



NC State Counseling Center
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Common Questions About Counseling

How is counseling different/better than talking to my friends or family?

A counselor has special training in dealing with stress, academics, career, and relationships. A counselor can also give you confidential, objective feedback and guidance that a friend or family member cannot. A counselor can provide suggestions about behaviors to modify to help manage stress, academic performance, or interpersonal relationships.

How do I know if I should go to the Counseling Center?

Anytime you are experiencing stress is a good time to use the Counseling Center. Your needs and goals provide the focus for counseling. Things you may consider small issues are valid reasons to come to the Counseling Center. Sometimes small issues can become big issues if not addressed.

Who will know about my visits to the Counseling Center? Under what context will the Counseling Center contact my parents or professors?

Your counseling visits are protected by state and federal privacy laws. If you think it would be helpful, you can give written permission for your counselor to speak to the person of your choosing about your counseling participation. You must give us written permission before we can share with anyone (professor, friend, family member, OIS). Only in life threatening situations (imminent harm to self or others, child or elder abuse, court subpoena) are we allowed to share information about you before we gain your permission.

Will you tell OIS or my department I came to the Counseling Center?

We will not tell OIS or your department about your visits unless you give us written permission. It is your right for counseling to be confidential.

You must be very disturbed or "crazy" to use the Counseling Center, right?

No. In fact, most students who come to the Counseling Center seek help for stress, academic pressure, social issues, and self development.

Who usually goes to Counseling Center? What kind of help do they look for?

International students use the counseling center all the time. They want to learn how to deal with stress and anxiety, or for support with academic stress. They also seek help for adjusting to the different culture at NC State.

What kind of benefit will I get from a visit to the counseling center?

Counselors commonly work with international students who may be having difficulties with depression, anxiety, and relationships. It is helpful to think of going to counseling as an investment in your health (e.g., stress management, etc.) and in skill building (understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, etc.) to better manage professional and personal situations in the future. The benefits you gain and skills you learn will actually save you time and energy in the long term.

What is the purpose of the paperwork I must fill out?

The paperwork provides us with information about your life and about your concerns. It helps us determine what your needs are so that we can begin supporting you more quickly.

Under what condition will the counseling center suspend my course work?

The Counseling Center does not have the power to suspend your course work; only your college or academic program can do so. There are times when a student decides they need to suspend their coursework due to psychological or medical difficulties. We can help you with course drops and semester withdrawal in these situations. The Counseling Center provides support for international students when they are making these choices while also assisting with the paperwork.

What does a typical counselling session look like?

Individual counseling is typically 45 - 50 minutes. You would meet every 1 - 3 weeks with the same counselor to provide you with support and work on your goals. Group counseling is typically 90 minutes and consists of 5 - 10 students. These groups meet weekly and are very popular.

If I do not feel any better after the first session, what could I do?

While some students may feel better immediately, for others it may take several sessions before you start to feel better. Sometimes a counselor will provide you with additional resources to help you feel better or refer you to a medical doctor for additional consultation. It is important that you communicate with your counselor how you are feeling so she or he can adjust treatment as necessary.

Does the Counseling Center provide unique services to international students?

The Counseling Center often provides unique groups and workshops for international students. Many international students have found these groups to be beneficial. We also work with OIS on special programs for international students. We invite you to ask us about these programs each semester.

I feel like I don't have enough time for counseling. My schedule is already very busy. Won't the Counseling Center make my life even more complicated?

It is helpful to think of going to counseling as an investment--in your health and in skill-building to better manage similar situations in the future. The benefits you gain and skills you learn will actually save you time and energy in the long term.