



Law Students as Unique Customers

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Purpose:

- Examining intense interactions generated by emotions from both parties
- Information about the type of emotions experienced by law students
- Empathy for the law school experience
- Referring to the Counseling Center



Stress

- The physiological response to any demand on us
 - Dr. Hans Selye
- Continuum of stressors, normal and helpful
- Challenging stressors: more intense and sustained demands on our physical and emotional reserves
- Overtax on systems can lead to fatigue, depression, burnout, and functional breakdown



Indicators of Taxing Stress

Actions:

- Exaggerating normal behaviors (e.g. hard workers turn into workaholics; quiet people turn into loners)
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and/or co-workers
- Working less effectively (working harder, but getting less done)
- Scapegoating (blaming others, finding fault, being critical or hard to please)
- Increasing fights and arguments with others
- Increasing substance use (alcohol, cigarettes, drugs)

Thoughts:

- Increased negative thinking



Indicators of Stress

Physical Symptoms:

- Upset stomach, digestive problems
- Headache, dizziness, muscle tension
- Having sleep problems (too little or too much)

Feelings:

- Feeling anxious (tense, nervous, unable to relax)
- Feeling irritable (getting angry at minor things)



Sources of Stress

- Academic Pressures
- Professional Pressures
- Financial constraints
- Family
- Relationships
- Future events: Graduation & Employment



Academic Pressures

- Adjustment to graduate school workload
- One test determines grade
- Performance in class: called on in class and feel need to bring “A” game to every class
- Grades, impact of 1st year grades
- Class Rank
- Journals
- Moot Court



Identity Crisis

- Small fish big pond
- Fear of failure
- Arguing against your beliefs
 - Cognitive dissonance
- Losing faith in the law



Professional Pressures

- Current job
- Internship application/interviews
- Internship preparations
- Resume building activities



Financial constraints

- Accruing debt to attend law school
- Worries how to pay back the loan
- Limited income as student



Relationships

- Limited time to spend with friends and family
- Family expectations or pressures
- Making new friends in law school
 - Fear of being seen as weak by peers or exposing vulnerability
- Friends outside of law school, maybe more difficult to form
- Romantic relationships
- Applying skills used in law such as being critical (looking for weakness), countering opposing position (argumentative), and defending a position (defensiveness) can be counterproductive in relationships.



Future events

Graduation & employment

- Career indecision
 - Big law vs. everything else
 - Financial implications
- Bar Exam



Overview of main Counseling Center services

- Counseling
 - Individual Counseling
 - Group Counseling
 - Psychiatric Consultation
 - Assessment and Referral
 - Outreach and Consultation



Contact Info and Hours of Operation

- **(202) 319-5765**
- 127 O'Boyle Hall- first floor, take a right after entering the main doors.
- Hours of Operation- School Year
Monday – Thursday: 9am to 7pm
Fridays: 9am to 5pm

<http://counseling.cua.edu>



When to Consult

- You are not sure how to handle a situation or approach a student that you are concerned about
- There are personality differences that interfere with your ability to work with a student
- The student keeps coming back and has not followed through with your referral to the Counseling Center

NOTE: In order to protect confidentiality, the Counseling Center can only provide information about a client with that client's written permission



When to Refer

- When you are doing more “counseling” than feels appropriate
- The problems or requests made are outside the scope of your role with the student
- After some effort, you feel like you are not making progress in helping this student
- When you wonder if the student has a disability or is struggling psychologically



Considerations when Referring

- Never offer a referral to the counseling center out of anger toward to the student
- How open is the student to hearing about resources
- Do you have the type of relationship with the student that will facilitate a referral to the counseling center?
- Who might you consult with when making the referral?



How to Refer

- Express your concerns directly to the student and focus on objective behaviors versus personality characteristics
- Let the student know that the issues they are discussing with you are not your area of expertise
- Normalize seeking help; don't say "you need help"
- Encourage the student to call the Counseling Center and make his or her own appointment
- Maintain expectations for professional interactions
- Make appointment with student to check on status and follow through



Example Statements

- “I wanted to speak with you because I’ve noticed...., I wanted to see how you’re doing?”
- “Maybe one of the things we can do is help you get support for these worries.”
- “I know there are resources on campus where you can talk with a trained professional about some of the things you brought up. Would you be interested in getting more information?”
- “I’ve seen some changes in you over the past couple weeks and I’m worried that you don’t feel like yourself. I know there is free counseling services that can help you sort out your feelings and help you manage some of these concerns. Would you be interested in talking with someone who works with these concerns all the time?”



Dealing with Ambivalence

- Difficulty getting students to utilize services
 - Feeling depressed, loss of motivation to seek support
 - Research indicate most people are ambivalent about starting counseling
- Assist student in making the phone call or walk student over
- More likely to utilize services when they have an appointment
- Not excessive hand holding, right amount of assistance



How to Refer if Urgent

- If the situation is pressing, facilitate a referral by having the student call from your office. Our policy is that students must make their own appointments.
- If urgent, call the Counseling Center for immediate consultation. In some cases, we may ask you to walk the student over for immediate assessment (uncontrollably tearful, risk of self-harm, incoherent, etc.).
- Expect to remain involved. We will help you help the student. You still have a role to play and we can work with you to help the student.



Appropriate Follow Up

- Ask if the student followed through with the referral if one was made. Remember, the Counseling Center cannot provide information about a student that is being seen without that student's written permission.
- Ask the student how he or she is doing. It is important to maintain your connection with the student.



A Note on Confidentiality

- Client rights to confidentiality are protected by District of Columbia law, the American Psychological Association's Ethics Code and the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. It is both illegal and unethical to violate rights to confidentiality.
- Any student, 18 or above must give written permission to allow the release of information regarding any contact with the center.



Other Resources on Campus

- Housing and Residential Services 5615
- Disability Support Services 5211
- Student Health Services 5744
- Public Safety 5111
- Campus Ministry 5575
- Vice President for Student Life 5714