



*Help Us to Help Your Student:
A Parent's Guide to
Counseling Center Services*

Created and Published by the
Bowling Green State University
Counseling Center

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INTRODUCTION

Most distressed or troubled students who come to the Counseling Center do so on their own. Sometimes, however, they are referred by parents, other family members, or others who care about them and become aware of their distress and hope that counseling might be helpful. Those of us at BGSU who work with students know how valuable parents and other caregivers are as resources and sources of support to college students. We want to inform you about what assistance is available for your student through the Bowling Green State University Counseling Center.

This reference guide is designed to give you, BGSU parents and other family members, information about a variety of Counseling Center services and how to access them in order to ultimately assist your student with educational, social, and personal concerns.

Counseling Center

Contact Us:

Phone: (419) 372-2081

Fax: (419) 372-9535

Web site: www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/counseling

Hours:

Monday & Thursday 8:00 am – 7:00 pm

Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
(excluding University observed holidays)

Location:

320 Saddlemire

OVERVIEW OF THE COUNSELING CENTER

The BGSU Counseling Center assists students with educational, social and personal concerns that may interfere with their academic progress. Except for emergencies and consultations, all counseling services are available by appointment only. Counseling services are limited to enrolled BGSU students, and are provided at no charge. Although there are no specific limits on the number of counseling sessions available to individual students, our goal is to provide quality services as quickly as possible.

The Counseling Center staff welcomes all students. We aspire to respect cultural, individual, and role differences. Our goal is to create a safe, supportive and affirming climate for individuals of all races, ethnicities, national origins, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, religions, ages, abilities, sizes, socioeconomic statuses, languages, and cultures.

Crisis Intervention

A clinical staff member is available during business hours for emergency consultation and to assist in managing individual or community crises on campus. Counseling Center staff members are also available to assist students and staff in the aftermath of campus crises and tragedies. Please note that after office hours emergency assistance is available through the Link Crisis Line. (See Emergency Referral section p. 8.)

Counseling

Individual Counseling Many students meet with a counselor on a one-to-one basis, to work through personal concerns. Most students are seen for less than one semester. Some students find that an initial meeting or two is all they need to explore and clarify their feelings and options; others will meet with their counselor for a longer period of time. The length and frequency of therapy is based upon individual student needs and the availability of Counseling Center resources.

Group Counseling Group counseling offers a wide range of insight and support from peers and professional counselors. Some groups deal with general concerns; others focus on specific concerns such as body image.

Couples Counseling Married and unmarried students are welcome to come, as well as students in traditional, non-traditional, and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender relationships. The only requirement is that one member of the couple must be an enrolled student.

Consultation

Although our office provides counseling services to BGSU students only, we are available to consult with parents, faculty, staff, and others about concerns that pertain to the welfare of students.

Consultation Continued

**OVERVIEW OF THE
COUNSELING CENTER
CONTINUED**

Family members are invited to call our Center and request consultation with one of our professional staff. If no one is available to provide consultation at the time of your call, you will be invited to leave a message. Our staff will strive to return all such calls in a timely manner—generally within one to two days. (If the situation requires immediate attention, please inform our support staff. Refer to Crisis Intervention Section p. 3) When leaving a message, please include the following information:

- Your name
- How you can be reached
- Times that you will be available
- The general nature of your concern

Psychiatric Consultation

Psychiatric services are available on a limited basis through the Counseling Center. A student must be referred for psychiatric services by either Counseling Center or Student Health Service staff.

Outreach Programming

Our staff members are frequently asked to provide training activities or educational workshops for various groups (e.g., student organizations, residence halls, classes, faculty and staff) and are available to provide workshops on a variety of topics (e.g., stress management, assertiveness and test anxiety). We also plan and present several workshops related to students' mental health needs. We invite you to view our webpage and go to the "current news" section to learn about upcoming workshops.

Testing Center

BGSU's Testing Center provides test administration and test information. In 2002 the Testing Center administered well over 4,500 exams. The following is a list of tests administered for admission into undergraduate, graduate and professional schools: ACT ACT-Residual, CLEP, GMAT, LSAT, MAT, MCAT and PRAXIS. For additional information you may contact the Test Center at (419) 372-7533.

Counseling Center Staff

The Counseling Center staff includes licensed psychologists and other well-trained mental health professionals, predoctoral interns, and advanced graduates students with backgrounds in psychology, and several support staff. They are competent and caring people who can help students achieve more satisfying educational and life experiences.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY STUDENT IS IN NEED?

Students may choose to seek some counseling services to assist them in coping with one or more of the experiences listed below. Others may not choose to seek professional services. It is important to be aware that counseling may help an individual cope with a variety of circumstances including the following:

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 of self or others
- Difficulty Adjusting to University
- Homesickness
- 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
- Body Image Issues
- Coming Out Issues

Signs Of Student Distress Which Require Immediate Referral Or Attention:

- Expressions of suicidal thoughts or intent
- Expression of violence towards others
- Severe loss of ability to function or cope in her/his own life
- Bizarre behavior or significant impairment in thinking ability



FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

Monday & Thursday 8:00 - 7:00 pm
Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 8:00 - 5:00
Call the Counseling Center at
(372-2081)

Evenings or Weekends
Call The Link at
(352-1545)

If danger to self or others appears imminent, call 911 or BGSU police (372-2346).

Common Warning Signs Of Student Distress

Some of the signs below are common experiences as your student learns about her/himself and becomes a young adult. Seeing a pattern of several of these signs as well as level of intensity of these signs help you know how much they are indicating your student's distress.

Interpersonal Signs

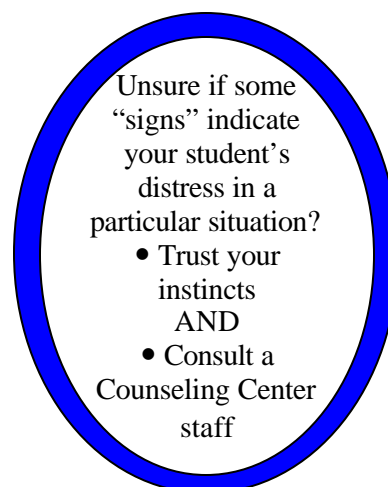
- Asking Parent for Help with Personal Problems
- Dependency on Parent or Avoidance of Parent
- Disruptive Behavior
- Inability to Get Along with Others
- Concerned Comments from Peers or Other Family Members
- Withdrawal from Others

Behavioral Signs

- Change in Personal Hygiene
- Dramatic Weight Gain or Loss
- Irritability
- Unruly Behavior
- Impaired Speech
- Disjointed Thoughts
- Tearfulness
- Intense Emotion
- Inappropriate Responses
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Physically Harming Self or Making Threats of Self-Harm

Academic Signs

- Career and Course Indecision
- Excessive Procrastination
- Uncharacteristically Poor Preparation, Performance, or Lack of Participation
- Repeated Requests for Extensions or Special Considerations
- Disruptive Classroom Behavior
- References to Suicide or Homicide in Verbal Statements or Writing



**HOW CAN I HELP MY STUDENT
ACCESS COUNSELING CENTER
SERVICES?**

Obviously your interest in your student's well being makes an important difference. We find that students whose parents are actively aware and maintain open communication lines with their sons and daughters are likely to be better equipped to handle difficult personal, academic, social, and developmental concerns when they arise. The Counseling Center can be a helpful resource, in addition to your support. Below are some suggestions for ways you might use to increase a student's willingness to accept a referral to the Counseling Center or other resources:

- Talk with your student privately to help minimize embarrassment and defensiveness.
- Listen carefully to your young adult, and respond to both the content and the emotions of the situation. *For example: "Sounds as if you are disappointed because the test did not go as you expected." OR "You feel sad because things aren't going the way you wish with your roommate."*
- Discuss your observations and perceptions of the situation directly and honestly with your student. *For example: "I notice you have been down lately when we have talked and that is uncharacteristic of you."*
- Express your concern in a non-judgmental way, respecting your son or daughter's perspective even if you do not agree.
- Help him or her identify options for action and explore the possible consequences.
- If your student appears to be in imminent danger of hurting self or others, consult the police immediately. If the student discusses thoughts of harm to self or others call the Counseling Center or the Link. (See Emergency Referral section p. 8).
- Discuss campus resources and specifically what you know about Counseling Center services from this link or other sources.

HOW A STUDENT CAN SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

We want you to be informed about how a student can schedule an appointment at the Counseling Center. Here are some suggestions for emergency and non-emergency situations.

FIRST SESSION:

What to expect?

- The student will be asked to complete initial assessment, providing some basic personal information.
- The student will meet with a counselor for about 50 minutes to assess situation and current needs.
- The student may be referred to an individual or group therapist in the Center or to another agency in the community, based on those needs.
- Sometimes the student's concerns are effectively addressed in an initial intake session or two.

Emergency Appointments:

Emergencies are those situations that require immediate attention (e.g., situations in which a student is highly agitated, cases in which there is an immediate danger of harm to oneself or others, instances in which a student's ability to function is substantially impaired and normal coping skills are not working, etc.).

- If the emergency occurs *during Counseling Center office hours* call 419/372-2081 and ask to speak to the counselor on-call.
 - Provide the counselor with a description of the situation, which has led to your concern.
 - The counselor will gladly consult with you about how you can talk with your student about Counseling Center services and discuss whether immediate intervention is necessary.
 - Whenever possible, inform your student that you are sharing information with the on-call counselor.
- If emergency situations should arise *outside of Counseling Center office hours*, students may be referred to the Link Crisis Hotline (419/352-1545). Parents can call the Link as well, for consultation.
- If the student or another person is in immediate danger call 911 or BGSU police at 419/ 372-2346.

Non-Emergency Appointments:

- Invite your student to call 419/372-2081 to schedule an initial "intake" appointment with one of our counselors. Let the student know that, except in emergency situations, it may take one or two weeks to be seen.
- Consult with Counseling Center staff when you think the circumstances may require an immediate (emergency) appointment. We will assist you in determining whether emergency intervention is warranted. (See the Emergency Appointment section above.)
- Assure your student that our counselors are competent, well-trained individuals.
- Discuss Counseling Center's confidentiality of services that are outlined in the Protecting the Student's Confidentiality section of this booklet (p. 10).
- Let your student know that he or she may request to see a male or female counselor, although this may delay services.
- Inform your student that ongoing counseling (if it is the most appropriate choice to meet their needs) may be provided by a different person than the initial intake counselor. Let him or her know that there may be a delay between the intake session and the start of ongoing counseling.

**HOW A STUDENT CAN
SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT
CONTINUED**

Non-Emergency Appointments Continued:

- Provide your student with expectations for their first visit to the Counseling Center.
- Let your student know that our Center frequently offers group therapy, which may be more effective than individual counseling in addressing his or her concerns.
- Provide information on other appropriate campus resources using the phone numbers listed in the Additional Resources section of this booklet (p. 11).

**WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS WHO
MAY NEED COUNSELING BUT
WILL NOT GO?**

If it seems clear that your student needs or could benefit from counseling, but is reluctant to go, you might mention any of the following that seem appropriate for that student:

- Your student can try one session to see how it feels.
- The visit will be kept strictly confidential.
- All your student has to do to get an appointment is go to the Counseling Center, or telephone, and tell the support staff s/he would like a counseling appointment.
- It's free.
- Students with very troubling concerns often get help at the Counseling Center.
- A person doesn't have to be seriously disturbed to go to the Counseling Center.
- Your student can call and speak with a staff member or see our website to learn more.
- Counseling Center staff will make referrals to agencies in the community if your student prefers to go elsewhere for therapy.

**ACCEPTING YOUR STUDENT'S
RIGHT TO SAY NO**

Except in certain life-threatening situations, the choice of whether or not to seek professional help at the Counseling Center is completely up to that individual. If a distressed student remains adamant about not seeking counseling, it may be difficult to determine at what point to accept your student's decision, even if it is a decision you don't like.

If your son or daughter is in this situation and you are quite concerned, consult with Counseling Center staff. Perhaps a Counseling Center staff member could suggest alternative ways of approaching your student, to help you more effectively intervene on your student's behalf, or confirm that you have done all that you could do.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT ONCE MY STUDENT HAS MADE A CONTACT WITH THE CENTER?

Once you have connected your student with the Counseling Center, you might be curious about how counseling and the student's concerns are going. You can talk with your student about Counseling Center services, your concerns, and their feelings and needs. We encourage you to follow-up with him or her by asking them how they are doing. Keep the lines of communication open so they know you are there for them, in addition to the resources they may be accessing. Keep in mind that change is a process and usually it is a slow and variable process. Therefore, it may be useful for you to share this with your student and to keep this in mind yourself as you look for their improvement.

Protecting the Student's Confidentiality

Once you have made a referral, it is normal to want to find out what happened and how you can continue to help your young adult. However, the staff at the Counseling Center is bound by the principles of confidentiality as defined by our disciplines and Ohio Law.

That means:

- We *cannot* give information about the student without written permission from the student.
- We *cannot* say whether the student has come for an appointment.
- We *cannot* discuss any specifics of the situation.
- We *CAN* answer your general questions about making referrals to the Counseling Center.
- 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, though whenever possible we ask that you inform the student that you are sharing information with us.

Take Care of Yourself

One of the most difficult experiences as a parent is seeing your child who is becoming an adult experience pain or distress. In addition to assisting them in talking about their feelings and accessing other resources to help them, it is important to take care of yourself as well. Think of it as being a good model for your son or daughter. Get your own support from friends, family, clergy, a therapist, or whoever is a source of support for you.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Bowling Green State University Resources

Career Center	419-372-2356
Center for Multicultural and Academic Initiatives	419-372-2642
Disability Services for Students	419-372-8495
Human Relations Commission	419-372-2600
International Programs	419-372-2247
Mathematics Lab	419-372-8009
Office of Residence Life	419-372-2011
Office of Student Life	419-372-2843
Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs	419-372-2147
Police Department	419-372-2346
Psychological Services Center	419-372-2301
Student Health Services	419-372-2271
Study Skills Lab	419-372-8840
The Women's Center	419-372-7227
Transformation Project	419-372-2190
Vision	419-372-0555
Wellness Connection	419-372-9355
Writing Lab	419-372-2221

Community

Behavioral Connections	419-352-5387
Bowling Green Pregnancy Center	419-354-4673
Bridge Home Health & Hospice	419-352-9808
Campus Ministers	www.bgsu.edu/studentlife/organizations/st_toms/bgcmresources.html
Catholic Charities	419-244-6711
Children's Resource Center	419-352-7588
Family and Child Abuse Prevention Center	419-352-7027
Family Services	419-352-4624
First Step	419-435-7300
Hospice of Northwest Ohio	419-661-4015
Lutheran Social Services	419-872-9111
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Wood County	419-666-8272
Planned Parenthood	419-354-3540
SAAFE advocates	419-352-1545
The Link Crisis Hotline	419-352-1545
Wood County Alcohol, Drug, Mental Health Board	419-352-8475
Wood County Hospital	419-354-8900
YMCA	419-251-9622
YW Child Care Connection	419-353-9702

Portions of the brochure have been adapted from University of Utah Counseling Center brochures and the Art Institute of Chicago Counseling Services On-line resources (<http://www.artic.edu/saic/life/pcrefguide.html>).

COUNSELING CENTER AT A GLANCE

<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/counseling>

Who?

The Counseling Center staff includes licensed psychologists and other well-trained mental health professionals, interns, and advanced graduates students with backgrounds in psychology, and several support staff.

What?

Counseling Center staff provides mental health services to Bowling Green State University students including:

- Crisis Intervention
- Individual, Couples, and Group Counseling
- Consultation
- Psychiatric Consultation
- Outreach Programming
- Testing Center

Counseling Center staff provides mental health support services to the Bowling Green State University community, faculty, and staff, including:

- Crisis Intervention
- Consultation
- Outreach Programming

When?

Counseling Center hours are:

Monday & Thursday 8:00 am – 7:00 pm

Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
(except for University Holidays)

Where?

The Counseling Center is located at:

320 SaddleMire Student Services Building

Bowling Green State University

Bowling Green, OH 43403

Phone: 419/372-2081

Fax: 419/372-9535

Testing Center Phone: 419/372-7533

How?

To obtain any of the provided services listed above please call the Counseling Center. To set up a counseling appointment you can ask the support staff member to schedule an appointment with one of the Counseling Center counselors. For additional information, you may ask to speak with the counselor on-call. There is no fee for counseling services.

Why?

Students often seek counseling for:

- Relationship breakup
- Family conflict or concerns
- Loss of a loved one
- Feeling lonely
- Academic pressure or failure
- Serious illness or injury of self or others
- Difficulty adjusting to university
- Homesickness
- 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
- Body image issues
- Coming out issues