Helping Students Get the Help They Need: The Role of The Counseling Center

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Welcome to William and Mary

• The Tribe is a diverse population of learners who seek to reach their highest level of academic and personal achievement - that level is different for everyone and all of our students will face challenges
• Some of your daughter/sons have faced significant emotional/psychological challenges in the past, or might in the days ahead
• College is the best place to learn to deal with these challenges

Give a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach him to fish and he eats for a lifetime

Lao Tzu
What to Expect

• From the College
  – To ensure developmentally appropriate challenges balanced with developmentally appropriate support

• From Your Daughter/Son
  – The same things you expected yesterday – their very best!

• From the Counseling Center
  – Attention to the overall health and wellbeing of all of our students; with expertise in unique emotional and psychological challenges
Tasks of the College Student

- Competence and mastery
- Managing complex emotions
- Becoming independent
- Establishing identity
- Forming deep interpersonal relationships
- Clarifying purpose
- Developing character
- Understanding their connection to a larger community
How to Live My Own Life With My Parents Money
The Counseling Center

• The Counseling Center is one office in the Division of Student Affairs, and an extension of the mission of the College of William and Mary. We are among a number of resources that seek to help students function more effectively in the College community. We partner with other offices and entities in the community to help students meet their personal and educational goals.
Our Expertise

• The Counseling Center is comprised of psychologists, social workers, licensed counselors and doctoral students who have dedicated ourselves to the development of college-aged young adults.

• The Counseling Center is designed to provide time-limited counseling which can facilitate adjustment, restore functioning, achieve resolution of developmental challenges, and relieve acute symptoms.

• We are primarily generalists who develop areas of interest and expertise within the field of college mental health.
Our Scope

• For students whose presenting issues suggest a need for more specialized or long-term services we will provide education and support, as well as treatment planning advice which may ultimately result in a referral to private or public mental health care in the community.

• The Counseling Center is not an appropriate substitute for long-term, intensive clinical and specialized psychological services
Making a Good Transition

• Have regular conversations that involve every aspect of their experience (social, emotional, financial, environmental, academic, physical)

• Be realistic about who your daughter/son is and talk with them about their strengths and weaknesses

• Be willing to share about times when you struggled in the past, family history, and expectations regarding risky behavior
Getting Them the Help They Need

• Know the resources; ask lots of questions
• Provide them with options
• Make your expectations clear
• Don’t stop worrying, advising, criticizing, encouraging, supporting, laughing, crying, and talking
• Make them handle the situations they can, and help them when they are in over their heads
How the Counseling Center Works

• Initial Assessment Appointments available within 24-48 hours
• An Assessment results in recommendation(s) for treatment

Treatment may include:
– Individual therapy
– Group therapy
– Psychiatric Referral
– Medical Referral
– Substance Use Referral
– Academic Support and Referral
– Career Counseling Referral
– Private Practice Referral
– Crisis Intervention
Confidentiality

• Federal and state laws, as well as ethical practice guidelines, prohibit counselors from speaking with you about your young adult’s (18+) treatment without their written permission except in very specific cases.

• In cases where we determine that your young adult may come to harm without additional help the Commonwealth of Virginia mandates that we contact you.

• We want to involve you to the extent that we know it can benefit your daughter/son.
The Counseling Center sees 14% of the student population each year – national average is 10%.

National and local trends indicate that more students are entering with previous treatment.

The majority of DSM-IV clinical disorders emerge during the ages of 18-25.

Our students are bright, competent, focused, competitive, and work hard – they are also a little high strung.
Problems they had as a child or adolescent DO NOT go away because they enter college

One visit to the Counseling Center does NOT “fix” a student in distress

Students DO NOT always tell you the truth, especially about their experience with counseling

If a student comes for help, and mentions suicide, we DO NOT kick them out.

Seeking counseling will NOT keep them out of the career they want to pursue

This is NOT “Suicide U.”
Urgent Concerns

• The Dean of Students Office has the authority to reach out to students in ways that we cannot. They can arrange to have students come in to be assessed when they are unwilling or unable to do so on their own.

• If you have an immediate concern about a student’s safety contact the Dean of Students Office, then contact us.

• We will use all the information we have about a student to make the best decision that we can about what should happen next.

• You may not always know what that decision is.
How We Can Help You

- Address hypothetical situations and consult with you in helping a student
- Explain how our system works; point you to the right resource
- Provide information on general developmental issues, mental health issues, and treatment issues
- Support you and your family should your son/daughter experience challenges or crisis while at the College
- Help you locate local resources to aid your student
How You Can Help The Student

• Do Your Own Homework
  – Don’t Tell Me What to Do: Just Send Money. Helen Johnson and Christine Schelhas-Miller, 2000
  – When Your Kid Goes to College: A Parent’s Survival Guide. Carol Barkin, 1999

• Make Decisions about Your Insurance Based on Your Son/Daughter’s needs
How Your Student Can Help Themselves

• Provide us or the Health Center with access to important medical information (diagnosis, previous treatment providers, medication taken and reaction history)

• Do their homework
  – Stress Management
  – Open Communication
  – Online Screenings and Resources
Congratulations!!!

Q&A
RESOURCES

• Dean of Students  757-221-2510
• Health Center      757-221-4386
• Counseling Center  757-221-3620
• Residence Life     757-221-4314
• Center for Student Diversity 757-221-2300
• William and Mary Police  757-221-4596