

Making Referrals

- Share your reasons for making the referral based on your observation of student's behavior.
- Reassure student that counseling is confidential (except for emergency situations such as suicidal intent) and counselors cannot share student information with others without written permission from student.
- Offer to walk over to counseling with student. This support sometimes helps them feel safer.
- Let them know what to expect for their first visit: Upon arrival they will have 5-10 minutes of paperwork to complete that a counselor will discuss with them. Sessions generally last 50 minutes.
- Students can see a counselor up to 15 times per academic year, but most students use far fewer sessions depending on the issues they are working through.
- Don't be surprised, if after a student's visit to counseling, that the student does not share the outcome with you. Counseling can be difficult and following a counseling appointment, the student may prefer to mull things over in private.

What about the Reluctant Student?

- Reassure students that counselors work with people on wide range of concerns, not just "severe" problems.
- It is much easier to work on issues before they become crises
- Students can speak to counselor on one-time basis; they are not required to return if it doesn't suit them.
- If the student had a bad counseling experience, encourage them to try speaking with another counselor or counseling center.
- Respect a student's decision to not seek help (unless it is an emergency).

Emergency

- **Call 9-1-1 if a student, or others, is in imminent danger**
- **After calling 9-1-1 please contact campus security to alert them to emergency response arriving at your location.**
- **Also, call the counseling office to report the situation after the student is taken care of by emergency responders. Counseling will follow-up with students upon their return to Cornish.**

Helping Students in Distress



A Guide for CCA Faculty and Staff

Student Counseling Services

MCC 308

206.726.5027

206.726.5047

<http://www.cornish.edu/studentaffairs/counseling.htm>

Recognizing Students in Emotional Distress

During the course of the academic year, students contend with a myriad of stressors that can overwhelm them. There is academic stress, the stress of living on their own, roommate issues, career and future planning, to name only a few. Distress may be the result of prior or current trauma, or the onset of mental illness.

If not managed, these issues can cause emotional, physical, and intellectual difficulties. Stress effects are readily observed if one knows what to look for. You will know troubled students by these indicators:

- Poor grades, especially if they performed well previously
- Pattern of asking for extensions on projects
- Excessive absences, especially if they previously had good attendance
- Sleeping in class, lethargy, can't focus
- Unusual or marked change in interaction with others: anxious, avoidant, argumentative, emotional, etc.
- Increase in memory problems
- Loss of contact with reality
- Increase in alcohol or other drug use
- Excessive increase in goal directed behavior
- Suicidal or homicidal thoughts, threats or actions

If you are unsure about your observations, call Counseling at x5027 or x5047 or visit the office to talk with a counselor about your concerns.

Recognizing Disruptive Students

Being disruptive might be a personality trait of a student. These traits may impede their ability to create healthy or respectful connections with their peers or faculty and staff. Disruptive students can also use counseling to learn more effective interpersonal skills.

Counseling Services supports holding students accountable for their behaviors; inappropriate behaviors must be in line with the CCA Student Code of Conduct. Appropriate behavior can be spelled out in syllabi (e.g. refraining from taking cell phone calls during class or talking out of turn during lecture). Often these behaviors are an attempt to consciously or unconsciously communicate something personal to others.

Some other disruptive behaviors and traits:

- Manipulating to get a better grade, better role, etc.
- Harassing or threatening others
- "Dropping a bomb": sharing personal information that makes others in class uncomfortable.
- Frequent use of profanity can be indicative of problems in students' lives.
- Talking over others or persistent interrupting
- Persistent tardiness

When Students' Work Concerns You

While a cornerstone of a higher education is individual expression, some content (written,

spoken or artistically presented) that seems incoherent, "bizarre," overwhelmingly negative or ominous may be indicative of a student's personal struggles. Themes of sexual violence, physical violence or death may be expressed. Other students in the classroom who have experienced traumatic events may experience anxiety at the recurrence of memories resulting from exposure to certain material.

Counseling Services encourages faculty and staff to consult with a counselor and your department chair regarding intervention steps.

Intervention Tips

Non Emergency

- DO intervene; the worst response is to do nothing.
- DO consult with your department chair
- DO consult with Student Counseling
- Talk to the student privately before or after class and avoid interruptions.
- In a nonjudgmental way, express your concern about the students behavior or content of their work
- Use open ended questions to help the student identify the problem
- Mutually problem solve establishing an action plan
- Follow-up, reinforce and encourage while establishing expectations for performance (avoid enabling problematic behaviors)