

COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

EVERYONE EXPERIENCES STRESS OCCASIONALLY

International students at UT experience many exciting opportunities. Like other students, they experience the normal stress of university life and schoolwork. However, adjusting to a new culture can cause additional stress and confusion. Often, it is difficult to live far from their home, their friends and their family. Occasionally, normal adjustments to university life cause significant stress that negatively affects a student's life. Academic success may become difficult.

You may experience one or more of the following situations:

- You miss your home.
- You have difficulty reading, writing, or listening to lectures in English.
- You must adjust to differences between classrooms and academic requirements in your home and at UT.
- You have difficulty talking with professors, advisors or employers.
- You notice that people do not understand you when you speak.
- You prefer an academic major but worry that your family will not approve.
- You prefer an academic major that will make it difficult to get a job.
- You find it is challenging to build friendships with U.S. students.
- You have conflicts with your roommates.
- You experience conflicts between values at home and values in the U.S. regarding dating.
- You worry about your family's reactions to choices you make while in the U.S.
- You meet people who have misperceptions about your country or culture.
- You meet people who are prejudiced against people from your culture or other cultures.

The situations listed above may cause you to experience:

- Sadness
- Worry
- Loneliness
- Confusion
- Helplessness
- Frustration or anger
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Fear of the unknown or unfamiliar
- A lack of confidence
- Sleep problems
- Concentration problems
- Academic performance problems
- Physical illnesses

HOW CAN THE COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER (CMHC) HELP INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

College students in the U.S. commonly use counseling resources, but talking to a counselor is not a common practice in some cultures. Some students hesitate to get help from a counselor. However, counseling is an investment in your health. Mental health care is as important as physical health care.

Counselors help you develop skills to be more successful in many areas of your life. Talking about your problems and feelings helps you focus on improving yourself, reduce your stress and achieve your academic goals. Counselors have years of specialized training and experience helping students manage their problems more effectively.

Some students have mental health concerns for which medication can be helpful. CMHC psychiatrists are medical doctors (physicians) who prescribe medication when it is appropriate.

CMHC staff are specifically trained to be understanding and respectful of students coming from different cultural backgrounds.

WILL ANYONE KNOW IF YOU COME TO THE COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER?

In the U.S., counselors cannot tell anyone if you receive counseling or what you discuss with a counselor. Counseling information is separate from student's academic records. Counselors cannot disclose information to your parents, family members, professors, the International Office or other people or organizations, unless you provide written permission to do so.

Counselors can only disclose information without your permission if a risk exists to your health or safety or to other people. CMHC counselors will discuss these situations with you.

HOW DO YOU GET HELP AT CMHC?

Come to CMHC or call 512-471-3515 between 8am and 4pm on weekdays to talk with a Brief Assessment and Referral counselor. The counselor will ask for information about you and your needs. This brief conversation will help determine which CMHC services are available and most appropriate for your needs. If your needs require lengthier care than CMHC can provide, the counselor may help you find long-term mental health care in Austin.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU HAVE AN URGENT CONCERN AND NEED TO TALK TO A COUNSELOR NOW?

If you are experiencing a personal crisis and need to talk to someone immediately, do either of the following things:

- Call the 24-hour CMHC Crisis Line (512-471-2255). (Deaf or hard-of-hearing students can call 711 and ask to be connected to 512-471-2255). Counselors answer telephone calls 24 hours of every day, including holidays.
- Come to the CMHC between 8am – 5pm weekdays. Tell staff at the reception desk that you need to talk to someone immediately.

You might need or want to speak to someone right away if you experience any of the following circumstances:

- You have thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else.
- You are unable to stop crying.
- You are not physically ill, but you have not eaten or slept for several days.
- Someone you love has died.
- You have experienced physical violence from a stranger or acquaintance, sexual assault, threats of harm, stalking or sexual harassment.
- You are worried about the safety of another student.

WHAT IS THE CHARGE FOR CMHC SERVICES?

- There is no charge to students for the following CMHC services*:
 - Brief assessment and referral sessions
 - Group counseling sessions
 - Individual counseling sessions
 - Telephone calls to the CMHC 24-hour Crisis Line
 - Workshops and classes
 - MindBody Labs
 - Thrive at UT
- The charge for each appointment with a psychiatrist* is \$10.
- You must notify CMHC no less than 24 hours before a group counseling, individual counseling or psychiatrist appointment if you cannot attend. CMHC will charge you \$25 if you do not provide this notification.

*Read more about these CMHC services at cmhc.utexas.edu.

SCAN TO GO TO CMHC

