

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS for FACULTY/STAFF

**As faculty, you can play a crucial role in identifying and assisting distressed or disruptive students. Below are some frequently asked questions that our office can support you in your role or how we can work together to support student wellbeing.**

### **How do I refer a Student to Counseling?**

After initiating a conversation with a student and you feel they would benefit from meeting with a mental health professional. Pose the Question, “from what we’ve talked about, it sounds like you have been under a lot of stress (students are more receptive to the term stress than psychological help). The counseling center staff are trained to listen to students and help them deal with stress. I’d be willing to help you get an appointment, would that be okay?”

### **Student responses:**

- 1) If the student says **Yes**, call the Counseling Center at 708-235-7334 and you can hand the phone over to them to let our office take care of the rest or you can walk the student to our office and they can schedule an appointment in-person.
- 2) If a student says **No** to the referral or says, “I need to think about it.” Please write down the Counseling Center’s phone number and encourage them to try our center at least once. We always need to remember that counseling is a personal choice, except when the student is in danger to themselves or others. Not all students will be receptive to the referral, however, for many students, your willingness to extent yourself will be life-changing or even life-saving for them.

You may want to arrange a follow-up meeting with the student to see if they made an appointment, however, keep in mind that a student has the right to privacy regarding their mental health and treatment. Therefore, the student may or may not want to share this information to you.

**A student seems to be having serious emotional or behavioral problems and is disrupting my class. I have suggested counseling, but they refuse to go. Can counseling be mandated for this student? What other resources are available?** Counseling cannot be mandated, it can be encouraged and strongly recommended. However, if a student is disrupting your class, their behavior may be in violation of the Student Conduct Code. For issues concerning Community Standards & Student Advocacy, consult with the Office of Dean of Students or you can complete a CARE/Student of Concern report located under the Office of Dean of Students. When a CARE/Student of Concerns report is completed, members of the CARE team (which includes the counseling center) are notified of this report. Therefore, information about the counseling center will be sent to the student of concern via email if applicable.

**How does a student set up an appointment for counseling?** Students can either call (708-235-7334), walk-in or they can request an appointment online at <http://www.govst.edu/counseling-request/>.

### **What happens when a student is referred to the counseling center?**

All students who are new to the counseling center attend a 30-45 minute triage/walk-in appointment. Students do not need to call before they come; they can walk-in to Building A, Room 1120. They will complete about 5-8 minutes of paperwork and then they will meet with a counselor for approximately 30-40 additional minutes. The counselor will go over their paperwork, listen to their concerns and assess their needs. Most students who attend a triage/walk-in appointment at the Counseling & Wellness (CWC) are seen at the center, however, sometimes a counselor will determine that a student (based on their mental health concerns) would benefit from a higher level of care and are referred to a provider within the community.

**How long does it take to for a student to get an appointment?** Typically students are seen the same day, however, based on the student and the counselor’s availability the wait time is 3 days. However, if a student is in need of immediate assistance, for example, in crisis, they are seen the same day.

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**What are typical concerns that the center supports?** GSU students have come in for a number of concerns. Here are a few: relationship problems including family concerns, social issues, homesickness, or break-ups, feelings such as anger, worry, anxiety, sadness, depression, loneliness, suicide or guilt, personal habits and problems including abusing alcohol or drugs, sexual abuse or assault, body image and eating habits, perfectionism/procrastination or coping with stress and anxiety and identity and self-esteem concerns like issues of gender identity, sexual orientation, negative or self-defeating thinking, lack of confidence and difficulty adjusting to college.

**How often does a student meet with a counselor?** CWC operates under a time-limited model of individual counseling, meaning students typically meet with a counselor around 6-8 sessions. However some students may meet longer (e.g. during your entire time at GSU), but some meet for fewer sessions depending on their needs. Students usually meet with their counselor once a week for 45-50 minutes.

**Can faculty or staff inquire if a student followed up for counseling?** Counseling is confidential in nature, meaning we do not talk to anyone about a student's mental health, unless we receive written permission from the student. However, therapists have a legal obligation for the safety of their clients. If a client is a danger to themselves or others, then it is the therapist's legal responsibility to prevent harm; in these cases, others may be informed. Therapists are also obligated to report cases of child abuse as well as elder abuse. In these cases, reports are made to the proper state agency. In addition, we cannot disclose information about a client, but we can receive any information concerning a student. For example, if a faculty or staff member has concerns about a student and they would like someone to follow up with the student. Our office can take all the necessary information and then we can follow up with the student or contact Public Safety for assistance if needed.

**What is a wellbeing check?** Sometimes life can be overwhelming, especially when a student is adjusting to college life, like balancing class assignments, tests and projects, handling personal relationships, and sometimes everything can be too much. Also, a student may not be attending classes or a parent has reached out and said they have not heard from their child. In these situations, faculty or staff can contact DPS or the Counseling Center and request a wellbeing check. DPS will meet with the student and if needed will request assistance from the Counseling Center to check on a student's wellbeing.

**What is consultation?** Counseling Center staff are available to consult with faculty, staff, and students who have concerns about a student; need help sorting out concerns about a student's personal difficulties; discuss whether and/or how to refer the student to the Counseling Center; explore alternative approaches, and manage emergencies. Consultation is available in-person or by contacting the center at 708-235-7334 during normal business hours; Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm and Friday's 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

**What is a crisis appointment?** When a student presents to or calls CWC in emotional distress and needs to be seen immediately during normal business hours, a crisis appointment is scheduled. Counseling staff are trained to handle emergencies, such as suicide attempts, suicide threats, reports of sexual assault, physical assault, or other types of crisis. If a student is in crisis after hours, they can contact the Will County 24-hour crisis line at 815-744-5280.

**What is the "New" Counselor-in-Residence (CIR) program?** The Counselor-in-Residence program is a new initiative between the Counseling & Wellness Center and University Housing. The goal of the CIR program is to extend mental health services as a cost-effective and collaborative strategy within the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. The CIR consists of a staff counselor who lives and works within Prairie Place and is available to provide housing residents with on-site counseling, workshops, and to provide crisis appointments, referrals, consultation, and trainings to housing staff. In addition, the CIR will collaborate with the faculty-in-residence (FIR) program.