

The Counseling Center

The **Counseling Center** is one of several units within the Department of Student Development. We offer individual and group counseling to the Baruch community. Our services are all **confidential and free of charge**. We are located in Room 927 at 137 East 25th Street (Annex building - west of the Library building). To schedule an appointment, you can call the Counseling Center at (646) 312-2155 or e-mail us at counseling@baruch.cuny.edu. We are open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 8:30 pm and Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Please call during regular business hours to schedule an evening appointment.

Services offered by the Counseling Center

The Counseling Center is staffed by licensed psychologists, supervised trainees, and psychiatrists. Our staff helps students define and achieve their personal and academic goals. Personal problems can range from common struggles such as difficulty establishing social supports, difficulty adjusting to a new country, difficulty meeting academic demands, time management, test anxiety, frequent absences, to more severe mental illnesses such as aggressive behaviors, depression with suicidal ideation, panic attacks and other anxiety disorders that can seriously impair a person's functioning. Our psychiatrists provide consultations on students who present with severe mental illness and prescribe medication to these students when necessary.

In addition to one-on-one counseling sessions, group sessions, and psychiatric consultations, the Counseling Center offers workshops, video screenings, and discussion groups. Topics of previous workshops have included Assertiveness, Procrastination, Stress Reduction, Test Anxiety, Asian Students and Cultural Adjustment.

Who can use the Counseling Center?

The Counseling Center offers professional services to anyone who is currently enrolled and registered as an undergraduate or graduate student at Baruch College. Baruch faculty, staff and alumni may be seen for consultation and referral. Non-degree and non-matriculated Baruch students are also seen for consultation and referral.

Further Resources

If you are concerned about a student, please **contact Dr. Cheng or Dr. Kasnakian at 646-312-2155 for a consultation**. We will help

you assess the seriousness of the student's behavior, guide you on how to approach the student to voice your concern, and explain how you can refer them to the Center. Your attention to the student can have the most favorable impact on their decision to get help.

You may also go to our webpage for additional information about the Center.

<http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/counselingCenter.htm>

Basic Guidelines for a Referral

The following are basic guidelines on assessing a student's need for counseling and the steps you can take to refer them to the Center. This information is also available on our webpage.

1. Be alert to signs of difficulty:

Mood: Extreme sadness, anxiety, anger, mood swings

Physical signs: Deteriorated grooming or physical state; pronounced weight changes; signs of substance abuse: dilated pupils, unsteady gait, slurred words, liquor on breath

Performance: Concentration difficulties, deteriorated performance, unexplained lateness or absences.

Social behavior: Extreme or inappropriate withdrawal or dependency

Speech: Irrational or unusually rapid or slow speech; alludes to problems, worthless or guilty feelings, death or suicide

NOTE: You don't have to pry to detect such difficulties. Usually students signal their distress quite clearly.

2. Take such signs seriously. Don't disregard what you've observed.

3. If possible, meet privately with the student. Allow sufficient time for the meeting.

4. Point out specifically the signs you've observed. Say you're concerned, and ask what's wrong:

"I want to talk to you because I notice you've been late recently, you

never participate in class anymore, and you seem troubled. I'm concerned about you. What's wrong?"

5. Discourage quick dismissals, especially if you observed several of the above distressing signs. ("I'm fine—it's nothing.") Say you really want to know what's wrong.

6. Listen to the student's explanation. Be open-minded about what you hear.

7. Decide if the problem is a false alarm, an "ordinary" problem, or an emergency:

A **false alarm** means that the student apparently doesn't have a problem, or already is in treatment to work on the problem. With false alarms, you needn't do anything further.

An **"ordinary" problem** is anything that troubles the student but falls short of an emergency—the student's basic safety is not endangered. With ordinary problems follow these steps:

a) Inform the student about College Counseling Service:

"Did you know we have professional counselors on campus to help with problems like yours? The Counseling Center is located at the Annex building on the 9th floor. You can call or stop by to schedule an appointment."

b) If necessary, address the student's fears about counseling:

"Going to a counselor doesn't mean you're crazy or weak. It's a sign of health to recognize and get help for a problem."

"All sessions at the college Counseling Center are confidential and free of charge."

"The counselors at the Counseling Center are trained professionals. They've worked with thousands of students."

"If you don't like the counselor you saw last time, I'm sure you can see a different counselor this time."

c) Respect the student's decision about counseling. If the student doesn't go now, he or she may reconsider later.

An **emergency** means that the student's basic safety is jeopardized. Examples are severe eating disorders, severe substance abuse, and suicidal urges. Follow these steps:

a) If possible, make an appointment with the student in your office or walk the student over to Counseling.

b) Whether or not you can set up an appointment, call Dr. David Cheng (Director) or Dr. Caroline Kasnakian (Assistant Director) at (646) 312-2155 to explain the problem.

8. If you have questions about referrals or about a difficult student, don't hesitate to call Dr. Cheng or Dr. Kasnakian.

9. To find out if a student kept an appointment, ask the student to report to you afterward. (Usually students are honest about this.) Since counseling is confidential, counselors are not at liberty to inform you about appointments, unless the student gives them written permission to do so.