

**UNIVERSITY
COUNSELLING
SERVICE**

**FACULTY AS A HELPING
RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS**

Faculty Guide for Psychological Referrals

FACULTY AS A HELPING RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS

University students may encounter a great deal of stress during their academic experience. Although many students cope successfully with the demands of university life, for some the pressures can become overwhelming and unmanageable. Students may experience stressors as they attempt to perform well academically, begin their career path, navigate interpersonal relationships, and as they balance academic, work, and family obligations.

As a faculty member interacting daily with students, you are in an excellent position to recognize potential problems. You are likely to be the first person a student reaches out to for help. Your ability to recognize the signs of emotional distress and to make an initial intervention can have a significant impact on a student's future well being. The University Counselling Service's (UCS) mission is to serve the university community, and we have prepared this brochure to assist you in identifying distressed students and to facilitate appropriate referrals to the UCS or other crisis support services.

Introduction

University Counselling Service

**Room 14, Health Centre
University of the West Indies
Mona**

**Telephone: 970-1992 or 927-2520
Exts 2270/2370**

**Common
Causes of
Emotional
Distress**

- **Relationship Breakup**
- **Family Conflict**
- **Loss of a Loved One**
- **Divorce of Parents**
- **Feeling Lonely**
- **Academic Pressure or Failure**
- **Serious Illness or Injury**
- **Difficulty Adjusting to University**
- **Not Fitting in with Peers**
- **Unplanned Pregnancy**
- **Religious Conflicts**
- **Sexual or Physical Abuse or Assault**
- **Identity Confusion**
- **Depression**
- **Drug/Alcohol Abuse**
- **Career Indecision**
- **Loss of Goal or Dream**
- **Occupational Setback**

Common Warning Signs of Student Distress

- **Career and Course Indecision**
- **Excessive Procrastination**
- **Uncharacteristically Poor Preparation or Performance**
- **Repeated Requests for Extensions or Special Considerations**
- **Disruptive Classroom Behavior**
- **Excessive Absence/Tardiness**
- **Avoiding or Dominating Discussions**
- **References to Suicide or Homicide in verbal statements or writing.**

Interpersonal Problems

- **Asking Lecturer/Tutor for Help with Personal Problems**
- **Dependency on Lecturer/Tutor**
- **Hanging Around Office**
- **Avoidance of Lecturer/Tutor**
- **Disruptive Behavior**
- **Inability to Get Along with Others**
- **Complaints from Other Students**

Behavioral Problems

- **Change in Personal Hygiene**
- **Dramatic Weight Gain or Loss**
- **Frequently Falling Asleep in Class**
- **Irritability**
- **Unruly Behavior**
- **Impaired Speech**
- **Disjointed Thoughts**
- **Tearfulness**
- **Intense Emotion**
- **Inappropriate Responses**
- **Difficulty Concentrating**
- **Physically Harming Self**

Academic Problems

What You Can Do

If you have noticed any of these warning signs, you are faced with the decision of whether or not to intervene. Although your faculty appointment is demanding, your interest in your student's well being can make an important difference to a person in distress.

If you decide to intervene, here are some suggestions:

- * Talk to the student privately to help minimize embarrassment and defensiveness.
- * Listen carefully to the student, and respond to both the content and the emotions of the situation.
- * Discuss your observations and perceptions of the situation directly and honestly with the student.
- * Express your concern in a non-judgemental way. Respect the student's value system, even if you don't agree with it.
- * Help the student identify options for action and explore the possible consequences.
- * Be frank with the student about the limits on your ability to help them.
- * If the student appears to be in imminent danger of hurting self or others, consult the UCS or the police immediately. Do not promise to keep threats to self or others secret.

How to Make a Referral

Presenting yourself as knowledgeable about campus services can ease a student's discomfort about seeking help. Here are some suggestions for emergency and non-emergency situations.

Emergency Referrals (when the student is in imminent danger of hurting self or others):

- * If the emergency occurs during UCS business hours (Mon - Fri, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), call 970-1992 and inform the Secretary, UCS, that you need to consult urgently with a member of the counselling staff.
- * Provide the counsellor with a description of the situation which has led to your concern.
- * The counsellor will advise you of appropriate actions to take to most effectively help the student.
- * If the emergency occurs outside of UCS business hours, call the Campus Police at 927-2298. This is appropriate if the student or another person is in immediate danger, or when you believe that the student is out of control.

Non-Emergency Referrals:

- * Encourage the student to contact UCS directly to schedule an initial intake interview.
- * Offer to let the student call from your office if you believe they need extra support and encouragement.
- * It might be helpful to share with the student that UCS is staffed by professional counsellors.
- * Discuss UCS's confidentiality policy that is outlined on page 7 of this brochure.
- * Provide information on other appropriate campus resources.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE UNIVERSITY COUNSELLING SERVICE

Scheduling an Appointment

To schedule an appointment, have the student come to the Counselling Service (Room 14 at the Health Centre) or call the Unit at 970-1992 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. There is no charge for the sessions. Usually students can get an appointment for an initial assessment within a week. Emergencies are seen the same day.

At the time of making the appointment, students are asked to complete paperwork which provides basic information about them and their situation. This takes approximately 30 minutes.

Intake Interview

The student is seen by a counsellor for a brief session of approximately 20 minutes. This allows the student to provide more information on the issues indicated on his/her forms. Based on this session he/she will then be assigned as appropriate.

If it is determined that personal counselling is appropriate, the student will be assigned to a counsellor or a group workshop for ongoing help. Sometimes the student will be referred to another agency on campus or in the community for treatment. In some instances, the student's concerns are effectively addressed in the intake session and no further psychological help is needed.

Once you have made a referral, it is normal to want to find out what happened and how you can continue to help the student. However, the staff at the Counselling Service are bound by the principles of confidentiality.

That means:

- We cannot give information about the student without written permission from the student.
- We cannot discuss any specifics of the situation.
- We CAN answer your general questions about making referrals to the Counselling Service.
- We CAN offer you information about psychological concerns and problems in general.
- We CAN provide other referral ideas.
- We CAN take information from YOU regarding specific behaviors of the student.
- * If you referred a student we CAN confirm that he/she kept his/her initial appointment. However, if you enquire about a student you did not refer we cannot say whether or not that student has been seen at UCS.

Confidentiality Guidelines

For Individual Sessions:

- * All students
- * All members of staff and their dependents.

Workshops and Seminars:

- * All students – full-time and part-time
- * All members of staff.

Eligibility

Other Services Offered by the Counselling Service

Psychoeducational Sessions:

The Counselling Service offers free workshops throughout the year.

Workshops:

Semester I – Study Skills (five sessions)

Semester II – Intimate Relationships (four sessions)

These are held on Thursday afternoons. They do not require pre-registration. They are advertised in the *UWI Notebook*, flyers and on *Pipeline*.

Special Needs Workshops/Support Groups:

These are offered each semester as needed and cover topics such as Stress Management, Motivation & Procrastination, Grief & Loss and Anger Management. Seminar groups meet once per week for four to six weeks. An Academic Support Group is also offered for students who are at risk of being asked to withdraw. To attend, participants must register with the Counselling Service.

Please encourage any of your students you think would benefit, to attend.

Consultation Services:

UCS staff is available to consult with faculty members about issues of concern related to student matters. While we cannot break the boundaries of confidentiality, we can offer guidelines for dealing with issues. We can also develop, and present seminars tailored to meet specific needs of both staff and students.

Adapted with permission from Faculty as a Helping Resource for Students: Faculty Guide for Psychological Referrals. University of Utah, Salt Lake City, USA.

DIRECTORY OF REFERRALS

ACADEMIC ISSUES

- Academic Advisors - each student is assigned to an advisor in the faculty
- Deans, Deputy Deans and Heads of Departments
- Counselling Service: Room 14, Health Centre 970-1992, 927-2520,
Extns 2270/2370
- for assistance with study skills and for evaluation when students are having academic difficulties

COUNSELLING SERVICES

- Counselling Service: Room 14, University Health Centre
**Dr Angela Gordon Stair, Mrs Sharon Williams Brown,
Dr Orville Shields (Counsellors)
Dr Franklyn La Hée, (Consultant Psychiatrist)** 970-1992, 927-2520,
Extns 2270/2370
- Peer Support Providers: c/o Counselling Service 970-1992, 927-2520,
Extns 2270/2370
- Career Counselling:
Office of Placement and Career Services - **Mrs Merrit Henry** 927-1650, Extns 2224/2332/

FINANCIAL ISSUES

- Office of Student Financing – **Miss Joy Dickenson** Extns 2946/2670
- this office provides information and assistance relating to student financing
- Office of Placement and Career Services
- job opportunities for students: part-time, full-time and vacation placements; peer advisors
(located near to the Bookshop)

RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

- Chaplains: Office located next door to the Office of Special Student Services
(on the Ring Road across from the Main Library) Extn 2654
- Denominational meetings – for times and places
check with the Chaplain's office.
- Jamaica Council for Interfaith Fellowship

Contact information available for various religious groups
Interfaith Fellowship also holds meetings involving people of different religions
Dr Trevor Yee - Natural Products Institute Extn 2718

SECURITY

- Campus Police 977-6290 or 927-2298,
Extns 2310/2331
- Campus Security Extns 2748-9

LEGAL MATTERS

- The Legal Aid Clinic (beside the Mona Police Post) 927-1007, 977-2889

MEDICAL CONCERNS

- University Health Centre 927-2520, 970-0017,
Extns 2270/2370
- University Hospital of the West Indies
(outside the hours of the Health Centre) 927-1620-9

OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES & DEVELOPMENT

- Director: **Dr Thelora Reynolds** 977-3880 Extns 2541/2546
- this office coordinates co-curricular programmes e.g. the Leadership and Mentorship programmes and provides other services which facilitate the total development of the student

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMMES

- Camera Club: c/o Philip Sherlock Centre
for the Creative Arts (PSCCA) 927-1047/927-1935 Extn 2383
- University Singers: c/o PSCCA 927-1877 Extn 2428
- UWI Dance Society: c/o PSCCA 927-1047/927-1935 Extn 2383
- University Dramatic Arts Society (UDAS): c/o PSCCA 927-1047/927-1935, Extn 2383
- Department of Sports – **Miss Grace Jackson**
(Student Services Building) 702-4473 Extn 2229
- Information on other programmes can be obtained from:
Office of Guild of Students Extn 2250
or the Office of Student Services & Development

STUDENT SERVICES & DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS (HALLS OF RESIDENCE)

- Chancellor Hall – **Mr Michael Clarke** 927-2788-9, Extn 2387
- Irvine Hall – **Mr Carlton Lowrie** 927-2793-4, Extn 2443
- Mary Seacole Hall – **Miss Nadeen Spence** 927-2546, Extn 2452
- Preston Hall – **Mr Horton Dolphin** 977-6721-3, Extn 2411
- Rex Nettleford Hall – **Miss Donna-Mae Jackson** 702-2405
- Taylor Hall – **Mr Peter O’Sullivan** 927-2533, Extn 2386

STUDENT SERVICES & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER (COMMUTING STUDENTS)

- **Mr Jason McKenzie** - Office of Special Student Services 702-2307, Extn 2654

LODGINGS

- The Lodgings Officer (next door to the Office of
the Director of Student Services & Development)
Assistant Lodgings Officer - **Miss Carmen Dias** 977-3880, Extn 2248

SPECIAL SERVICES (Assistance for Students with Disabilities)

- Office of Special Student Services (Ring Road – beside
Chancellor Hall) Extn 2654

REMEMBER:

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Except for certain extreme instances, SERVICES ARE CONFIDENTIAL for all students

STUDENTS ARE ADULTS

- They have a right to privacy
- Since they may not want University staff to think ill of them, they may not want you involved past the initial referral consultation

RESPECT STUDENTS'

- Rights as adults
- Need to prove themselves as adults
- Ability to act in a mature manner when given the choice and the chance

WHEN IN DOUBT CONSULT

- Assess the situation, seriousness and potential for referral
- Learn about counselling services
- Find the best way to make a referral
- Clarify your own feelings
- Find a way for you to be most effective as a helper
- Discuss follow-up concerns with the Head of the Counselling Service.

CONSULT	INTERVENE	GIVE HOPE
Initial consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Counselling Psychologists ○ Career Specialists ○ Health Service Professionals ○ Health Educators 	Your purpose is to provide enough hope to enable students to consult an appropriate professional IT IS NOT TO SOLVE THE STUDENT'S PROBLEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assure student things will get better ➤ Help student to realise that there are options ➤ Suggest resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - friends - family - clergy - professionals - community agencies

REFER	FOLLOW UP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Help is available ➤ Seeking help is a sign of strength not weakness or failure ➤ Prepare student for what might happen if he/she follows your referral ➤ Tell student what you know about the referral service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Arrange time to meet with student again ➤ Talk about resolve to seek help or what keeps student from seeking help ➤ Demonstrate your commitment to help ➤ Check in again to make sure appointment was kept ➤ Provide support

CONSULT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When in doubt about appropriateness of intervention ➤ When in doubt about the appropriateness of referral ➤ When a student's behaviour has become threatening, violent or significantly disruptive ➤ When you are feeling stressed about your student's well-being and do not know what to do.

Appendices taken, with permission, from: *"Identifying & Referring Students in Difficulty - Booklet for Faculties & Departments"*, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, July 2005.