



KING'S COLLEGE

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Faculty and Staff Guide to Counseling Services

Counseling Center

Administration Building, 6th Floor, Room 620

570.208.5873

Office Hours: 8:30am-4:30pm Monday through Friday

Faculty and Staff Guide to Counseling Services

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Purpose of this Guide

College is a challenging time. With deadlines to meet, relationships to build, and a career to plan, it can seem like a lot to juggle. The King's College Counseling Center assists students in finding solutions to life's challenges by helping them manage stress and anxiety, learn new ways to deal with difficult situations, improve moods, mend relationships, and hopefully live better lives.

The purpose of this publication is to assist faculty and staff in their efforts to enhance the educational and personal achievements of King's College students by providing some information about situations or circumstances in which counseling services may be helpful or advised.

The information within explains when professional counseling might be beneficial to an individual and how to make a referral to Counseling Services. You will find some common concerns that students often seek support for and a discussion of how to assist students in obtaining a referral for services, how to help those immediately in distress, and how to gauge what is an urgent situation.

Throughout, the concept of professional confidentiality as it applies to counseling and information about referral and consultation services are also discussed. You will also find specific information about what to do in emergency circumstances.

King's College Counseling Center **Mission Statement**

College is an important time of academic, personal, and social growth and development. It may bring challenges, changes, decisions, opportunities, and new experiences that one must navigate. Our Mission is to support our students' overall emotional health and well-being to aid them in pursuing their academic success and empower them to meet their career and life goals after leaving campus.

To achieve this Mission, the Counseling Center strives to:

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- *Provide quality mental health treatment by qualified clinicians using best practices.*
- *Adhere to the guiding Code of Ethics from our respective disciplines.*
- *Practice with inclusivity, cultural competence, and cultural humility, respecting every student's inherent dignity and worth regardless of their gender identity, race, ethnic background, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, economic background, or disability/ability.*
- *Offer a variety of services to meet student and campus community needs, including individual counseling sessions, consultation, programming and outreach, groups and workshops, crisis and emergency intervention, psychiatric consultation, and referrals when appropriate.*
- *Support the overall Mission of King's College by being a part of a nurturing community that strives to form personal connection and provide genuine compassion and attention to all our students.*

Services Offered

The services offered in the King's College Counseling Center fall into three basic categories:

1. Counseling/Clinical Mental Health Services

During the academic semesters our primary function is to offer one-to-one counseling sessions to our students. Typically, sessions are approximately 45 minutes in duration and the meeting frequency is tailored to each individual student's needs. All of our services are offered by masters level mental health professionals that are educated, experienced, and trained on the issues most often occurring in the lives of our students.

2. Education

Through various outreach methods including presentations, workshops, our HOPE Peer Education program, and events on campus, we offer information and advocate for mental health matters.

3. Consultation

Many times, situations arise regarding students that present a challenge or bring about unrest in a faculty or staff member. You do not have to feel alone, confused, or unsure of what to do or how to handle the scenario. In these times, we encourage you to consult

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with a counselor in the Counseling Center. We can go over the situation and develop a plan or direction on how to proceed. You can consult with one of our staff members directly through email or by calling our office during normal business hours.

counselingcenterstaff@kings.edu

570-208-5873

Some additional and helpful information about Counseling Center services:

Cost

Our services are included in a students' tuition and fees and no additional costs are to be expected. We do not accept or require insurance for our services. This includes services provided by our contracted psychiatric provider.

Population Served

All currently enrolled full-time undergraduate students can utilize the services offered in the Counseling Center. Full-time graduate students who are located in the state of Pennsylvania are also eligible for services. Part-time undergraduate students will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Due to state-to-state licensing laws, our clinicians cannot provide services to students out of state or while they are abroad. If you are unsure if a student would be eligible for services or if have any questions regarding eligibility, please contact us and we can provide some clarity.

Confidentiality

All aspects of a student's participation in counseling at the Counseling Center - **including the scheduling of/attendance at appointments, content of counseling sessions, records, and outcomes of counseling** - are kept private and are protected by law and guided by our respective licensing boards. Mental health professionals provide services to enrolled King's College students with respect for the diverse backgrounds, dignity, and worth of everyone in a confidential and supportive manner. Please know, counseling records are separate from academic or administrative records at King's College; *the standard student FERPA release does not apply to counseling records or information.*

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Should a student want a counseling center staff member to speak with someone regarding their care and treatment in our center, a student can sign a *Release of Information Form* granting permission for clinical staff to share specific confidential information with or to release records to an individual or agency.

There are specific legal limits to confidentiality such as:

- Evidence of clear and imminent danger of harm to self or others may require a counselor to report this information to the local or campus authorities or other pertinent individuals to ensure the safety of the student and/or others.
- Pennsylvania state law requires the mandatory and immediate reporting of any information pertaining to the possible physical or sexual abuse or neglect of any person under 18 years of age or in the case of elder/dependent adult individuals.
- A court order, issued by a judge, may require the releasing of information contained in Counseling Center records or may require a counselor to testify in a court hearing. [This exception does not include student conduct hearings held within the College.]

Furthermore, specific to policies on our campus, additional limitations to confidentiality exist:

- Under federal Title IX policy, professional counselors in the Counseling Center are *confidential reporters* when a student discloses sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence or any such behaviors that fall under the umbrella of Title IX. This means that if a student does not want to initiate an official Title IX report, counselors are able to make a confidential Jane/John Doe report with respect to privacy.

What to Look For:

Signs a Student May Need a Referral to the Counseling Center

There are times when someone may see some behaviors or traits in a student and wonder if they should do anything further. Below are some areas that may warrant a need to refer to the Counseling Center to get a student additional assistance and support.

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- Excessive anxiety or panic
- Depression, chronic fatigue, suicidal thoughts, or thoughts/actions of self-harm
- Severe self-doubt, negative self-put downs, uncertainty about goals and direction
- Confused, disorganized, or suspicious thinking
- Bizarre or inappropriate behavior and/or appearance
- Changes in personal relationships or physical appearance
- Loneliness, isolation, and/ or poor relationship skills
- Emotional outbursts
- More talkative than usual, unusual energy, decreased need for sleep
- Confusion regarding sexual behavior and identity
- Perfectionistic behavior and overwhelming test anxiety
- Problems with alcohol or other drugs
- Eating or body image problems
- Missing classes, responsibilities, procrastination, avoidance
- Poor academic performance or abrupt drop-off in participation
- Inability to modify tardiness in attendance/ with assignments
- Experiencing a personal loss such as a death in the family or the ending of a relationship

Urgent Situations and Emergencies

If you observe a student behaving in one or more of the concerning ways below, if it is during normal business hours, call our office and speak with someone directly. If your call is not immediately answered, contact Switchboard (570-208-5900) as these are signs of URGENT matters. Ask the switchboard operator to contact the Professional On-Call (POC). They will help navigate the situation and notify the Counselor On-Call (COC) for further direction.

- Talking, writing about, or making gestures about suicide directly
- Becoming verbally aggressive or physically violent
- Loss of contact with reality (show signs of psychosis such as responding to things only they appear to be hearing or seeing or beliefs or actions at odds with reality)
- Making direct statements/threaten to harm other people
- Unable to communicate clearly (garbled or slurred speech)

***Differentiating Urgent Need to be Seen by a Counselor
versus Needing to Make an Appointment for a Later Time***

1. If you are referring a student to the Counseling Center and there is a direct concern for the student's safety (i.e., you may be afraid they will harm themselves or someone else), please directly emphasize this concern when speaking to someone in the Counseling Center during your phone call. If you talk to our Office Coordinator, please indicate this concern. If you walk a student up to the Counseling Center and our Office Coordinator is not at their desk, and the counselors are in sessions (their doors are closed), please knock on one of the counselors' doors for immediate assistance. If there is a direct concern for safety, we will want to see this student immediately.
2. If a student is *extremely* visibly distressed, please also follow the above. Tears don't always equate to a safety issue, but it's best to let us determine that in extreme circumstances rather than put yourself in a complicated position.
3. If a student is expressing struggles but no immediate threat is apparent, then please refer them for an appointment which will occur at a later date. We do our best to see students in a timely manner (typically within three to four business days for new students requesting an initial session).
4. If a student is struggling with no immediate threat – please remember as a staff or faculty member you are in a position to provide validation, encouragement and support. While you are not a licensed mental health professional, *you still may have valuable information you can share with a student to help them navigate though their stress*. Sometimes students feel markedly better after having an empathetic ear listen to them or after being educated on some useful life skills.

How to Have Difficult Discussions with Students

Here are some pointers on how to approach difficult, delicate, ambiguous, or emotionally charged situations with students and how to help point them in a safe and helpful direction.

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1. Show direct eye contact and attentive behavior to the student. Speak in a clear and moderate tone with a slowed down pace. Body language and tone is incredibly important and how a good portion of our communication is received by others.
2. Speak directly to the student showing simple, specific, and concrete concern. Do not make assumptions. For example, *“I’ve noticed your grades and attendance have been dropping. I’m concerned that perhaps something might be getting in the way for you.”*
3. Be specific regarding the behaviors that raised your concern and avoid attributing anything to the student’s personality or character; be careful to avoid a judgmental or punitive tone. For example, *“You missed six classes so far this semester, and I noticed three were since you returned from break.”*
4. Give some clear direction and clarify that it is your best judgment based on your observation of the student's behavior. For example, *“Although I’m not a counselor, my experience tells me when a student’s grades go down and they aren’t attending regularly, it may be helpful to talk through what’s going on.”* **OR** *“Some students have really been challenged with the content we are covering. It could be helpful to get connected with a tutor.”* **OR** *“You have missed a lot classes and information this semester, which makes it difficult to realistically catch up. It likely is best that you withdraw from the course.”* Be sure to provide the student with information on the various campus offices that they could connect with as next steps.
5. Be prepared with a plan in case the student becomes distressed (see below).

How to Help a Distressed Student

Faculty and staff frequently meet with students and are on the “front lines”, often becoming aware of information and situations in a sometimes raw and unfiltered fashion. There are times you might encounter a student that is distressed emotionally for various reasons. Below are some ways that you might approach this situation. The below list are suggestions and are not in any particular order.

1. There is no perfect way to handle these situations. Try your best to maintain calmness and enlist the help of those that may further assist where possible.
2. Maintain gentle eye contact with the student. Though you may feel revved up inside, try your best to remain calm to help emotions from escalating.

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3. Gently ask questions that come to mind. The questions may or may not be related to the cause of the distress. The objective is to get the person to slowly open up more. It may also help you to figure out what the student needs further.
 - a. Urge them to talk more directly. You might say *“Can you tell me more about what has you upset?”*
 - b. Ask them *“Is there anything that you need right now?”* or *“How can I help you?”*
4. Perhaps offer to get the student some water. They may accept or decline but you are giving them some empowerment and control by being able to make a simple choice. It might also afford you the opportunity to excuse yourself briefly and signal to someone to get you further assistance.
5. Listen without being judgmental and do not interrupt when they are talking. Encourage them to talk openly. Talking may reduce distress and help the person see things in a different or clearer perspective.
6. Ask the student if there is someone that they would like to talk to or if it would help to get someone. Sometimes a student may name another student, friend, or roommate. You are not looking to pass off the situation, however many times having a positive support present is helpful. The student needs trusted people at this juncture to help them feel safe.
7. Know your limits of what you can help with and offer help how you can. Connect the person with someone who can help. Offer to assist in making an appointment with a counselor in the Counseling Center or accompany them to walk there.
8. Leave the option open for students to refuse counseling. For example, *“The choice is yours, but I do really feel that speaking with a counselor may be helpful. What do you think?”* **HOWEVER if this is an urgent situation where immediate safety is of concern, as soon as you can, contact Switchboard and notify them to send the Professional On-Call (POC), telling them that you have a distressed student in need of assistance.**
9. Follow up. Let the student know you'll be checking in with them to see how things turned out because you care about them. If the student has declined counseling (and there is no immediate safety concern), then respect the decision. For example, *“As I said, the decision is yours to make. If you should change your mind, I am here to help you make contact.”*

Reasons Why Students Resist Referrals or Support – And Ways to Respond

When offered additional support or resources, there are times when students may not be receptive or accept the help. There could be many reasons behind that choice. Below may be a few of those reasons to be aware of.

1. They are worried about privacy or “don't want to get on the radar” of anyone. or they may have specific worries about the impact on their standing in their academic program, sports team, etc.
 - Reassure students that any involvement in the Counseling Center is private and confidential. Counselors do not have the right to share any information with anyone, on or off campus. You can also assure them of the private location of the Counseling Center offices.
2. They believe they can solve it themselves.
 - Validate their problem-solving abilities and resilience – but remind them that often times in college students are faced with new challenges not experienced before - and it can be helpful to learn new strategies to cope.
3. They feel they don't have a problem.
 - Accept that this is their perception. You can fall back on factual, observable changes in behavior that could indicate something actually may be off.
4. Self-pride or stigma.
 - Normalize struggle. It may be helpful to share some facts. Nationally, 1 in 3 young adults (18-25) have experienced a mental, behavioral or emotional health issue in the past year ([SAMHSA, 2021](#)). Among college students, 29.1% have been diagnosed with anxiety and 23.6% have been diagnosed with depression ([NCHA, 2021](#)).
5. They have difficulty asking for or accepting help.
 - Acknowledge that asking for help is HARD. Remind them it is not weakness.
6. They don't believe they have the time.

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- Reassure them that Counseling Center staff can be flexible. Telehealth sessions are available to accommodate busy schedules and we can offer shortened sessions (30 minutes) if that works better for students.
7. They don't know what to expect.
- Share some information! The Counseling Center offers a variety of approaches and will work with students on an individual basis to best meet their needs. Some students may just need one or two sessions to work through a particular problem; other students may benefit from regularly scheduled counseling sessions. Some students are seen on a weekly basis, others every 2 or 3 weeks.

Follow-up After a Referral to the Counseling Center

It is often the case for faculty or staff members to put a lot of time and effort into helping a student accept help or get connected to the Counseling Center. We also understand that it gives you peace of mind to know that a student is indeed getting support. We appreciate this. **However, due to the dynamics of confidentiality, we are not privileged to pass on information if students did follow-through on an appointment, what was discussed if they did attend, or if they scheduled a follow up session.** If a student signs a release of information form to share information for follow-up purposes, we would be able to share with you what the student has given their specific consent to share. As a reminder, professional and licensed mental health clinicians have an obligation to maintain confidentiality when acting under the scope of their licensure, professional ethics, and/or professional credentials, except in extreme cases of the immediacy of threat or danger, abuse of a minor or elder or otherwise dependent person, or when required to disclose by law or court order.

Other Non-Counseling Interventions

Non-urgent/non-crisis referrals involving academic, personal, emotional, psychological or behavioral concerns can be made by any staff or faculty member to the Care Team through the following link:

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https://kings.guardianconduct.com/incident-reporting/new?incident_type=CARE%20Team%20Behavior

If you have any difficulty filing online, you can file by email: careteam@kings.edu.

When reporting, the following information is needed:

- Name of the student of concern
- The student's specific behavior(s) including date, time, and location
- Your name and contact information

Faculty and advisors: For academic or classroom issues, or for issues that involve stress, housing insecurity or difficulty transitioning to college life, a report can also be made on the current academic alert system, CRM Advise.

<https://www.kings.edu/mykings/crm-advise>

Counseling Center Staff and How to Make an Appointment

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Students can make an appointment by emailing counselingcenterstaff@kings.edu, calling the office at **570-208-5873**, or walking in and scheduling an appointment in person.

Students can also utilize our online scheduling system, accessible at <https://kings.titaniumhwc.com/Hwc/>

Our private and confidential office space is located on the 6th floor of the Administration Building, Room 620.

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References

American College Health Association. American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment III: Reference Group Executive Summary Spring 2021. Silver Spring, MD: American College Health Association; 2021.

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