama işte hani hastaneden çıkıp geldiğimde burada arkadaşlarımla hani bana moral vermesi, işte birlikte

sohbet ediyor olmak, şöyle bir oturup bir şeyler içip neler olduğunu konuşmak, nasıl olduğumu sormaları hani bunlar çok değerli şeyler gerçekten. (P4)

78. (...) Oralarda böyle çat hemen arayıp ya şöyle bir sorunumuz var diyebiliyor olmak ve şu öğrencide şöyle bir zorlanti yaşadık ve bir endişe yaratıcı bir durum var diyebiliyor olmak çok güven veriyor. Yani orada destekleniyorum, yalnız değilim ve hatta benden daha güçlü birisi de contain ediyor bu süreci. Bunu hissetmek çok iyi geliyor. (P6)
79. (...) biraz da evet şu da var yani işte dışarıda hani farklı insanlarla tanıştığımız zaman yani üniversite dışından insanlarla tanıştığımız zaman direkt aa merhaba hocam üniversitede çalışıyormuşsunuz. Hani orada tabii ki de hani ben düzeltiyorum yok ben hoca değilim, ben orada idari personelim diyorum ama yine de hani oranın o bakış açısı. Evet biraz daha insanın yüreğini okşayıcı olabiliyor. Yani bir titr açısından baktığımız zaman. Doğru ifade edebiliyor muyum bilmiyorum ama yani üniversitede çalışıyor olmak diğer kurumlarda çalışıyor olmaktan daha prestijli, doğru kelime bu, daha prestijli. (P2)
80. Hani meslektaşlarımı arayıp akran süpervizyonu aslında bir nebze, bir taraftan da şey aslında dertleşme seansları yapıyoruz. “Aaa ben de ben de zorlandım orada” falan onlar çok iyi geliyor hakikaten. Hani bazen çok afedersiniz ama hani dünyanın en kötü haltını yediğinizi zannederken bir bakıyorsunuz bir başkası daha büyük :) o haltı yemiş. Ve o kadar da berbat bir şey değilmiş. Hakikaten şey hani oradan destek almak çok kıymetli geliyor bana. (P7)
81. (...) Yani böyle hani çok çok önemli bir yerde, çok iyi hissettiriyor, rahatlatıyor, bir an evvel buradan çıkayım kaçayım, zaten ruhen daraldım gibi bir his hiç duymuyorum. Kalmaya çalışıyorum, akşam da kalmaya çalışıyorum burada. Vakit geçirmeye çalışıyorum. İşte hani online günlerim de olunca buradaki günlerimi uzun uzun kalarak da geçiriyorum hatta. Öyle bu tarafını seviyorum. O baharda sakuraların açması, erguvanların açması, her birinin ayrı bir tazelik hissi vermesi insana gerçekten çok kıymetli bir şey. (P6)
82. Yok. Yok yani mesela bir eğitim isterdim, bir eğitim açılması ya da işte düzenli aralıklarla belki görüşmek, konuşmak, konferansların olması... Böyle şeyler olmasını beklerdim, güzel olurdu neden olmasın ama hiçbir şeyin olmaması bizi böyle çok savrulmuş ve işte bir noktada bir şeylerle uğraşmaya çalışan bir hale sokuyor. Ve oradan somut bir şey de çıkmıyor. Onlar için sadece bir sayıdan ibaret yani. Şu kadar seans, şu kadar kişi, okey yani tamam yapmışlar. E böyle olunca da herhalde yani ya da benim düşüncem bu, böyle somut şeyler çıkmadığı zaman da çok bir şey ifade

etmeyen, iŖte bir Ŗekilde orada iŖleyen bir Ŗeyin olduėunu ifade eden bir durum oluyor. O y zden belki de b yle eėitimler istiyorlar, at lyeler istiyorlar, bir Ŗeyler anlatalım ya somut g r nen bir Ŗey olsun istiyorlar. Ama buna ihtiya ımız yok. (...) Evet yani hani en azından eksiklerimiz i in destekleyici bir yer olduėunu bilmek iyi gelebilirdi. (P10)



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