

Referral Process to Counseling Services at UHCS, Fall 2020

We understand that you are often the first person a student may confide in when they are struggling. We also realize that now more than ever, in such a time of uncertainty, students might be in need of additional support for their mental health. This document provides guidance and serves to update you on how Counseling Services at UHCS is available to support you in your daily interactions with your students.

OFFER SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE — Your interest, attentive listening and concern may be pivotal in helping a troubled student. Validate feelings while also encouraging positive action by helping the student to define the problems and generate coping strategies.

REFER — Know your limits as a helper: only go as far as your expertise and resources allow. When a student needs more help than you are able or willing to give, a referral is appropriate.

ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY — UHCS staff are required by law and professional ethics to protect the confidentiality of all communication between therapist and client (except in cases where harm to self or others is indicated). Consequently, the Counseling Services staff cannot discuss with others the details of a student's situation, or even indicate whether the student is being seen in therapy without the student's signed consent. It is suggested that you ask a student directly if they followed up on your recommendation to make contact with UHCS.

DELIVERY OF SERVICES DURING COVID — Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and recommended safety guidelines outlined by the CDC, Counseling Services made the transition in Spring 2020 to meet the needs of our students virtually (via video or phone) in most cases. We continue to offer this treatment modality during the fall 2020 semester.

If students are engaging in **telemental health** (having their counseling session via WebEx or phone), we ask them to be physically located in a quiet and confidential space where they are not worried about being overheard when speaking to a provider. If a student does not have access to such a space, rooms have been set aside in the Health Center and in various locations across campus for this purpose. The student simply needs to inquire about this when they schedule their appointment.

Students may also be seen in person when circumstances dictate, on a case-by-case basis. **Call before appearing in person.** We have and will continue to have staff available at the Ambrose Health Center during business hours, M-F 8:00—4:30.



University Health
and Counseling Services

710 W. Starin Road
Whitewater, WI 53190
262-472-1300

Hours:
Monday—Friday
8:00 am—4:30 pm

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General Guidelines: Non-Emergency Referral

Talk to the student about the services and procedures of UHCS (found on the 1st page of this handout). A triage appointment can be made by calling 262-472-1305. It is important to let the student know that services are confidential and free to enrolled students. If a student struggles with initiating a phone call, they can also request to be contacted for an appointment by following the link located here: <https://www.uww.edu/uwcs/counseling-services/services-available>

- Their first scheduled contact with a mental health provider will be a 30-minute phone or video conversation, during which the individual's presenting concerns and recommended next steps will be discussed. The student will receive an email prior to this appointment containing relevant paperwork to complete.
- It is important to provide the student with a sense of control about their decision to follow your recommendation. Sometimes offering to call with them on speaker phone may be beneficial if you sense the student would benefit from the additional support. You can assist the student in anticipating what will happen and what they will say when they come in for the appointment. When referring a student, point out that asking for help is a sign of strength and courage, not a sign of weakness or failure.

It is important to follow up with a student after you make a referral. This conveys your interest. You can also help reduce the stigma associated with counseling by not avoiding the topic, though such discussions should be held privately.

Crisis/Emergency Referral

If it seems the situation warrants a same-day crisis appointment, **please call 262-472-1305 and ask for an emergency appointment**. The counselor-on-call will provide guidance on the next steps to take. These types of appointments are appropriate for individuals who are having thoughts of harm to self or others, have experienced a recent trauma, assault, death, or situation that would cause them to cancel school or work.

You are welcome to walk the student to Ambrose Health Center; however, please be aware that there may be physical health restrictions and guidelines that will need to be navigated prior to entering the building. Depending on the circumstances, you may be encouraged to stay with the student for a short time or to speak briefly with the on-call provider. **Please call prior to walking over.**

When you refer a student, remember that a referral is a transfer of trust. Thank you very much for being there for our students and helping us identify those students who need us. Please do not ever hesitate to reach out and if you have any questions. We are happy to provide consultation and feedback.