

THE  
UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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<http://counseling.fsu.edu>



**SERVICES**

The University Counseling Center (UCC), a department within the Division of Student Affairs, provides psychological counseling and consultation services to currently enrolled FSU students. The Center offers brief counseling and therapy to support students' growth and development emotionally, interpersonally, and intellectually.

- ◆ Crisis Intervention
- ◆ Short-term individual counseling
- ◆ Couples Counseling
- ◆ Group Counseling
- ◆ Alcohol & Drug Evaluation / Counseling
- ◆ Life Skills Workshops
- ◆ Referrals
- ◆ Mental Health Presentations
- ◆ Consultations
- ◆ RENEW (Peer Educator Group)

## **RECOGNIZING DISTRESSED STUDENTS**

University students often encounter a great deal of stress during the course of their academic experience. While most students cope successfully with the challenges that these years bring, an increasing number of students find that the various pressures of life are unmanageable or unbearable. As individuals who work closely with students, you may encounter these distressed students in your offices or your classrooms. Many of these students have not sought counseling and may be unaware of the services available to them. Thus, your role could be a crucial and positive one in identifying and referring students who are in distress.

### **WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

The following signs may indicate a need to refer a student to the University Counseling Center:

- Marked changes in academic performance (e.g., excessively anxious when called upon, dominating discussions)
- Infrequent class attendance with little or no work completed
- Dependency (e.g., the student hangs around you or makes excessive appointments to see you during office hours)
- Chronic fatigue, lack of energy, or frequently falling asleep in class
- Abrupt/marked changes in behavior and/or appearance (e.g., hygiene, dress)
- Bizarre/inappropriate behavior and/or garbled, disjointed thoughts
- Alcohol/drug abuse
- Behavior which regularly interferes with the decorum or effective management of your class
- Overtly suicidal thoughts (e.g., referring to suicide as a current option or indirect reference to suicide or death)
- Overt references to harming someone else
- High levels of irritability, including unruly, aggressive, violent, abrasive, or otherwise disruptive behavior
- Normal emotions that are displayed to an extreme degree or for a prolonged period of time (e.g., fearfulness, tearfulness, nervousness)
- Expressed uncertainty and anxiety about emotional stability, family situation, and/or relationship problems

In your role with the student, you may also observe content that is disturbing in his/her work. Examples of disturbing content might include:

- Written or verbal content that seems disjointed and fragmented, indicating disorganized or incoherent thinking
- Preponderance of expressed negative themes such as violence or death
- Dramatic departure from the student's typical social demeanor or affect

## **COMMON CONCERNS**

A student may be referred to the University Counseling Center for help with a variety of concerns. Some of the most common include:

- Adjustment to College
- Alcohol & Drug evaluation
- Alcohol & Drug counseling
- Anger Management
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Family Concerns
- Relationships
- Self-esteem
- Sexuality
- Stress Management
- Study skills
- Sexual Assault
- Time Management
- Life Transition and Loss

## **ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDENT**

In the initial interview, a counselor will assess the student's needs and what services may be appropriate. Students whose needs cannot be met at the University Counseling Center may be referred to other departments or services on campus and/or in the community, as appropriate.

## **MANAGING DISTRESSED STUDENTS**

It is important to recognize that you may not be able to detect every distressed student; nor will every student you approach be willing to accept your assistance. You may want to call the University Counseling Center for a consultation to discuss your concerns about a student. One of our staff will help you clarify what may be the most helpful approach for that individual.

## **HOW TO HANDLE THE INTERACTION**

Raising the issue of counseling can be an uncomfortable and challenging task. Whenever possible, it is best to present your suggestion for counseling in a way that is honest, non-threatening, and expresses support and concern. Attempting to trick or deceive the student into counseling is not advised. At times, it may be helpful or necessary for you to walk the student to the University Counseling Center. The following include some additional suggestions for encouraging a distressed student to seek counseling:

- Talk to the student in private if you feel safe doing so
- Show concern and interest
- Be specific regarding the behaviors that have contributed to your concerns
- Listen carefully
- Repeat back the essence of what the student has told you
- Be honest and direct
- Avoid criticizing, sounding judgmental, or offering advice outside your area of expertise
- Emphasize that seeking help is a sign of health and maturity, not weakness
- Give the University Counseling Center phone number (850-644-2003) and location (2nd Floor, Askew Student Life Center) and encourage him/her to make contact. UCC hours are 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.
- If necessary, assist the student with scheduling by calling from your office with the student present
- If the student resists help and you are worried, contact the University Counseling Center to discuss your concerns. Upon calling, the student will be given the first available appointment. Remember that, with the exception of emergencies, pursuing counseling is optional and the choice should be left open for the student to either accept or refuse counseling.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Counseling is available to currently enrolled, fee-paying Florida State University students.

## **EMERGENCIES**

If the situation is urgent enough to require immediate attention, call the University Counseling Center and let us know the situation is urgent. Students in crisis can be seen by an on-call counselor the same day to manage the crisis or to be referred, as appropriate. We consider a situation to be an emergency when there is:

- imminent danger of physical harm to self and/or others,
- disabling emotional distress (e.g., insomnia, uncontrollable crying, agitation), and/or
- gross impairment in thinking, behavior, etc.

In case of emergencies occurring after 5 p.m. and/or on weekends, please contact the Crisis Management Unit (CMU) through the FSU Police Department at 850-644-1234. If you feel there is immediate danger to the student, yourself, or someone else, call 911 at once.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We understand that you may be interested in the progress of the student you have referred. However, we are bound by the principles of confidentiality as defined by the Ethical Principles of Psychologists (American Psychological Association/APA) and by Florida law.

### **APA GUIDELINE**

Psychologists have a primary obligation to respect the confidentiality of information obtained from persons in the course of their work as psychologists. They reveal such information to others only with the consent of the person or persons' legal representative, except in those unusual circumstances in which not to do so would result in clear danger to the person or to others. Where appropriate, psychologists inform their clients of the legal limits of confidentiality.

The following examples may clarify this principle.

We can

- Offer you general information about psychological concerns
- Answer questions regarding steps to help students obtain UCC services
- Ask the student to follow up with you or the referring party

Without written authorization from the student, we cannot

- Say whether a student is being seen here or has kept an appointment
- Discuss the content of sessions
- Discuss treatment plans or progress

In some cases the student may find it in his/her best interest for information to be shared with a faculty, staff, family member, or significant other. This is done by the student's own written authorization with clear explanation of the purpose and content of any disclosure. The only exception would be a counselor's determination of imminent danger to the student or to others. In this case, the counselor would release without consent only information necessary to ensure an appropriate emergency intervention and the safety of all concerned.

## REFERRAL SOURCES

### CAMPUS RESOURCES

#### ***Adult Learning Evaluation Center (ALEC)***

(850) 644-3611

Assessment and testing for learning disabilities and ADHD

#### ***Dean of Students Department***

(850) 644-2428

Assistance for difficulties related to illness or death in family, sexual harassment by another student, disruptive classroom behaviors and general student concerns or questions

#### ***Employee Assistance Program (EAP)***

(850) 644-2288

Assistance for faculty and staff for personal and professional difficulties

#### ***FSU Crisis Management Unit (CMU)***

(850) 644-1234 - FSU Police Dispatcher

24-hour service. Handles mental health emergencies for FSU students and staff

#### ***Safe Zone - Tallahassee, Florida***

(850) 644-2003 (Website: [www.safezone.fsu.edu](http://www.safezone.fsu.edu))

Support network and resources for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students and staff

#### ***Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)***

(850) 644-9566 (Voice) / (850) 644-8504 (TDD)

Support services for students with disabilities

#### ***Thagard Student Health Center***

(850) 644-6230

Medical care, psychiatric services, and nutrition counseling

#### ***The University Counseling Center (UCC)***

(850) 644-2003

Monday-Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm

Free psychological services and counseling support for enrolled FSU students

#### ***Victim Advocate Program***

Weekdays: (850) 644-7161 or 644-2277

Nights/Weekends: (850) 644-1234

24-hour crisis helpline for FSU victims of violence

### COMMUNITY RESOURCES

#### ***Big Bend 211***

211 or 224-6333 (local)

(877)211-7005 (toll-free)

24-hour crisis help line and referral services for the Tallahassee Community

#### ***Refuge House***

(850) 681-2111 or (800) 500-1119

Services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and 24-hour hotline and shelter for battered women and children

#### ***Tallahassee Memorial Hospital Bixler Emergency***

***Department*** (850)431-0911

#### ***Capital Regional Medical Center Emergency Department***

(850)325-5093

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**The University Counseling Center is accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services. The Predoctoral Internship Program is accredited by the American Psychological Association**