

Student Psychological Services

Telephone: 310-338-2868
Office: Burns Recreation Center
North Entrance, Second floor

Faculty and Staff Guide

Although most students manage college life effectively, some do not cope well, and other struggle significantly. Students may experience emotional or life crises that temporarily disrupt their lives. As faculty and staff, you may find yourself with students who have serious problems, or are in crisis. When students require more assistance, please refer to Student Psychological Services (SPS). SPS staff are available to consult with faculty and staff.

WHAT STUDENTS CAN EXPECT

After an initial appointment, the student and their therapist will decide together on an appropriate and achievable therapy goals. The duration of the therapy will depend on the nature of and extent of the student's concerns. If the student needs specialized or extended therapy, SPS staff may refer to an off-campus provider.

CONFIDENTIALITY

A student's contact with Student Psychological Services (SPS) is protected by laws of confidentiality and privilege with a few legal exceptions. SPS will not disclose information without the student's written permission. Therapy records are kept separate from all other university records and cannot be released without the student's consent, except under very rare legal circumstances. If you seek a consultation for a student who may be in therapy at SPS, we cannot confirm or deny any information about that student without their permission. However, we will make every effort to consult and assist you with your concerns.

IMMEDIATE CONCERNS

If you believe a student is in crisis during regular business hours and should receive immediate help, please have the student call SPS and speak with the on-call therapist. If it is after hours, please have student call SPS and press 2 to speak to the on-call therapist. If an on-campus emergency, please contact the Department of Public Safety at 310-338-2893.

WHEN TO REFER

Whenever you feel a student's problems involve significant issues outside the academic realm, please refer the student to SPS directly. You are also welcomed to contact SPS for consultation. Your referral is a vitally important step to help a troubled student and we appreciate your concern.

Common signs that students might need professional help include:

- A dramatic decline in academic performance, including increased absenteeism and failure to complete assignments.
- Talking about feelings of hopelessness and helplessness as well as direct and / or indirect suicidal references, including saying "goodbye."
- Indications of substance abuse, including alcohol and/or drug reference.
- A crisis event, including academic problems and pressures, family or relationship problems, financial stress and other acute life events.

General recommendations on what to do and say:

- Express your care and concerns, e.g., "I am concerned about you."
- Describe the behavior that concerns you, e.g., "your grades have dropped significantly and you have missed several classes" or "you seem depressed."
- Remain calm and non-judgmental, and listen to what the student is saying or not saying.
- Support the student's feelings by acknowledging the difficulty of his/her situation; avoid dismissing feelings by saying "many people feel that way."
- Offer your assistance in seeking additional help from others, provide options for support, encourage problem solving and constructive actions.
- Because people in crisis may not be thinking beyond the pain of the immediate situation, discourage making impulsive or life changing decisions.
- If a student appears to be suicidal, listen to what the student says, and treat it seriously. Talk directly about your concerns, never leave the student, and call SPS or walk the student over to our office.