

Referring a Student for Professional Help

When to refer

In many cases of student distress, faculty and staff can provide adequate help through empathic listening, facilitating open discussion of problems, instilling hope, conveying acceptance, giving reassurance, and offering basic advice.

In some cases, however, students need professional help to overcome problems and to resume effective functioning. The following signs indicate that a student may need counseling:

- The student remains distressed following repeated attempts by you and others to be helpful.
 - The student becomes increasingly isolated, unkempt, irritable, or disconnected.
 - The student's academic or social performance deteriorates.
 - The student's behavior reflects increased hopelessness or helplessness.
 - You find yourself doing ongoing counseling rather than consultation or advising.
 - The student shows significant and marked changes in behavior and mood.

How to refer

- Speak to the student in a direct, concerned and caring manner.
 - Because students may initially resist the idea of counseling, be caring but firm in your judgment that counseling would be helpful. Also be clear about the reasons that you are concerned
 - Be knowledgeable in advance about the services and procedures of Counseling Center and other campus help-giving agencies. The best referrals are when the student knows what to expect who they will likely see.

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- Suggest that the student call to make an appointment and provide the phone number to the Counseling and Testing Center (521-6202) located in the University Center, second floor, Room 243.

- Offer the student the use of your phone or call the receptionist yourself while the student waits in your office. The student will more likely follow-through with attending an appointment that was "publicly" made and agreed upon in your presence.

- Ask for an "emergency appointment" that day if you feel the student cannot wait for the first available initial appointment.

- Walk the student up to the counseling Center and ask to see a counselor immediately if you feel the student is unable to wait (e.g., suicidal or unable to function or take care of self) for an "emergency" appointment.

- If you need help in deciding whether it is appropriate to make a referral, call the Counseling Center (521-6202) for consultation with a counselor.

- Counseling Center staff will also come to your department or staff to speak further regarding referrals or Counseling Center Procedures and services. Please call 521-6202 to schedule.