

# Adelphi University



## Faculty Staff Referral Guide to the Student Counseling Center

Student Counseling Center  
University Center, Room 310  
Garden City, NY 11530  
516.877.3646  
SCC@adelphi.edu

## **Introduction**

This guide was designed to provide faculty and staff with information about the Student Counseling Center (SCC), its services, and how faculty and staff can help Adelphi students who may be experiencing some trouble or discomfort. We have included information to help you recognize some of the symptoms of students in distress, ways of dealing with students (in particular, the reluctant student), and how to refer them to the Student Counseling Center.

While it is not expected that staff and faculty monitor students' behavior or intervene, you may be the first person to notice the student's distress. You may choose not to intervene or may limit your response to the student's classroom behavior or you may choose to approach the student. Another important fact to remember is that even if a student may have a disability or psychological condition, they are responsible for maintaining appropriate behavior on campus.

## **Role of Faculty and Staff in Dealing with Distressed Students**

Students are usually able to cope with the stress they experience during college, but some students find themselves overwhelmed by the pressures. Faculty and staff are in a good position to recognize students who are experiencing some distress or trouble. Much of the stress that students experience is related to the developmental tasks of their particular life phase. However, it is not uncommon for major mental illnesses or related symptoms to be seen in a person's late teens or early 20s.

You will not be able to spot every student in distress, nor will every student you approach be willing to accept your assistance. By communicating your concern to a distressed student, you may play an important role in helping that student get the help he or she needs to cope with the stress he or she is experiencing.

## **Recognizing Students in Distress**

Students in distress are likely to show some signs. Following are several common symptoms you may see in these students:

- **Changes in mood, appearance or behavior**

Some students do not feel comfortable telling someone that there is a problem, but their appearance and behavior can be indicators of a problem. Poor hygiene or change in appearance and dress may be signs of a problem. Declines in academic performance, poor attendance, an uncharacteristic need for additional attention or repeated requests for extensions are examples of behavioral changes you might observe. Outbursts of anger, crying, extreme levels of activity or conversations that do not make sense could indicate psychological difficulties. Threats to classmates and angry, harassing behaviors may require intervention on several levels. These behaviors should not be tolerated and action needs to be taken to stop them. In addition, underlying psychological problems may need to be addressed as well.

- **Anxiety**

Anxiety and depression are two of the most common problems among students. Anxiety is characterized by a sense of fear sometimes accompanied by unpleasant physical symptoms such as dizziness, nausea, trembling, headaches, and sweating.

- **Depression**

Depression is characterized by feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. The person can also suffer from fatigue, lack of motivation, disruption of normal sleeping and eating patterns, and a sense of unhappiness. Suicidal thoughts or behavior may also be present.

- **Psychosomatic Symptoms**

Nausea and other forms of gastrointestinal distress, difficulties with eating or sleeping, or physical pains with no apparent organic basis may be related to underlying emotional problems. It is important to remember that psychosomatic symptoms are real and are not merely feigned for the purpose of avoiding responsibilities or gaining attention.

- **Changes in Personal Relationships**

College students often have difficulty adjusting to changes in their relationships. Common among these changes are separation or divorce of parents, the death of a relative or friend, roommate problems, or the breakup of a romantic relationship. Dealing with these changes often contributes to a student experiencing profound emotional reactions.

- **Drug and alcohol abuse**

Coming to class or a meeting while intoxicated or high is a sign of drug or alcohol abuse. Individuals often use drugs and alcohol to cope with life's stresses and psychological difficulties that feel overwhelming to them. Unfortunately, the substance abuse frequently becomes a problem in itself and causes further decline in academic and personal functioning. If you see signs of intoxication, do not underestimate their significance. Be aware that abuse of and addiction to alcohol, marijuana, heroin, crack/cocaine, club drugs such as ecstasy and special K, along with other hallucinogens, are sometimes problems in the student population.

- **Academic difficulties**

Many students encounter stress while adjusting to the demands of college academics. The most common problems include poor study skills, test anxiety, lack of motivation and poor academic performance.

- **Learning problems**

Some students find the demands of college-level work to be harder than they anticipated. While it is expected that students will go through an adjustment period, those who demonstrate a consistent discrepancy between their ability and performance may need further assistance. At times an undiagnosed learning disability may be affecting the student's academic performance. The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) is available to help with these problems. DSS is located in UC310 can be reached at (516) 877-3145.

- **Reference to Suicide or Intention to Harm another Person**

It is always cause for concern and reaction whenever a student expresses a desire or a plan to harm himself or herself, to die, or to harm another person. Dismissing this as attention seeking behavior or avoiding the topic because it is unpleasant would be a mistake. A referral to the SCC should be made, gently but firmly. If you remain concerned about the student or the student refuses help, please consult with a staff member in the Student Counseling Center. In the case of an actual attempt to harm oneself or another while on the Garden City campus, call Public Safety (dial "5" from any Garden City campus phone or 516-877-3511), Health Services (516-877-6000), or the SCC (516-877-3646). If you are at the Hauppauge Center, call security at 631-300-4367. At the Hudson Valley Center, call the main office at 845-471-3348 or 911. At the Manhattan Center, contact the public safety desk at 212-965-8340 ext 113 or call 911.

- **Leaving School**

When a student thinks about leaving school or transferring to another college, a large number of issues may be impacting the student's decision to leave. A referral to counseling may help the student sort out the issues, enabling him or her to make the best decision.

**Guidelines for Dealing with Students in Distress**

There is no one correct way to deal with a student in distress. Each person has his or her own style of approaching others and differing capacities to deal with problems. It is important to know your personal abilities and limits. If you decide you want to intervene and try to help a distressed student, or if a student approaches you to talk about personal problems, here are some suggestions:

- Request to see the student at a mutually agreeable time when there will be an adequate period for extended discussion. Ask to meet with the student privately. Meet the student in a relaxed, private setting (for example, a professor's office).
- Speak directly and honestly to a student when you sense that he or she is in academic and/or personal distress.
- Ask if the student has the support of family or friends, with whom he or she is able to talk about the problem.
- Tell the student why you are concerned in an open, direct and non-judgmental manner. Describe the behaviors or symptoms you have observed without making interpretations or conclusions. (You might say: "I've noticed you've been absent from class lately and I'm concerned.") Be specific and give examples based on what you have seen.
- Allow the student to respond to your concerns. Listen to the student's thoughts and feelings in a sensitive, non-threatening way. Let the student know you understand by repeating back what the student has told you. Try to include both content and feeling. (You might say: "It sounds like you're

having a hard time right now” or, “I can see it is hard for you to discuss how you feel.”)

- Try to help the student fully express and clarify his or her feelings and thoughts. (Some examples:”Have there been any changes in your life?” “It usually helps to talk about how you feel.” “If you don’t feel comfortable talking to me, perhaps you would find it easier to talk to a counselor, privately and confidentially.”)
- Avoid judging, evaluating or criticizing the student, even if he or she asks for your opinion. It is important to respect the student's value system, even if you don't agree with him or her.
- Behavior that is strange or inappropriate should not be ignored. Comment directly on what you have observed.
- Do not discuss your concerns with other students.
- Decide how you can most effectively help the student. Can you provide direct support to help the student resolve these problems? If not, call the Student Counseling Center for suggestions. If on the Garden City campus, the SCC may even be able to come to your location to help out.
- Be aware of your own tolerance limits. If you are uncomfortable talking to the student, call the SCC to help you.
- Some signs you may have overextended yourself include:
  - Feeling stressed or overwhelmed by the situation
  - Feeling angry at the student
  - Feeling afraid
  - Having thoughts of “adopting” or rescuing the student

### **Overly Agitated or Enraged Student in Your Office**

Students who are overwhelmed by their feelings may act in an overly agitated or enraged manner. When you encounter such a person, try to do the following:

- Allow the student to express his or her feelings and do not attempt to use logic to calm him or her down. A few supportive comments from you may help.
- Do not ask too many questions but try to ascertain the facts of the student's distress.
- When the student has calmed down, make a referral to the Student Counseling Center for additional help as soon as possible. If the student does not attend classes on the Garden City campus, the SCC can assist students with counseling referrals in other areas. The Derner Institute’s Psychological Services Center also offers therapy services at the Manhattan Center (516-877-4820).

- If on the Garden City campus, try and get student to walk with you to the Student Counseling Center, University Center, Room 310. If the student refuses, call Public Safety (dial “5” from any Garden City campus phone or 516-877-3511). On the Hauppauge or Hudson Valley Centers, call the SCC (516-877-3646) for suggestions or for local referrals. If you are at the Manhattan Center, call either the SCC or The Derner Institute’s Psychological Services Center (516-877-4820).
- If the student does not regain control while in your office and the situation becomes a crisis, call Public Safety for help (in Garden City, dial “5” from any Garden City campus phone or 516-877-3511). If you are at the Hauppauge Center, call security at 631-300-4367. At the Hudson Valley Center, call the main office at 845-471-3348 or 911. At the Manhattan Center, contact the public safety desk at 212-965-8340 ext 113 or call 911.
- If there is any indication of danger to yourself or the student, leave your office immediately and call local Public Safety for help. (Do not ignore your "gut" feeling.) On Garden City campus, call Public Safety by dialing “5” from any campus phone or 516-877-3511. If you are at the Hauppauge Center, call security at 631-300-4367. At the Hudson Valley Center, call the main office at 845-471-3348 or 911. At the Manhattan Center, contact the public safety desk at 212-965-8340 ext 113 or call 911.

### **Overly Agitated or Enraged Behavior in the Classroom**

A student's disruptive behavior may be due to different causes, such as fear of failure, an attempt to alleviate his or her anxiety, or a symptom of an underlying emotional disturbance that he or she can no longer manage as the demands on the student become too great. You may ask the student to cease attending your class until they can change their behavior. You may want to arrange a security presence in advance to enforce your request. In addition, an instructor may make a request to withdraw a student from a course because the student's behavior disrupts the conduct of the course. (For undergraduate students, this request would be made to the Associate Provost in the Office of Academic Services & Retention, and for graduate students to the dean of the appropriate academic unit.) You can also initiate University disciplinary action with respect to the student, by contacting the Dean of Student Affairs (516-877-3660).

If you decide to talk to the student about his or her behavior in your classroom, it is important to reassure the student that you want him or her to do well, and that you know that being a student can be demanding. Remind him or her that you are willing to help, while gently asking that the student accept the responsibility of behaving appropriately in class. In any of these situations, you can let the student know of the counseling services at the Student Counseling Center, or if possible and you are on the Garden City campus, you may want to escort the student directly to the Counseling Center (University Center, Room 310). The SCC can offer students from Hauppauge, Hudson Valley and Manhattan Centers local service providers.

If necessary and appropriate, here are some suggestions for escorting a disruptive student out of the classroom or your office:

- Ask the student to leave with you and take him or her to a place where it is quiet and there is protection for you. "I need to ask you to come with me where we can talk." If on the Garden City campus, you may want to escort the student to the Student Counseling Center (University Center, Room 310), or if at Hauppauge, Hudson Valley, or Manhattan Centers, call the SCC (516-877-3646) for suggestions.
- Choose your words carefully. Be supportive but firm. Continue to speak in a calm and reassuring manner, saying, "I'm sure we can work this out," or something similar.
- Initiate the conversation by asking how you can help or by asking what just happened.

### **In an Emergency**

In an emergency, where a student has expressed the intention to harm or has actually harmed himself or herself or another person, the student may need emergency services. If you believe the student may be at risk: On the Garden City campus, call the SCC (516-877-3646) or Public Safety immediately by dialing 516-877-3511 or "5" from any Garden City campus phone. If you are at the Hauppauge Center, call security at 631-300-4367. At the Hudson Valley Center, call the main office at 845-471-3348 or 911. At the Manhattan Center, contact the public safety desk at 212-965-8340 ext 113 or call 911.

Be prepared with as much information as possible for the person you contact including:

Your name, the name of the student, and your department.

Concise description of situation and kind of assistance needed.

Your exact location.

If the person appears dangerous or seems likely to leave your office abruptly, be prepared to notify the local Public Safety office. Have an accurate description of the person and if the person leaves your office, take note of the direction in which he or she goes.

### **When to Make a Referral to the Student Counseling Center**

Even though you may be genuinely concerned about students, and interested in helping them, you may find yourself in situations where it would be better to refer them to other resources. You may want to make a referral if to the Student Counseling Center if:

- A student discloses a problem or requests information that is more serious than you feel comfortable handling.

- You have talked to the student and helped as much as you can, but further assistance is needed.
- You think your personal feelings about the student will interfere with your objectivity.
- The student admits that there is a problem, but doesn't want to talk to you about it.
- You are either extremely busy, or are experiencing stress in your own life, and are unable or unwilling to handle other requests for help.
- The student asks for information or assistance that you are unable to provide.
- Personality differences between you and the student prevent you from helping him or her.
- The problem is personal and you know the student other than on a professional basis (e.g. friend, neighbor, relative, etc.).
- You believe your attempts to help the student have not been successful.
- The student seems unimproved or worse, even after several contacts.
- The student is a potential danger to himself or herself or to others.

Let the student know your reasons for making a referral (e.g., lack of time, conflict of interest, limited training) and emphasize your concern that they do get help from an appropriate source. It may help the student to know that you support his or her desire to seek help. Remind students from Hauppauge, Hudson Valley or Manhattan Centers that the SCC can help with referrals to local service providers.

### **If a Student is Reluctant to Seek Professional Help**

Some students think that only people with serious mental health problems need therapy so they may hear your referral to the SCC as a judgment on their mental health. Reassure the student that counselors at the SCC work with students who have concerns that are both small and large. Problems need not reach crisis proportions for students to benefit from professional help. In fact, it is much easier to work on problems if they are addressed before they reach crisis level. Normalizing the process of seeking help may be especially helpful for international students whose cultures may not have similar views of psychological counseling.

Reluctant students might also be relieved to know that they can speak with a counselor on a one-time basis without making a commitment to ongoing therapy. Furthermore, any contact and information shared by the student is kept strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to parents, faculty, other University departments, or even you, without the student's written permission. Finally, it is important to acknowledge, validate and discuss the student's real fears and

concerns about seeking help. It takes considerable courage to face oneself and acknowledge one's limitations.

In some cases, you may find that the student has already sought counseling services at the SCC, or elsewhere, and was dissatisfied with the experience. There are many reasons why counseling may not be successful in a given situation. Please encourage the student to consider giving counseling another try, perhaps with a different counselor.

### **How to Make a Referral to the SCC**

When you have determined that a student might benefit from psychological counseling, it is best to speak directly to the student in a straightforward fashion that will show your concern for his or her welfare. Clearly state that the referral is based on your best judgment from your observations of the student's behavior.

Students should make their own appointments if possible. To schedule an appointment, students can come by our offices in the UC, room 310, or by calling 516-877-3646. You can assist this process by offering the student immediate use of your phone. Students from Hauppauge, Hudson Valley and Manhattan Centers, can receive referrals to local service providers by contacting the SCC at 516-877-3646 or by email at [scc@adelphi.edu](mailto:scc@adelphi.edu). The Derner Institute's Psychological Services Center also offers therapy services at the Manhattan Center (516-877-4820).

If referring a student to the SCC or the Psychological Services Center, it might be a good idea for you to have a follow-up contact with that student to show your continued interest in his or her welfare. Whenever possible, please let us know you are referring a student to us. This will help us prepare for the student when he or she arrives.

## **Summary of Student Counseling Center Services**

### **What is counseling?**

Counseling is a voluntary relationship in which a professionally trained psychologist, social worker, psychiatrist, or counselor meets with the student to discuss some issue or conflict. Counseling is a process by which change is sought through the expression of thoughts and emotions in a safe, supportive, non-judgmental forum. Counseling gives a student the chance to speak to a non-biased professional who is not affiliated with the student's friends or family.

The goal of counseling is to help the student better understand thoughts, feelings, and relationships, by looking at patterns of behavior. The student can expect a counselor to be someone who is available and interested in listening to the student's concerns. The counselor's role is to help the student develop effective strategies for coping with whatever is bothering him or her. The counselor should be focused on the student, and not on himself or herself or others.

### **What can a student expect?**

When a student calls or comes to the SCC to make an appointment, he or she will usually talk to the receptionist who sits at the front desk. If the student wants to see a counselor on the Garden City campus, he or she will be given an appointment to meet with a counselor as soon as possible. If the student attends classes on the Hauppauge, Hudson Valley, or Manhattan Centers, referrals to local services providers will be given to the student. The Derner Institute's Psychological Services Center offers therapy services at the Manhattan Center (516-877-4820).

At the SCC, the first appointment, which is called an "intake," is usually scheduled within a day or so. If the matter is urgent and needs immediate attention, the student can be seen for an emergency appointment that day. The student will be asked to arrive 20 minutes before the intake appointment to complete some paperwork which includes some basic information about the student and a brief description of the problem. (This process will be postponed in an emergency situation.)

During the intake, which usually lasts 45-60 minutes, the counselor works together with the student to set personal goals and formulate an agreeable plan for attaining the goals discussed. During the intake, the student has the opportunity to ask questions and describe his or her situation in detail. Sometimes the initial consultation is all that is needed to resolve the presenting issue. However, the student and the counselor may also decide that continued counseling is the best route to take. If so, a plan will be made to continue at the Counseling Center or the student will be given a referral to a resource that may better meet his or her needs.

Any student currently enrolled at Adelphi is eligible for free, private and confidential counseling services. The Student Counseling Center is located on the Garden City campus and is staffed by licensed clinicians trained in social work and clinical psychology and by graduate-level social work interns and doctoral-level psychology externs.

### **Types of Counseling**

**Individual Counseling** is treatment for one student, who meets with one therapist. This offers the most attention to the student's individual concerns.

**Groups** are formed to create supportive forums for people with similar issues. In group counseling, 3-10 individuals meet at an assigned time with one or two group leaders usually on a weekly basis. Members talk about what is currently going on in their lives and what may be troubling them. Group leaders and other group members are available to give support, offer alternatives, and feedback to members of the group. This treatment offers the student the opportunity to interact with others and learn from them as well as study their own relationship style. Students often encounter some social anxiety in starting group therapy; however it offers an ideal environment in which to challenge and overcome these feelings.

**Couples Therapy** is conducted with a couple in a marital or "significant other" relationship. Its purpose is to assist the couple to work together as partners to

communicate, love and solve the problems of daily life. The establishment of realistic, adult expectations is usually an important goal.

## **Psychiatry**

The SCC is now offering limited psychiatric services on the Garden City campus to Adelphi students. Our psychiatrist is available by appointment only to students in ongoing individual counseling. Psychiatry often uses psychotropic medications to manage emotional, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms. Medication is prescribed by a psychiatrist only after a thorough evaluation indicates that medication may be helpful to the student. Ongoing medication management is implemented in conjunction with ongoing individual counseling and is aimed at treating the underlying causes of the condition.

## **Confidentiality**

Individual and group counseling, as well as psychiatric services, are private and confidential. Counseling records are kept separate from academic, disciplinary and medical records to ensure the student's privacy and confidentiality. Information about students or sessions cannot be released to anyone, including a student's parent, without prior knowledge and written consent. These rules are maintained in all cases with the exception of an emergency situation that presents a danger to life, or by court order.

## **Outreach and Consultation**

Outreach and consultation are available to residence halls, academic departments, teams, clubs, and other campus groups. The purpose of outreach and consultation is to offer counseling and education services to organizations and departments.

## **Workshops**

Workshops are educational presentations for students, designed to enhance personal growth and to lessen stress and anxiety. Possible workshop topics include stress management, study skills, relationship issues, anger management, assertiveness training, eating and body issues, grief and loss, time management, and sexual abuse and assault. The SCC is happy to receive requests for other workshops.

## **Resources and Referrals**

Resources are organizations, clinics, practitioners or literature sources that offer services and information not offered by the SCC. There are many excellent on-campus resources for students. At times, however, it may be more helpful to refer a student to a resource off-campus.

## **Drug and Alcohol Education and Counseling**

Drugs and alcohol are a problem on college campuses all across the country. Often students use substances to socialize, relax, or avoid other things in their lives. At times, the use of drugs and alcohol becomes problematic for students, resulting in personal problems or academic difficulties. The Student Counseling Center offers education and confidential counseling on substance abuse issues on the Garden City campus by appointment.

### **Who should see a counselor?**

Anyone who is:

Feeling depressed, anxious, stressed, overwhelmed, or lonely.

Having difficulty relaxing.

Worried about the future.

Noticing changes in eating or sleeping habits.

Gaining or losing weight.

Having difficulty adjusting to college life.

Having trouble attending classes, concentrating, or studying.

Having problems with friends, roommates, or family.

Having difficulty making or keeping friends.

Worried about a friend and is unsure what to do.

Or anyone who just wants to talk.

### **SCC Office Hours**

#### **Fall and Spring Semester SCC Hours:**

Monday	8:30-7:00	<b>In case of an emergency in the evening or on the weekend: On Garden City campus: call Public Safety by pressing 5 on any campus phone or 516-877-3511. Off-campus: call 911</b>
Tuesday	8:30-7:00	
Wednesday	8:30-7:00	
Thursday	8:30-7:00	
Friday	8:30-4:30	

#### **Winter Break and Summer SCC Hours**

Monday	8:30-4:30
Tuesday	8:30-4:30
Wednesday	8:30-4:30
Thursday	8:30-4:30
Friday	8:30-4:30

### **Counseling Services for Faculty and Staff**

Counseling for faculty and staff is available through the Derner Institute's Psychological Services Clinic (516-877-4820) or through the Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis (516-877-4840).