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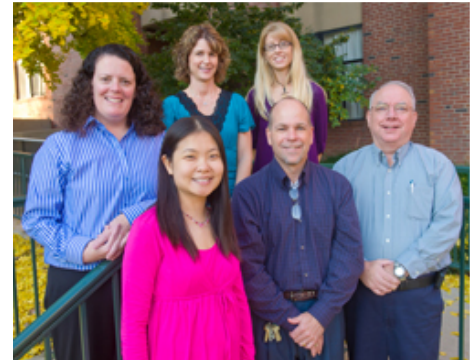
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Counseling and Consultation Services Offer Support

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— For students making major transitional decisions, college life can often seem like a turbulent quest of self-actualization. Making critical decisions and learning to take responsibility for those decisions, anything from determining a major to time management can often take its toll on students. Illinois Wesleyan's Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS) provides support and guidance while students are going through these processes.

The staff of the Counseling and Consultation Services located in Magill Hall, which consists of five licensed clinicians three fulltime and two part-time, strives to help students dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol issues, relationship difficulties, disordered eating, trauma, loss, adjustment, time management, study skills and much more. The mission is "To promote student personal growth and well being through a variety of mental health services including counseling, outreach and consultation."



Staff of Counseling and Consultation Services

These services are free of charge and the information that is shared with CCS is strictly confidential. The services offered include:

- Direct counseling services to students.
- Indirect consultation with faculty or staff and students, who have concerns about particular students.
- Training and support to the Residential Life staff, advisors, faculty and others who can support student mental health.
- Outreach/prevention programs to the campus community.

According to Staff Psychologist and Outreach Coordinator Grace Blocher, "Research says, 80 percent of people who go through counseling or therapy heal better than those who never receive professional help."

One of the counseling programs that the CCS offers is the IWU Student Therapy Group. This is a group-counseling program with group sessions that usually consist of at least six to ten students and two licensed counselors facilitate the discussions. According to Blocher, "The group setting helps in understanding the interpersonal style of the individual, which may not come out much in individual counseling. Students are placed in a group setting where they have to interact with other students and some interpersonal style is often revealed in these interactions, which helps with the counseling." Another advantage of this type of setting is that students do not have to talk about their problems every week with their counselors, as is the case with individual counseling; they can sometimes listen to others as well. "And there is always something empowering about knowing that you are not alone," said Blocher.

Other services that the CCS offers are the outreach programs.

A new outreach program, which Blocher initiated last year, is the Peer Educators Program. Currently nine IWU students are going through the BACCHUS network Certified Peer Educator training course with Blocher. "A lot of times students are reluctant to come to us." Said Blocher, "We are often their last resort. Students sometimes do not feel as comfortable talking with adult counselors, as they can with peers on issues such as drug and alcohol use as well as sexual health. The peer educators are trained to develop skills that enable them to really see who needs help and they can refer those in need, to the Counseling Center. Students' attitudes are different too if they are referred by a friend or a peer. The students become more receptive to counseling."

Junior psychology major Emily Zibell shared her experience with peer educator training, and the work she has been doing with the CCS. "The BACCHUS training has helped me learn a lot, I thought I was a decent listener and a decent person to talk to, however the training has helped me develop my skills further and has taught me different ways to deal with different situations, which I think will help me in all of my relationships and even as a person."

The peer educators, who are currently in training, are also participating in the Step Up: Bystander Intervention Program. Some of the peer educators have given presentations for Residential Assistants training as well as for the members of fraternities and sororities on campus. The peer educators can collaborate with any member of the staff from the CCS to offer programs of their interest.

The CCS also co-sponsors the Academic Skills Series, in collaboration with the Office of Residential Life and the Office of Academic Advising. This program provides weekly workshops on a variety of topics such as time management, stress management, note-taking, and study skills, with more than 50 students attending the workshops. In addition, Staff Counselor Bob Rogers and Blocher have provided Alcohol Education programs and Bystander Training as part of the outreach program, to more than 200 students this semester.

Addressing the hesitancy of students in approaching CCS Annorah Moorman, assistant dean of students, director of counseling and consultations services, said, "Students find our counseling services approachable, with 12-15 percent of our student body making at least one appointment with a clinician at CCS in any given year. It is challenging for a student to come through the door for the first time and meet with someone he/she doesn't know, especially when a student is struggling and feeling vulnerable. I encourage students to think of coming to CCS as a 50-minute commitment for one session. What do they have to lose, other than 50-minutes of their time? Students feel better after connecting with someone and realizing CCS staff can offer support, help students identify blind spots they may have, or offer an objective perspective with an expertise in interpersonal and intrapersonal issues. After the first session, many students return as they realize they feel better from talking to someone and it no longer seems scary or unknown."

For additional information visit the CCS website www.iwu.edu/ccs/ or contact the office by phone at (309) 556-3052.

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