

MUHLENBERG

COLLEGE

Counseling Services: A Referral Guide for Faculty and Staff



Counseling Services
484-664-3178

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Counseling Services

A Referral Guide for Faculty and Staff

The purpose of this publication is to assist faculty and staff in their efforts to enhance the educational and personal achievements of Muhlenberg College students by providing some information about situations or circumstances in which Counseling Services lend assistance.

There has been a steady demand from students in requesting counseling services at Muhlenberg College. The total of students who used such services in 1997-98 represents about 18% of the student body. Longitudinal studies have shown that approximately 45% of the individuals in every graduating class have used the counseling services during their enrollment at the college. Today, Counseling Services provides services for over 50% of our student body.

The information contained in this document explains when professional counseling might be beneficial to an individual and how to make a referral to Counseling Services. The concept of professional confidentiality and information about referral and consultation services are also discussed.

Location: The Life Sports Center
(2nd Floor, Directly above the Health Center)
Phone: 484-664-3178

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday – Friday

Counseling Services Staff

Anita Kelly, M.A., C.A.C., L.P.C.
Director

Rick Yenser, M.A.
Assistant Director

AnnMarie Stevens, M.Ed.
Counselor

Michele Paules, L.C.S.W., B.C.D.
Counselor

Master Level Interns

THE ROLE OF FACULTY AND STAFF

Students in distress seek the advice and counsel of individuals in their lives with whom they have immediate contact. Students look to peers, faculty members and staff. Each of us responds to a student in our own personal style. It is important to know when and how to refer a student who desires more help or needs more help than you feel prepared or able to offer.

INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling Services at Muhlenberg offers three basic services using a community-based approach.

Consultation

Staff members are available to provide consultation regarding issues or concerns that may be presenting problems for you or for a friend. Consultations are available in person or by telephone on a formal or informal basis.

Education

The counseling staff is available to provide educational sessions to student groups on various topics and issues. The session may be held in the Resident Halls, Seegers Union, classrooms, sorority or fraternity facilities or at any other college-owned facility.

Counseling

Individual and/or group counseling sessions are available to full-time students of the College. Counseling may focus on concerns such as separation issues, relationships, anxiety, depression, abuse, grief/loss issues, eating disorders, etc. Counseling Services utilizes a brief therapy model of counseling in order to accommodate the entire student body. This means that therapy sessions will focus on the issues/concerns at hand. If ongoing, continuous therapy is required, the student will be referred to a therapist in the community. If a student requires medication management, a psychiatric consultation or inpatient treatment, referrals are made within the Lehigh Valley community as well.

A Word About Confidentiality

Counseling Services at Muhlenberg College is governed by legal and ethical standards of confidentiality. Any and all participation at Counseling Services is strictly confidential. Any student wishing information to be released to parents, administration, etc., must sign a release of information form indicating this intent.

Prior to an initial counseling session, students sign a paper informing them of the following exceptions to confidentiality:

1. A student is suicidal or homicidal,
2. A referral agent asks if the student has attended the first session,
3. A student signs a written release to share counseling session content with a specified individual.

General Guidelines and FAQs

How do I know I need counseling?

There are often times in life when certain issues or life events cause emotional distress, problems in relationships or change how we view ourselves. During these times, we may become overwhelmed with our emotions or have problems in our relationships. We may have difficulty concentrating during class, withdraw from friends and family, lose sleep, lose our appetite, or struggle communicating. Our counseling staff can help you through these difficult times and facilitate positive coping and personal growth. Problems that can be addressed in counseling are, but not limited to:

- Depression, anxiety or other mental illnesses
- Relationship and family issues
- Addictions
- Sexual abuse and domestic violence
- Disordered eating
- Difficulty adjusting to campus atmosphere
- Low self esteem
- Grief and loss
- Academic or job-related stress
- Emotional difficulties as a result of disability or illness

How much does counseling cost?

All services provided to full-time students at Counseling Services are of no cost to the student or to his/her family.

How long does counseling take?

Length of counseling treatment varies depending on the individual and the problem they are presenting with. The timeline will be discussed further when you meet with your counselor and develop therapy goals.

Are my sessions confidential?

Counseling Services at Muhlenberg College is governed by legal and ethical standards of confidentiality. Any and all participation at the Counseling Center is strictly confidential. Any student wishing information to be released to parents, administration, etc, must sign a release of information indicating this intent.

What can I expect at a counseling session?

We understand that you may feel nervous or uncomfortable at your first counseling session. During your first session you will complete an intake form which will provide your counselor with background, contact information, and a better understanding of why you are seeking counseling. You will then speak to a counselor privately to discuss therapy goals you would like to pursue.

How do I schedule an appointment?

Please call our offices at (484) 664-3178 or stop by the Life Sports Center to schedule an appointment to see a counselor. Our offices are located above the Health Center.

Stress and Distress Warning Signs

If you observe or are informed of these behaviors, you should consider making a referral to Counseling Services.

- **Major Life Trauma:** *Death, divorce, abuse, terminal illness*
- **Marked Change in Work/Study Habits**
- **Dependency:** *The student who hangs around you all the time or is always demanding your attention.*
- **Listlessness:** *Lack of energy, sleeping in class*
- **Marked Changes in Physical Appearance:** *Change in personal hygiene, dramatic weight loss or gain*
- **Disturbing Written Work:** *References to suicide or homicide (immediate consultation required)*
- **Marked Seclusion or Unwillingness to Participate or Communicate**
- **Irrational Worrying or Expression of Fear**
- **Extreme Emotions:** *Tears, nervousness, anger, laughter that are extreme in degree, prolonged or inappropriate*
- **Student's Conversation is Disjointed and Makes No Sense**
- **Suspiciousness or Irrational Fears of Persecution**
- **Persistent Lying, Stealing, or Other Grossly Asocial Acts**

Referral: When, How, What Next?

When?

- The student wants counseling.
- You feel unable to help the student due to time or skill.
- Your personal relationship with the student prevents you from offering objective assistance.
- You have offered assistance but the problem persists.
- The student expresses despair, hopelessness, thoughts of harming self or others. IMMEDIATE REFERRAL IS NECESSARY. (Call Counseling Services at ext. 3178 or Campus Safety at ext. 3110.)

How?

- It is always appropriate to consult with a counselor about making a referral. You may maintain the confidentiality of the student until a decision is made regarding a referral.
- Speak directly to the student at a private place and time regarding your concerns. It is important to remember that many students use the counseling services for normal developmental issues.
- Assure the student of your concern for his/her welfare and your desire for him/her to talk to someone who may be more helpful, available, or skilled in working with their problem.
- If the student is willing to go for counseling, you might have him/her make the phone call (ext. 3178) to make an appointment. If the student is uncomfortable making the phone call, you may call for him/her in his/her presence. It is important for the student to take as much initiative in obtaining that fir appointment as possible.

- In a crisis situation, it is appropriate to call Counseling Services and bring the student to meet with a counselor. You may participate in that first session if the student wishes. After hours, call Campus safety (ext. 3110) for an on-call professional.
- If the student refuses to seek counseling in a non-crisis situation, do not despair. Experience at Counseling Services indicates that students who are referred over time by faculty, staff, and fellow students, will eventually seek help.

What Next?

You may follow up with the student directly. If there are continuing problems, call the director or the specific counselor. Please remember confidentiality prohibits us from sharing information about the student, however, your insights are helpful.

Change takes time, and sometimes a student is unwilling or unable to continue to engage in counseling.

Policies and Procedures

Medical Withdrawal of a Course(s) Policy

A student must provide documentation supporting an illness, injury or disorder from an appropriate authority. The documentation is to be submitted to the Director of Student Health Services if it is a physical issue or to the Director of Counseling Services if it is of a psychological nature. If appropriate, the respective Director will provide the student with a Medical Withdrawal of Course form to be signed by the student's academic advisor. Once the student has obtained their advisor's signature, s/he must submit the form to the Registrar. A grade of "W" will appear on the transcript.

All requests for medical withdrawals of a course must be made by the last day of class in the semester. The college does not allow for a retroactive drop of a single course.

Procedure

1. Student must initiate the process using the Medical Withdrawal of Course form and provide verification of illness or injury from psychiatrist or psychotherapist to the Director of Counseling Services, or from a physician to the Director of Health Services, who will act on behalf of the College.
2. The documentation must be generated from a non-family member and /or friend.
3. The Director of Counseling or Health Services determines that compelling reasons exist for a reduction in the student's schedule.
4. Student then meets with her/his academic advisor(s) to discuss the impact that withdrawing from the designated course may have on the student's academic progress. If the above course is the only remaining course for this academic semester, this form is not valid. The student must then return to the Director of Counseling or Health Services to process the Medical Leave of Absence. Students will not be given withdrawals that places them below three units for the semester.
5. The student delivers the completed form to the Registrar, who will provide form for distribution and notification of professors.

Medical Leave of Absence Policy

I. Purpose – to provide students who are experiencing a mental or physical health difficulty with a withdrawal venue in order to take the time away from campus to obtain proper treatment.

II. Types

Voluntary – a voluntary MLOA is initiated by the student at any time during the academic year, in effect until the end of the current semester.

Temporary Involuntary – a temporary involuntary MLOA is initiated by the College at any time during the academic year but differs from an involuntary MLOA in that this is for a brief period of time, not the remainder of the semester.

A. Voluntary

1. Student provides verification of illness from a therapist or psychiatrist to Muhlenberg College's Director of Counseling or from a physician to the Director of Health Center, who will make a determination on behalf of the college. The documentation needs to include: diagnosis, symptoms of the diagnosis that the student is experiencing and also how the student has been impacted by those symptoms. Dates of treatment must also be included.

2. If a compelling reason is approved, a notice of action concerning Medical Leave of Absence is sent by the Director of Counseling (mental health issues) or the Director of Health Services (physical health issues) to the following:

a. Notification is sent by email to the:

Registrar's Group

The Controller

The Principal Accounts Coordinator of the Controller's Office

b. MLOA form with signature of Director of Counseling or Health Services is sent by mail to the:

Registrar's Office

Dean of Students Office

Dean of the College for Academic Life Office

c. The Registrar's Office will then notify the "Attrition Group" of the MLOA action by means of email.

3. Dean of Students, based on information from the Controller, determines:
tuition and fees due and
refund arrangement. (Normally, a refund will be pro-rated based on tuition
and fees as outlined in the College catalog.) Financial aid sources will determine
extent of cash refund. In addition, necessary agencies are notified.
All course grades will appear as "W" on transcript.

4. Residential Services staff will assist student in meeting the check-out
procedures.

Student must surrender all keys recorded on the "Room and Board Contract".

Students are expected to remove their belongings within 72 hours.

All students must return their ID card to the Residential Services Office.

The Residential Services Office will inspect the student's room after his/her
departure from campus. Students will be invoiced for any damages, lost inventory,
or extra cleaning required in accordance with "Damage Billing Policies and
Procedures".

The Director of Residential Services will contact the Director of Counseling or
the Director of Health Center once the student has removed his/her belongings and
returned the key.

5. Controller

The Controller will analyze the student's account in conjunction with any
financial aid or student loans that pertain to the student for the semester in
question. A pro-rated refund will be calculated using the official leave date as
determined by the Director of Counseling or Health Center. A daily rate for the
number of days from the start of the semester to the official leave date will be used
to calculate the tuition, fees, and room and board charges for the portion of the
semester in attendance. The calculated charges will be subtracted from all
payments, financial aid, and loans available for the period. The difference will be
refunded to the student at the first available disbursement date. The "College
Refund Policy" requires that the College retain a minimum of \$200 of the
comprehensive charges.

6. The professional signing the MLOA Form will send a follow-up letter to the
student reminding the student of their responsibility to seek treatment and to
provide documentation in order to return.

7. The Dean of Students sends a letter to the student indicating that the student
must arrange for a letter from his/her psychiatrist/therapist to be sent to the
College's Director of Counseling or from his/her physician to the Director of Health
Center in order to return from medical leave. The letter should outline: The letter
should outline:

The reason for the student's original Medical Leave of Absence.

Dates and treatment or therapy the student has undergone or physician's
verification of treatment and date(s).

The prognosis for the student's continued success at the College.

8. The Dean of Students Office mails registration packets with the cover letter when the advising period begins for registration. An application for housing is included in the registration packet. Registration and housing is contingent upon reinstatement.

9. Students must schedule an appointment with the Director of Counseling (mental health issues) or the Director of Health Center (physical health issues).

10. Once the psychiatrist's/therapist's or physician's letter has been received and approved, and the appointment has been completed, the Director of Counseling or Director of Health Center will render a recommendation for either a reinstatement or a continued Medical Leave of Absence. This form will be submitted to the Dean of Students. Students returning from a Medical Leave will not be permitted to register for summer courses as support services are not available during summer sessions.

11. Notification of the action taken will be sent by the Director of Counseling Services or Director of Health Services to the following:

- Notification is sent by email to the:
 - Registrar's Group
 - The Controller
 - The Principal Accounts Coordinator of the Controller's Office
- MLOA form with signature of Director of Counseling or Health Services is sent by mail to the:
 - Registrar's Office
 - Dean of Students Office
 - Dean of the College for Academic Life Office
- The Registrar's Office will then notify the "Attrition Group" of the MLOA action by means of email.
 - A. Student
 - B. Dean of the College for Academic Life
 - C. Registrar
 - D. Residential Services
 - E. Financial Aid
 - F. Controller
 - G. Advisor
 - H. Director of Counseling
 - I. Director of Student Health
 - J. Seegers Union
 - K. Academic Support

12. A student may be granted a MLOA for up to four (4) semesters, cumulatively.

Please Note:

1. Students with Guaranteed Student Loans may have to begin repayment if they take a leave of absence of more than six months.
2. During a Medical Leave of Absence, no more than two courses will transfer to Muhlenberg College.

B. Temporary Involuntary Medical Leave of Absence

A temporary involuntary medical leave of absence is initiated by the College when they have substantiated reports/evidence that a student is in jeopardy of harming himself or herself or another individual. This harm may come in the form of suicidal gestures, or continued suicidal ideation and threats of suicide, or it may come in the form of an overdose of alcohol/other drugs as a result of a dependency/abuse situation or a suicidal gesture. This action being taken is not limited to overt threats but may include placing oneself in harmful situations, risky behaviors, etc.

1. The Dean of Students, on the recommendation from either the Director of Counseling or the Director of Health Center, notifies the student that s/he is being placed on a temporary MLOA.
2. The Dean of Students notifies the student's guardian of the same.
3. The student must seek immediate attention from a healthcare provider agreed upon by the Director of Counseling or the Director of Health Center.
4. When the student is cleared by the service provider to return to campus, the Director of Counseling or Director of Health Center will coordinate the student's return through communication with the service provider.
5. While on a temporary involuntary MLOA, the student will be asked to leave campus until they have been cleared to return by the Director of Counseling or Director of Health Center, working in conjunction with their service provider.

Counseling Services: Student Procedures for Medical Leave of Absence

1. Student provides medical verification of illness or injury from:
therapist/psychiatrist to Muhlenberg College's Director of Counseling, or
Director of Counseling, who will make a determination on behalf of the College.

2. If a Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) is approved, the student must surrender all keys issued and recorded on the Student Key Registration Card and their ID card to Residential Services Office or Resident Advisor.

3. Student is expected to remove all belongings within 72 hours.

4. In order to return from medical leave, the student must arrange for a letter from his/her therapist/psychiatrist to be sent to the College's Director Counseling outlining:

the reason for the student's original medical leave of absence,
dates of treatment or therapy the student has undergone, and
the prognosis for the student's continued success at the College.

5. Student must schedule appointment and meet with the Director of Counseling. After meeting with the student, the Director of Counseling will make a decision regarding the student's return.

6. Please note that students with Guaranteed Student Loans may have to begin repayment if they take a leave of absence of more than six (6) months.

7. Students may not return from a MLOA and register for summer courses as support services are not available during summer sessions.

8. A student may be granted a MLOA for up to four (4) semesters, cumulatively.

9. No more than two courses from other learning institutions taken during a Medical Leave of Absence will transfer to Muhlenberg College.

Incomplete Grades Policy and Procedure

1. All requests for incomplete grades must be made directly by the student to his or her professor and must specify a compelling reason or reasons for failure to complete the course requirements by the end of the term. Only faculty members are authorized to grant incomplete grades. No incomplete grade may be given to any student who has not requested one.

a) If the student specifies the involvement of a medical or mental health issue, the faculty member should consult with the Director of Health Services or the Director of Counseling, who should provide verification to the professor.

b) If the student requesting an incomplete grade has sought medical or mental health services off-campus.

i) The student must obtain appropriate documentation from the health service provider and arrange for this documentation to be presented to the Director of Health Services or the Director of Counseling.

ii) The on-campus care professional should review the documentation and verify the compelling reason for the requested incomplete grade.

The professor and student typically put in writing the required work to be done and the deadline for submission. A Change of Grade must be submitted to the Registrar's Office within thirty-five (35) calendar days of the date final grades were due.

If the student fails to produce completed work so that a Change of Grade is not submitted within the thirty-five (35) calendar day period, the incomplete will convert to a grade of F unless, within the thirty-five (35) calendar day period, the student has presented a compelling reason for failure to complete the work and requested and been granted by the faculty member an extension of the incomplete.

Extensions for other than medical or mental health reasons may be made at the discretion of the professor following consultation with the Dean of the College for Academic Life. Extensions based on medical or mental health reasons must follow the procedure set out above in a or b.

The College policy regarding incomplete grades is equally applicable to students with disabilities. Faculty members should confer with the appropriate campus professionals (Disability Services, Academic Resource Center, Counseling, Health Services).

Campus Professionals

Academics Resource Center

Seegers Union, Lower Level

X 3433

- Wendy Cole, Director
- Mary Beth Kallen, Learning Specialist
- Maggie Cummings, Learning Specialist
- Eileen Fleischman, Office Manager

Counseling Services

Life Sports Center (Directly Above the Health Center)

X 3178

- Anita Kelly, Director
- Rick Yenser, Assistant Director
- Michele Paules, Counselor
- Ann Marie Stevens, Counselor
- Cheryl Leitgeb, Staff Associate

Office of Disability Services

Seegers Union, Lower Level

X 3825

- Pamela Moschini, Director
- Claire Hoffman, Secretary

Student Health Services

Life Sports Centers

X 3199

- Brynmarie Dorsey, Director
- Audrey Fernald, Staff Nurse
- Theresa Calogero, Staff Nurse
- Kelly Powell, Staff Nurse
- Deb Varney, Nurse/ Administrative Assistant

National Resources

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
ADA Information Line
1-800-514-0301 (voice)
1-800-514-0383 (TDD)
<http://www.ada.gov/>
- Autism Society of America (ASA)
7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 300
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-3067
1-800-328-8467
www.autism-society.org
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
3803 N. Fairfax Dr., Ste. 100
Arlington, VA 22203
703-524-7600
www.nami.org
- National Mental Health Association (NMHA)
2000 N. Beauregard Street, 6th Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22311
1-800-969-6642
www.nmha.org
- National Domestic Abuse Hotline
1-800-799- SAFE
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK