

# Urgent or Emergency Situations

If you believe that a situation is urgent, call the Counseling Center at 273-2676 and we will consult with you about what to do. In many cases, we will recommend that you send or bring the student to the Counseling Center to meet with an on-duty crisis counselor. After regular office hours, call the Counseling Center at 273-2676 and press 2 to speak to a counselor.

Urgent or emergency situations may include, but are not limited to:

- A risk of suicide;
- A threat of harm to others;
- Severely disorganized, psychotic, or out of control behavior;
- Trauma, such as sexual assault or the death or injury of someone close to the student.

## Counseling Center

The UNI Counseling Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday during the academic year.

Summer hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Counseling Center**  
**University of Northern Iowa**  
**103 Student Health Center**  
**Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0385**

**Phone: 319-273-2676**

More information is available at:  
**[www.uni.edu/counseling](http://www.uni.edu/counseling)**



# Referring STUDENTS TO THE Counseling Center

*A Guide for UNI Faculty and Staff*



UNI faculty and staff members frequently become aware of students who are troubled or distressed. In many cases, a student benefits greatly from supportive listening and advice from a trusted faculty or staff member. In other cases, a faculty or staff member may wish to refer the student for professional counseling. For mental health emergencies, call 911 or go to a hospital emergency department.

The UNI Counseling Center is staffed by professional, experienced psychologists and mental health counselors who specialize in working with college students. Located on the 2nd floor of the Student Health Center, we are easily accessible to students.



# Counseling Center Services

Counseling Center services are confidential, free, and available to UNI students who have paid the Health Fee. Services include:

- Initial assessment
- Short-term individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Couples counseling
- Consultation and referral

The Counseling Center is committed to being knowledgeable and sensitive regarding issues of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, and ability.



## When to Refer

As with many of life's problems, earlier intervention is often better. A person who receives appropriate help sooner, rather than later, may be less likely to experience more severe symptoms or problems.

Students could also benefit from counseling if they are having difficulty coping with a loss (e.g., death or relationship breakup), if they have experienced a traumatic incident (e.g., assault or accident), if they have experienced a significant stressor or whenever emotional difficulties interfere with daily functioning.

The following signs may indicate a need to refer a student to the Counseling Center:

- Depression
- Inappropriate crying
- Suicidal thoughts or feelings
- Outbursts of anger
- Substance abuse
- Low self-esteem
- Abrupt changes in behavior
- Debilitating anxiety

## How to Refer

Consider the following guidelines when talking with a student:

- Talk to the student in a private setting.
- Listen carefully and express your concern.
- Repeat back the essence of what the student tells you to convey your understanding.
- Avoid criticizing or sounding judgmental.
- Suggest the Counseling Center as a resource to help the student.
- Inform the student that counseling is confidential and free to students who paid the Mandatory Health Fee.
- Suggest they call or visit the Counseling Center to arrange an initial appointment.

If the student is reluctant to come to the Counseling Center, it may help if you can provide more information about counseling:

- "Counseling is a confidential conversation about your thoughts and feelings with a trained counselor who is objective and a good listener. This often is helpful when you have a decision to make."
- "Sometimes counseling may help you to change your behavior in order to deal more effectively with a problem."
- "You may become aware of strengths and potentials you can use to your benefit."
- "Counseling may help by giving you certain types of information, or by teaching you new skills."
- "Counseling may help you to see yourself and others in a different light."

Sometimes students feel more comfortable if you, or another trusted person, offer to accompany them to the Counseling Center on their first visit.

If the student still resists help and you continue to be concerned, contact the Counseling Center to consult with a staff member.

## Confidentiality

Counseling is confidential according to state and federal laws. We cannot legally release any information about our clients to anyone without their permission (with specific, rare, legally defined exceptions).

If you wish to be certain that a student makes an appointment, consider having the student call the Counseling Center from your office. We will be able to confirm that the appointment was kept only if the student gives us permission to release that information to you.



## Counseling Center Staff Members

Our professional staff members have doctoral and/or master's degrees and are licensed by the State of Iowa as psychologists or mental health counselors, or are being supervised by a licensed staff member.