

WU COUNSELING CENTER A GUIDE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

**Wheeling University Counseling Center
Acker Science Center - 204
316 Washington Avenue
Wheeling, West Virginia 26003
Phone: 304-243-2081
Confidential FAX: 304-243-4457
Email: ttordella@wheeling.edu**

Counseling Services:

- Students can utilize the following services:
 - individual,
 - couple,
 - or group counseling;
 - assessment;
 - information/education
 - resource/referral;
 - topical workshops/presentations;
 - consultation
- Counseling services are provided by a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and professional supervisees in affiliation with partnering Institutions of Higher Education.
- **The Counseling Center is available during the ten month academic year.**
- Community providers are available through local hospital emergency rooms which serve as an **emergency referral** for psychiatric evaluation and referral to appropriate inpatient psychiatric services and Northwood Health Systems 24 hour Emergency Services.
- **On campus emergency networking is available 24 hours 7 days a week (extension 2486, Campus Safety and Security).**

Location:

The WU Counseling Center is located on the second floor of the Acker Science Center - 204.

Appointments:

The Center's hour of operation during fall and spring semesters are Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Services may be scheduled by calling 304-243-2081 or in person.

Campus Resources for Medical and Mental Health Services

Emergency medical services and mental health services are available after hours at WVU Reynolds Hospital Emergency Room.

Campus Security Department: EMERGENCY NUMBER: Extension 2486

Security officers on duty 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Campus Security Officers will make emergency notification to all appropriate resources through the VP of Student Services.

Medical Services:

To access medical services contact the Campus Nurse at 304-243-2225.

Faculty/Staff Consultation:

The counseling staff is available in person or by telephone to assist the faculty or staff with concerns about students: problems in the classroom, change in academic performance, or personal issues to name a few.

How to Make a Referral:

Help the student by:

- Providing essential support
- Expressing a willingness to help
- Assisting the student in locating resources

If counseling services are the best resource for the student:

- Except for an emergency, proceed gradually.
- Inform the student in a matter of fact manner basing recommendation on their behaviors.
- Avoid judging the student's personality or character (avoid diagnosing).
- Except for emergencies, leave open the option for the student to accept or refuse the referral.
- Encourage a time to 'think it over.' Remember to follow-up.
- If a refusal is made, leave the issue open for possible reconsideration.
- If recommendation is accepted, assist in creating a plan to schedule an appointment, and follow up with the student in a timely manner.
- Call the Counseling Center (extension 2081) stating a referral had been made.

Confidentiality:

As required by law and the code of ethics of professional practice, all communication between a mental health professional and a client is confidential. If information is needed about a student, the student will need to sign a release of information form allowing information to be shared.

Warning Signs of Student Stress:

Below is a partial list of behaviors indicating emotional stress. Signs that a student is experiencing difficulties may be overt or hidden. While an isolated behavior may cause no alarm, a pattern of behavior may be cause for concern.

Personal Relationships:

- Death of a family member
- Marital or intimate relationship discord
- Problems with family members or roommates

Academic Performance:

- Dramatic drop in grades
- Moderate to severe test anxiety
- Inconsistent class attendance or periods of absences

Social interaction:

- Isolation and unwillingness to communicate
- Persistent lying, or stealing
- Underdeveloped social skills
- Sleep disturbances
- Eating related problems
- Unexplained crying jags, or anger outbursts
- Marked difference in behavior: increased activity (ex. Incessant talking)
- Nonsensical conversation
- Frequent expressions of fear or moderate to severe anxiety
- Flat responses to normally upsetting events

Physical complaints:

- Physical distress or complaints which seem to have no apparent cause
- Complaints such as: loss of appetite, or excessive eating, insomnia, or excessive sleeping, or gastrointestinal distress

Substance Abuse:

- Excessive consumption of substances

- Pattern of reliance on substances
- Loss of time from school due to substance use
- Depression due to substance abuse
- Drinking/drugging to cope with personal problems
- Drinking/drugging to overcome shyness
- Loss of interest in family, friends, and activities that were once of interest
- Mood fluctuations
- Experiencing memory blackouts during or after drinking
- Usually drink to the point of intoxication
- Feeling guilty about drinking/drugging
- Not fulfilling promises or obligations because of drinking or drugging
- Drinking or drugging outside of a social setting
- Drinking to boost self-confidence

WARNING SIGNS OF A SUICIDAL PERSON

- Suicide threats (verbal, written, nonverbal)
- Having a plan
- Previous suicide attempts
- Extreme depression, withdrawal
- Acquiring the lethal means to complete suicide (pills, rope, guns, knives, etc.)
- Sleeplessness, lowered grades, poor work performance
- Giving away personal possessions
- Putting affairs in order (good-bye letters, wills)
- A sudden lift in spirits after extreme depression (this can mean a person is relieved that problems will “soon be ended”).

MYTHS ABOUT SUICIDE

- People who talk about suicide do not commit suicide
- Mentioning the word “suicide” may give a person the idea
- All suicidal persons are mentally ill
- A suicide threat is just a bid for attention and should not be taken seriously
- Suicide happens without warning
- If a person attempts suicide and survives, they will never attempt again
- Once a person is suicidal, they are suicidal forever.

Warning Signs of Threat to Others

- Low frustration tolerance
- Leakage: violence slips into this person’s life/comments
- Injustice collector
- Inappropriate humor
- Closed social group
- Dehumanizing to others
- Lack of trust
- Externalize blame
- Narcissistic
- Alienation
- Poor coping skills
- Planning behaviors
- Signs of depression
- Failed love relationships
- Pecking order in school social environment
- Code of silence

- Interest in violent media, entertainment, technology
- Isolated with peers who also have violence preoccupation

Responding to student crisis/emergency

Some guidelines:

- If possible, offer a quiet and secure place to talk.
- Listen to the student; maintain a consistent, straightforward, and helpful attitude.
- If the student seems volatile, or disruptive, alert a co-worker for assistance. Do not leave the student alone.
- Make arrangements for appropriate university intervention and aid.
- Call for a mental health professional for backup, if necessary. (304-243-2081)
- If medical care seems appropriate, contact the Health Center (304-243-2225) and Campus Security extension: 2486
- **If the student is aggressive, or unmanageable, call 911 and contact campus Security ext. 2486.**

Be prepared to provide the chosen campus resource with as much information as possible, including:

- Name of student, yourself, and your department
- Description of the situation and assistance needed
- Exact location of the student
- If the student is deemed unmanageable or is a possible risk to themselves or others, provide an accurate description of the student. If the student leaves the area, refusing assistance, note the direction by which the student leaves.