

TRANSCRIPT

Getting the Most Out of Counseling

Hi, I'm Chuck Zanone, a Licensed Psychologist and psychotherapist at Counseling and Psychiatric Services at the University Health Center.

Many students are reluctant to seek counseling services because of the stigma associated with counseling and mental health treatment. Many myths and misconceptions exist about counseling. For example, some students assume that only students with severe emotional problems seek counseling. Others have questions about the qualifications of their counselor, believe that seeking counseling is sign of weakness, or have concerns about confidentiality.

College students seek individual counseling for a variety of reasons:

- because they are in crisis or feel overwhelmed by academic and other stressors
- to address specific concerns that are impacting them academically, personally, or socially
- to learn new coping skills so they can function more effectively and get the most out of their college experience

Counseling is a collaborative relationship between a client and a mental health professional that is trained to assist clients in understanding and changing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

CAPS is staffed with licensed psychologists, social workers, postdoctoral fellows, and doctoral level practicum students who are under the supervision of a licensed clinician. Our clinicians are skilled in addressing a wide variety of college student concerns.

CAPS' counselors apply scientifically validated procedures. There are a variety of different approaches to counseling. Regardless of the approach, effective counseling is characterized by open communication and a collaborative working relationship between you and your counselor.

Our staff adheres to professional and ethical guidelines that allow disclosure of information about you only with your written consent. Exceptions to confidentiality include when your life or someone else's is in imminent danger or if there is a threat to the University community.

It is important that you feel comfortable working with your counselor. If you have a preference for working with a specific counselor you may request to work with this therapist but keep in mind that availability may be limited based on current demand for services and availability of counselors.

I mentioned previously that counseling is a collaborative relationship. To get the most out of counseling you will need to be an active participant in the process. This means, honestly sharing your reasons for seeking counseling, working with your counselor to find solutions to your concerns, and implementing any suggestions that are made.

Clients typically experience a wide range of emotions during counseling and at times some of these emotions can be intense. You may be asked to discuss difficult or painful experiences. While this can be challenging, students who have a good working relationship with their counselor often feel relief and find solutions to their concerns. It takes courage to seek assistance but most students find that the pay-off is worth any anxiety or misgivings they had about counseling.

A Few Tips for Getting the Most Out of Counseling

- if you have questions about your counselor's qualifications or your treatment do not hesitate to ask
- decide what issue(s) you would like to address and what your goals are for counseling, the clearer you are about your goals, the more you will get out of counseling
- communicate openly and honestly with your counselor, ask questions, share your expectations and express any concerns that may arise
- be an active participant in your treatment, attend all sessions and give thought prior to the session about what you would like to discuss, follow through with professional recommendations your counselor makes
- be patient, keep in mind that some issues take longer to address than others and that you may need to be flexible regarding your goals for counseling
- periodically review your progress with your counselor
- if you feel inclined to discontinue counseling prematurely, discuss your thoughts and feelings with your counselor

If you are interested in counseling please call CAPS for a telephone screening. If you are in crisis and need to see a counselor immediately, you may come to CAPS during regular hours and see a clinician for a walk-in appointment. After hours and on weekends you may speak with the counselor on-call by contacting the UGA Police at (706) 542-2200.

If you have other questions about our services, please call CAPS at (706) 542-2273.

