

**LAFAYETTE**

## Counseling Services



***A Guide  
for  
Faculty and Staff***

**Bailey Health Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
330-5005**

## The Counseling Process

The Counseling Center provides high quality, confidential counseling designed to help students learn how to meet their intellectual, interpersonal, and developmental goals. Our programs, services and assessments aim to promote a healthy, equitable, and positive campus community. The Counseling Center staff provides crisis intervention and offers consultation on matters related to student development and psychological well being. All services are conducted in a manner that is positive, empowering and respectful of the diversity of the Lafayette community.

Counseling is provided to all students enrolled in a degree program. Each student may have up to *fifteen individual counseling sessions per academic year*. If a student has difficulties that cannot be adequately addressed in this time frame, we may suggest other resources that would be more appropriate. Although we do not offer ongoing counseling for faculty and staff, we are happy to make referrals to local mental health professionals.

## Your Role as Faculty/Staff

Faculty and staff members play a vital role in identifying students who may benefit from the services provided by the Center. Students will often turn to trusted teachers, coaches, and supervisors for informal advice and support. Although you are not expected to provide counseling, it may be helpful for you to become familiar with signs that indicate a student is having difficulties of an emotional or psychological nature so that you can respond effectively when students approach you with problems.

If at any time you become concerned that the student is in *immediate* danger of harming himself or herself or someone else, you should call the Office of Public Safety at X4444. You may also contact members of the *College's Behavioral Health and Safety Review Committee* who can respond to students who are in distress and/or are behaving in a manner that suggests they might pose a danger to themselves or others. The Committee is chaired by the Dean of Students (x5335) and is comprised of the Directors of Health, Counseling, and Residence Life and the Associate Deans of the College.

## Signs of Distress

You should consider making a referral to the Counseling Center if you notice any of the following:

### Changes in Academic Performance

- Poor academic performance, particularly if such behavior represents a change from the past
- Excessive absences from class
- Confusion or uncertainty about interests, abilities, or values

### Unusual Behavior

- Listlessness, lack of energy, complaints about fatigue
- Marked changes in personal hygiene
- Impaired speech or disjointed, confused thoughts
- Aggressive or threatening behavior
- Extreme mood changes or inappropriate display of emotions
- Excessive crying
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Preoccupation with food or body image
- Bizarre behavior indicating a loss of contact with reality

### Changes in Relationships

- Death of a family member or close friend
- Difficulties in romantic relationships
- Problems with family members, friends, or roommates

### References to Suicide

- Overt references to suicide or statements of hopelessness or helplessness
- Indications of prolonged unhappiness
- Pessimism about the future

### **Guidelines for Responding**

- Initiate contact with a student about whom you are concerned; please don't ignore strange or inappropriate behavior.
- Express your concern and caring and indicate the *specific behaviors* that are the cause for your concern.
- Talk to your student in private when you both have enough time for a conversation.
- Use "I" language that focuses on what you have observed.
- Listen attentively, observing non-verbal as well as verbal responses.
- Avoid being critical or judgmental.
- Encourage positive action by helping the student define the problem and generate coping strategies; avoid the temptation to solve the problem.
- Ask directly how you can best help them.
- Know your limits as a help-giver. When a student needs more help than you are able or willing to give, consider making a referral to the Counseling Center or other mental health agency.

### **Making a Referral**

Many students are initially hesitant about seeking counseling. When you have decided that professional counseling is indicated, tell the student directly and clearly why you are making the referral.

- Review information about the counseling process with students on-line [http://www.lafayette.edu/student\\_life/counseling/](http://www.lafayette.edu/student_life/counseling/)  
Emphasize that services are free and confidential.
- Offer to call the Counseling Center from your office or to let the student use your phone to do so. If you believe it is an emergency, you can accompany the student to the Center on the 2nd floor of Bailey Health Center.
- You might suggest that the student attend one session before judging whether counseling is helpful or not. For those students who are hesitant, point out that using appropriate resources is a sign of strength and maturity.
- Except in the case of imminent danger to self or others, it is important to allow the student to refuse counseling.

### **Confidentiality**

Counseling Center staff members are required by law and by professional codes of ethics to protect the confidentiality of all contacts with students. The only exceptions occur in cases of imminent danger to self or others or direct reports of child abuse. Without a student's permission we can discuss neither the content of counseling sessions nor the fact that they are a client of the Counseling Center. These requirements are in effect even when a faculty/staff member has made the original referral to the Center.

## **Making an Appointment**

The Counseling Center is open from 8:45am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday. Students may make an appointment by calling 330-5005 or by stopping by the 2nd Floor of the Bailey Health Center. Typically, they will be seen within a few days of making the appointment, depending on their schedule. From time to time, especially during mid-semester when our services are in greater demand, the wait may be somewhat longer. However, if it is an emergency, we ask that the caller let the secretary know so that the student can be seen as soon as possible. In the case of after hour emergencies, students should call the Office of Public Safety at 330-4444.

## **Additional Services**

### **Performance Enhancement Classes**

Staff members provide classes and trainings for students, faculty, and staff on such topics as alcohol's effect on academic and athletic performance, becoming an academic "standout," positive psychology approaches to mental health, and current research on Lafayette students.

### **Referral Guide**

For those students who wish to seek counseling from an off-campus mental health professional, we offer a referral guide for psychologists in the Lehigh Valley. Students who are interested in receiving an evaluation for medication are encouraged to consult with the physicians in the Bailey Health Center.

### **Testing**

A number of career and psychological tests are offered to students at no charge. The Counseling Center does *not* provide testing for learning disabilities.

## **Staff**

- Karen J. Forbes, Ph.D., Director of Counseling Services & Student Life Research
- Timothy J. Silvestri, Ph.D., Assistant Director & Coordinator of Drug and Alcohol Services
- Amanda L. Johnson, Psy.D., Postdoctoral psychology intern
- Lindsey Brooks, B.A., Doctoral-level psychology trainee
- Kristin Mehr, B.A., Doctoral-level psychology trainee
- Billie Weiss, Secretary