



# Counseling Center



# A Faculty and Staff Guide to Helping Students

Counseling Center  
104 College Park Office Building  
Bowling Green, OH 43403  
419-372-2081  
[www.bgsu.edu/counseling](http://www.bgsu.edu/counseling)

 BGSU Counseling Center  
 @BGCounselingCTR

**BGSU** | DIVISION of  
STUDENT  
AFFAIRS  
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

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## INTRODUCTION

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Most distressed or troubled students who come to the Counseling Center do so on their own. Sometimes, however, they are referred by others at the University who become aware of their distress and hope that counseling might be helpful. In fact, faculty and staff members who have frequent contact with students are in an excellent position to identify troubled students, and assist them in obtaining appropriate help.

This reference guide is designed to give you, BGSU faculty and staff members, guidelines about referring students to the Counseling Center for counseling services. This guide will provide you with information about other Center services and how to access them in order to ultimately assist students 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/](http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/counseling/)

#### **Hours:**

Monday - Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm  
(excluding University observed holidays)

#### **Location:**

104 College Park  
Office Building

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## OVERVIEW OF THE COUNSELING CENTER

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The BGSU Counseling Center assists students with educational, social and personal concerns that may interfere with their academic progress. Except for emergencies and consultations, counseling services are available through walk-in hours Monday – Friday 1:30-4pm. 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 staff member is available during business hours for emergency consultation and to assist in managing individual or community crises on campus. You may call the Counseling Center and request to speak with the on-call counselor for an immediate consultation. 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. (See Emergency Referral section p. 10.)

### **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.

**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 and non-traditional 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 faculty and staff about concerns that pertain to the welfare of students. Staff members are invited to call our Center and request consultation with one of our professional staff. If no one is

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**OVERVIEW OF THE  
COUNSELING CENTER  
CONTINUED**

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**Consultation Continued:**

available to provide consultation at the time of your call, you will be invited to leave a message with our secretary or on our confidential voice mail system. 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, position and office
- How you can be reached
- Times that you will be available
- The general nature of your request

**Psychiatric Consultation**

Psychiatrists are available through the Falcon Health Center. A student may be referred for psychiatric services at the Falcon Health Center or to a community by Counseling Center 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, etc. To assist our Center staff in responding to such requests, we have an “outreach team” comprised of graduate students from select programs (i.e., College Student Personnel, Higher Education Administration and Clinical Psychology); all team members have past experience in public speaking, undergo outreach training in our Center, and are available to provide workshops on a variety of topics (e.g., stress management, assertiveness and test anxiety).

At least 2 weeks in advance of the program, you may call our support staff at 419/372-2081 to inform us that you are planning to offer a program and would like to have one of our staff serve as a facilitator. In those instances in which we do not have a staff member available to assist you with your program, our staff will be happy to explore options with you—e.g., options for locating a qualified facilitator elsewhere or for our providing a facilitator at another time. At the time of this contact, please provide the following information about your planned program or workshop:

- Title and brief description
- Possible dates and times
- Intended audience and estimated number

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**OVERVIEW OF THE  
COUNSELING CENTER  
CONTINUED**

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**Liaison Services**

Our liaison relationships are reciprocal, on-going relationships between a representative of the Counseling Center and another unit within the University community. Our intention is to provide reciprocal consultation, mutual outreach programming, and ultimately a greater sense of connection and community for BGSU students.

**Counseling Center Staff**

The counselors are qualified, trained mental health professionals and advanced graduate students with backgrounds in psychology. They are competent and caring people who can help students achieve more satisfying, educational and life experiences.

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**IDENTIFYING A STUDENT IN  
NEED:**

**What should you look for?**

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**Distressed Vs. Distressing Students**

It may be helpful to clarify a key distinction — the difference between students who are in emotional distress, versus students whose behavior is distressing to others.

Students who are *distressed* are experiencing emotional pain which may be generated by external factors and/or internal characteristics. Sometimes, this emotional distress can be observed by others. It may show up as public tearfulness, angry comments, extreme withdrawal from others, etc. ways. Distressed students may be referred to our office and generally find counseling helpful in addressing their concerns.

Students who are *distressing*, on the other hand, are those who cause distress for other people (e.g., instructors, classmates, administrators, roommates) due to their inappropriate behaviors. Examples of such behaviors include disruptive outbursts in class, theft, and threats of harm. It is appropriate for faculty and staff to alert their department heads and/or consult the Office of Student Life and discuss the situation with the Associate Dean or Assistant Dean of Students (372-2843). Students who engage in behaviors that cause undue distress in the campus community should be dealt with in accordance with University and departmental policy for handling such problems.

As you might imagine—and may have experienced—the most complicated situations involve students who are both *distressed* and *distressing*. These students should receive appropriate disciplinary intervention through their department and/or the Office of Student Affairs. This is true whether or not the troublesome behavior arises from emotional disturbance. Additionally, the Counseling Center is available to assist faculty and staff in determining if psychological intervention is appropriate. Such students may be encouraged to seek counseling.

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**COMMON CAUSES OF  
EMOTIONAL DISTRESS**

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- 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

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**SIGNS OF STUDENT DISTRESS  
WHICH REQUIRE IMMEDIATE  
REFERRAL OR ATTENTION:**

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- Expressions of suicidal thoughts or intent
- Expression of violence towards others
- Severe loss of emotional control
- Bizarre behavior or gross impairment in thinking ability

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**FOR EMERGENCY  
ASSISTANCE:**

Monday - Friday 8:00 - 5:00 pm  
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).**

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## **COMMON WARNING SIGNS OF STUDENT DISTRESS**

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### Academic Signs

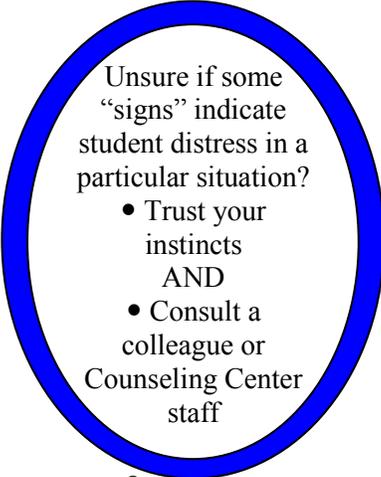
- Career and Course Indecision
- Excessive Procrastination
- Uncharacteristically Poor Preparation or Performance
- Repeated Requests for Extensions or Special Considerations
- Disruptive Classroom Behavior
- Excessive Absence/Tardiness
- Avoiding or Dominating Discussions
- References to Suicide or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

### Interpersonal Signs

- Asking Instructor for Help with Personal Problems
- Dependency on Advisor or Avoidance of Advisor
- Disruptive Behavior
- Inability to Get Along with Others
- Complaints from Other Students
- Withdrawal from Others

### Behavioral Signs

- 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



Unsure if some  
“signs” indicate  
student distress in a  
particular situation?

- Trust your instincts
- AND
- Consult a colleague or Counseling Center staff

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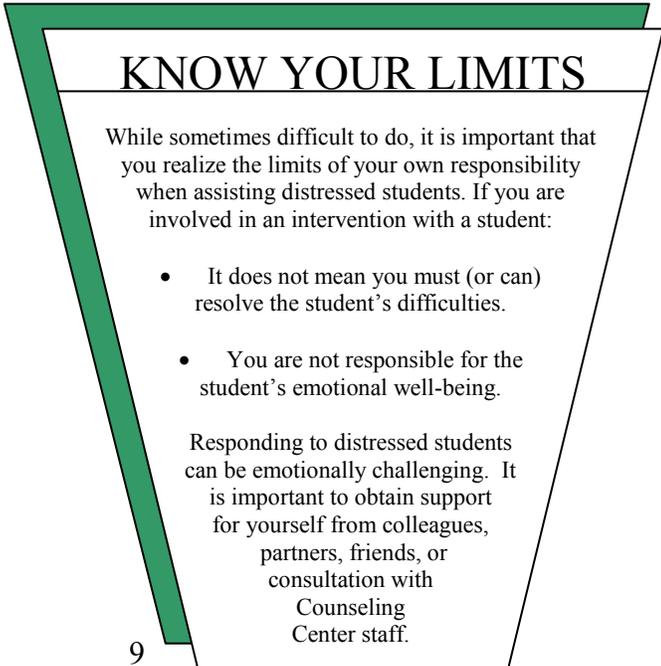
**RESPONDING TO THE  
STUDENT IN NEED:**

*How can you help?*

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If you have noticed warning signs, you are faced with the decision of whether or not to intervene. 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 that will help you to be a good listener and to increase a student's willingness to accept a referral to the Counseling Center or other resources:

- 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. *For example: "Sounds as if you are disappointed because the test did not go as you expected." OR "You feel sad because you didn't get accepted to the program in which you are really interested."*
- Discuss your observations and perceptions of the situation directly and honestly with the student. *For example: "I notice you haven't attended class lately and that is uncharacteristic of you."*
- Express your concern in a non-judgmental 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 of your ability to help them.
- If the 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. 12.) Do not promise to keep threats to self or others secret.
- Discuss campus resources. If the student is interested, make a referral to the Counseling Center.



### KNOW YOUR LIMITS

While sometimes difficult to do, it is important that you realize the limits of your own responsibility when assisting distressed students. If you are involved in an intervention with a student:

- It does not mean you must (or can) resolve the student's difficulties.
- You are not responsible for the student's emotional well-being.

Responding to distressed students can be emotionally challenging. It is important to obtain support for yourself from colleagues, partners, friends, or consultation with Counseling Center staff.

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## HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

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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**

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 to make the referral and discuss whether immediate intervention is necessary.
- Whenever possible, inform the student in crisis 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).
- If the student or another person is in immediate danger call 911 or BGSU police at 419/ 372-2346.

### **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 30 minutes to assess situation and current needs.
- The student will be referred to an individual or group therapist in the Center or to another agency in the community.
- Sometimes the student's concerns are effectively addressed in an initial intake session or two.

### **Non-Emergency Referrals:**

- Invite the student to go to the Counseling Center's walk-in hours Monday-Friday 1:30-4pm. This is the initial "intake" appointment with one of our counselors
- Offer to let the student call from your office if you believe they need extra support and encouragement.
- Consult with Counseling Center staff when you think the student's circumstances may require an immediate (emergency) appointment. We will assist you in determining whether emergency intervention is warranted and talk with you about the specific arrangements that need to be made.
- Assure the 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.12).
- Let the student know that he or she may request to see a male or female counselor, although this may delay services.
- Provide student with expectations for their first visit to the Counseling Center.

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## HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL CONTINUED

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### **Non-Emergency Referrals (Cont.):**

- If you choose to provide the student with the specific names of counselors (to personalize your referral), please do not offer the student any guarantees about whom he or she will see. Let the student know that particular staff may not be available at the Counseling Center for either the initial session or for ongoing counseling.
- Inform the student that ongoing counseling (if it is the most appropriate choice to meet his or her needs) may be provided by a different person than the initial intake counselor. Additionally, let the student know that there may be a delay between the intake session and the start of ongoing counseling.
- Let the 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. 13).

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

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If it seems clear that a 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:

- The student can try one session to see how it feels.
- The visit will be kept strictly confidential.
- All the student has to do to get an appointment is go to the Counseling Center during walk-in hours Monday-Friday 1:30-4pm.
- 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.
- The 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 the student prefers to go elsewhere for therapy.

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## ACCEPTING THE STUDENT'S RIGHT TO SAY NO

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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, you need to accept the student's decision.

If you are quite concerned about such a student, consult with Counseling Center staff. Perhaps a Counseling Center staff member could suggest alternative ways of approaching the student, to help you more effectively intervene on the student's behalf, or confirm that you have done all that you could do.

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**FOLLOWING UP:**  
*What can you expect?*

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Once you have connected the student with the Counseling Center, you might be curious about how counseling and the student's concerns are going. You can follow-up with the student by asking how they are doing—this communicates your ongoing concern/care of the student and lets them know that you also continue to be a resource to them, if that is a role you are comfortable fulfilling. 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 the student and to keep this in mind yourself as you look for the student's 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 the student. 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**

Responding to distressed students can trigger complex personal thoughts and feelings for faculty and staff. It is important to obtain support for yourself as you engage in work with students in distress. This support might come from colleagues, partners, friends, or through consultation with Counseling Center staff.

Faculty and staff who wish to obtain counseling services for themselves may consult with our staff about referral options available to them. Harbor operates BGSU's Employee Assistance Program. Harbor representatives can be reached at 800/422-5338.

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## 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
Learning Commons	419-372-2221
Office of Residence Life	419-372-2011
University Activities Office	419-372-2486
Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs	419-372-2147
Police Department	419-372-2346
Psychological Services Center	419-372-2301
Falcon Health Center	419-372-2271
The Women's Center	419-372-7227
Wellness Connection	419-372-9355

### **Community**

Behavioral Connections	419-352-5387
Bowling Green Pregnancy Center	419-354-4673
Bridge Home Health & Hospice	419-352-9808
Spiritual/Religious Student Organizations	
<a href="http://www2.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/deanofstudents/ministry/page16838.html">http://www2.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/deanofstudents/ministry/page16838.html</a>	
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/prefguide.html>).

# COUNSELING CENTER AT A GLANCE

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

## Who?

The Counseling Center staff includes several licensed psychologists and other well-trained mental health professionals, 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

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 - Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

(except for University Holidays)

## Where?

The Counseling Center is located at:

104 College Park Office Building

Bowling Green State University

Bowling Green, OH 43403

Phone: 419/372-2081

Fax: 419/372-9535

## How?

To obtain any of the provided services listed above please call the Counseling Center. For a counseling appointment, students can use walk-in hours Monday-Friday 1:30-4pm for an initial appointment. 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