



Counseling Center

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New Client Information

Welcome to the UCI Counseling Center. The decision to receive counseling services is often made while dealing with some challenging circumstances. So our hope is to make getting started easier. Reading this orientation first will help to clarify how you might use us to assist you with your current challenges. For additional information, you may also visit our website (<http://www.counseling.uci.edu>).

Services. The Counseling Center provides personal and psychological counseling to UCI students. However, if your interest is academic or career counseling only, our receptionist will be happy to direct you to the campus facilities which offer these other types of counseling. The Counseling Center provides session-limited counseling for individuals, couples, and families. Generally, a counseling session for an individual last fifty minutes and there is a limit of eight sessions per year. Group therapy and support groups for various concerns are also available. Group therapy is more appropriate for many students and there is no session-limit for group therapy. On occasion, students elect to be in family therapy or couple's counseling. If for any reason you are not able to attend a scheduled appointment, we ask that you call the receptionist or your counselor. Psychological testing and evaluation may be suggested to help with your treatment. Sessions in which tests are administered are not counted as part of your eight-session limit. Given your particular concerns and symptoms, your counselor may find that consultation with a psychiatrist (M. D.) would enhance your treatment. At that time, you may be asked to make an appointment with a physician at the Student Health Mental Health Clinic. In some cases you may wish to use your health insurance or HMO, as Student Health does require a fee for services.

Reaching us. We are open between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. from Monday through Friday. During our open hours, we have someone available to assist with crisis management and emergencies for UCI students, staff and faculty. We can be reached by phone at **(949) 824-6457** or you can come to **room 201 in Student Services I**. When the Counseling Center is closed the UCI Campus Police ((949) 824-5223) provides a first-response to emergencies. As a general rule we discourage personal counseling on the Internet because this communication is not secure and we are concerned that third parties, not affiliated with the UCI Counseling Center, might view and store your confidential communication. Furthermore, we can not ensure that your e-mail message will be received or responded to promptly. Therefore, do not send information you consider confidential by e-mail. Please phone or walk in during open hours.

Fees. There are no fees collected for our services. Services are paid through fees collected from students when they enroll.

Staff. Our staff members are very aware of the stresses unique to a university setting. Most teach academic classes and facilitate workshops throughout the campus community as well. Our counseling psychologists have doctoral degrees in psychology or social work and are licensed or in the process to be licensed by the State of California. Our counselors in training are doctoral-level and masters-level interns who are supervised by the licensed counselors. Our pre-doctoral training program is accredited by the American Psychological Association. The Counseling Center has a firm commitment to meeting the needs of a culturally diverse campus and consequently boast a highly professional multiracial and multicultural staff.

Conflict of interest. Because our staff are involved in multiple roles at the University it is possible that you might discover that your assigned counselor is or has been in another professional role with you such as teacher or supervisor. We avoid dual relationships with students so as not to harm the success of the counseling relationships. If you find that you are or have been in a non-counselor relationship with your assigned counselor, please immediately bring the issue up with him or her so that it can be resolved.

Getting started. There are two ways in which you may enter our services; you walk in or call to make an appointment for the initial meeting. This meeting is called an intake. Or you need help more urgently and you are helped immediately after reaching the Counseling Center. In both situations you will likely be asked to complete information and consent forms prior to speaking to a counselor. The goal of the initial meeting is for the counselor to discuss your concerns and decide upon a course of action that would best meet your needs. The outcome of this discussion is likely to be one or more of the following.

1. You may resolve your concern satisfactorily during the intake and require no further action.
2. You may be better assisted by another resource person on or off-campus. Your counselor will help you to identify other resources and assist you by making a referral. The Counseling Center reserves the right to refuse treatment to anyone if we determine that our services are inappropriate.
3. You may benefit from, and be eligible for, further counseling here at the UCI Counseling Center.

Counselor assignment. If you are offered and agree to counseling, your counselor will either make an appointment to see you again or will assist in the assignment of another counselor. If you have strong preferences to see a counselor of a particular gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, we will try to accommodate your request.

Taping. Because we are a training and research facility you may be asked to give your consent to have your sessions audio-taped or video-taped. Tapes of counseling sessions are used to provide our counselors in training supervision to ensure that you receive the highest quality counseling. Your agreement to taping or to participate in research is voluntary and will not be done without your knowledge. You may obtain counseling services whether or not you agree to taping or to participate in research.

Feedback. We encourage you to ask questions about counseling methods and procedures, qualifications of your counselor, or services at the Counseling Center. You should discuss any dissatisfaction regarding services with your counselor. If you are still dissatisfied following a discussion with your counselor, you may arrange to discuss these questions, concerns or grievances with the Clinical Services Director of the Counseling Center.

Confidentiality. Counseling is confidential. All information you share with us, whether it is information in our records about you or even the fact that you have come to see us, can not be shared with others outside the Counseling Center. In some circumstances your counselor may consult with other counselors at the Counseling Center in order to provide you with the best help available. However, no one outside the Center may have access to counseling information without your prior written permission or as required by law. The law in the State of California mandates that information may be appropriately shared if you are in imminent harm to yourself or to others, when there is an indication of child or elder abuse or if you are gravely disabled. If you are referred for counseling as a condition of an agreement, for example with the Dean of Students or with your academic department, and want information communicated to them, you will have to sign a release form to have any information provided to the person who referred you.

Forms. Finally, we would appreciate your cooperation in completing the attached forms.

1. The **Informed Consent for Counseling Services** should be read and discussed with your counselor if you have any questions before you sign it. Your signature indicates that you understand the nature of the services offered, and the limits of confidentiality and the fact that you are voluntarily requesting counseling services. If by chance you are asked to have your sessions taped or to participate in research, you will first be asked to sign a separate consent form for that purpose. You will never be taped without your knowledge and consent.
2. The **Student Information Form** provides us with your schedule and information to aid us if we need to reach you, as well as information regarding your status with Student Health and the reasons for which you are requesting to be seen.
3. The **Information Sheet** is collected for our statistics and utilization data so that we can keep track of the general characteristics of the students who we are serving.

Your counselor will be happy to address any questions or concerns you may have about the forms. We thank you for coming in and for helping us help you.