

**REFERRING
STUDENTS
FOR
COUNSELING:
A GUIDE
FOR
FACULTY,
STAFF
And TA's**

**University Counseling Service (UCS)
726 Broadway #471
212-998-4780**

Personal problems can cause students psychological distress and interfere with their academic performance. When students have personal problems, faculty, staff and TA's can address the situation by referring the student to University Counseling Service (UCS), NYU's professional counseling service. A referral involves telling the student in a non-threatening way about UCS and how to make use of its services.

Here are some common sense suggestions for identifying students who have problems and referring them to UCS:

1. Be alert to signs of difficulty:

Mood: extreme sadness, anger or anxiety, or mood swings

Performance: concentration difficulties, deteriorated academic performance, repeated unexplained absences or lateness

Social behavior: extreme withdrawal or dependency

Speech or writings: student alludes to problems, to feeling worthless, or to thoughts about death or suicide

2. If you notice any of these signs, ask to meet privately with the student. Allow plenty of time for the meeting.

3. Point out specifically the signs you've observed, say you're concerned, and ask what's wrong, for example:

"I wanted to talk to you because I notice you've been late recently, you never participate in class anymore, and you seem troubled. I'm concerned. What's wrong?"

4. Discourage quick dismissals ("I'm fine—it's nothing.") Say you really want to know what's wrong. Then while the student talks, listen carefully.

5. If it turns out there **is not** a significant problem, or the student is already in treatment, you needn't do anything further. No harm's been done. By checking on the student you've demonstrated that you're a caring person.

6. If there **is** a significant problem, you should make a referral to UCS. What qualifies as a significant problem? Anything that impairs the student's well-being or school performance. Examples are depression, homesickness, loneliness, excessive anxiety, an eating disorder, family conflicts, inability to study, drug or alcohol abuse, or anxiety about sexual issues.

Note: You don't have to be Sigmund Freud to recognize a significant problem. Usually, listening carefully should make crystal clear

whether a problem is interfering with the student's well-being and/or school performance.

If not sure about a student, however, please feel free to call.

7. To refer the student, explain that University Counseling Service (UCS):

- Is the NYU office devoted to helping students with personal difficulties
- Offers short-term individual counseling, group counseling, and referrals
- Is free of charge
- Is staffed by professional counselors
- Has counselors who specialize in eating disorders, substance abuse, gay/le sbian concerns, concerns of various racial groups—and more!
- Is confidential
- Makes it easy to schedule an appointment; simply call or stop by:

726 Broadway Suite #471
(for all students except CAS & GSP)

920 Silver Center
(for CAS students)

Pless Building
(for Steinhardt students)

326 Shimkin

(for GSP students)

8. Be encouraging if the student is frightened or skeptical. If necessary, explain that counseling doesn't mean someone is crazy or weak. But respect the student's decision whether or not to make an appointment. Sometimes students initially reject counseling but take the step later.

9. If the student does agree to go to UCS, you may ask for feedback about how the appointment went—if he/she wants to give feedback. Remember, some students prefer to keep counseling contacts confidential.

10. In case of an **emergency**, it is essential that UCS see the student promptly. An emergency exists if the student is suicidal or is otherwise in immediate danger.

11. In an emergency, please call UCS directly and ask to speak to us directly. Then if possible escort the student directly to UCS at 3 Washington Square Village #1M. If that's impossible, we will consult with you about arranging to meet the student.

12. For after hours emergencies, call NYU Protection Services at 998-2222. They will contact the Health Center nurse and the UCS counselor on duty.

13. If you have any questions at any time, please do not hesitate to call 998-4780.

Ask for:

Paul Grayson, director

Victor Schwartz, medical director

Or **Michele Wheeler**, assistant director