

Returning to Grounds and Student Mental Health

Nicole L. Fischer, PhD, ABPP

nlf6z@virginia.edu

Assistant Director for Outreach

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

August 20, 2021



Agenda

- Overview of CAPS services and how to refer students
- Current mental health concerns of students
 - Returning to Grounds
 - COVID-19
- How to identify and support students of concern

CAPS Services

- Free and Confidential
- Individual therapy, group therapy, psychiatry/medication (telehealth)
- 24-hour emergency services by phone: 434.243.5150
- “Let’s Talk” drop-in consultation hours (hybrid)
- Support Spaces
- SilverCloud and other online resources
- <https://studenthealth.virginia.edu/caps>

CAPS Services

- New Building opening **TBD** – Brandon Avenue
- Staff: Psychologists, Licensed Counselors, Care Managers, Psychiatric Providers, Interns, Graduate Students, Administrative Support
- Telehealth clinical services
- In-person Outreach and Community Engagement

How to Refer to CAPS

- Call and speak to on-call therapist 24/7.
 - You may or may not disclose student's identity.
- When CAPS resumes in-person services, you may accompany a student to our office.
- Refer students to “Let’s Talk” drop-in consultation hours.
- Share information about CAPS services, events, and social media with your students/include in your course syllabus.

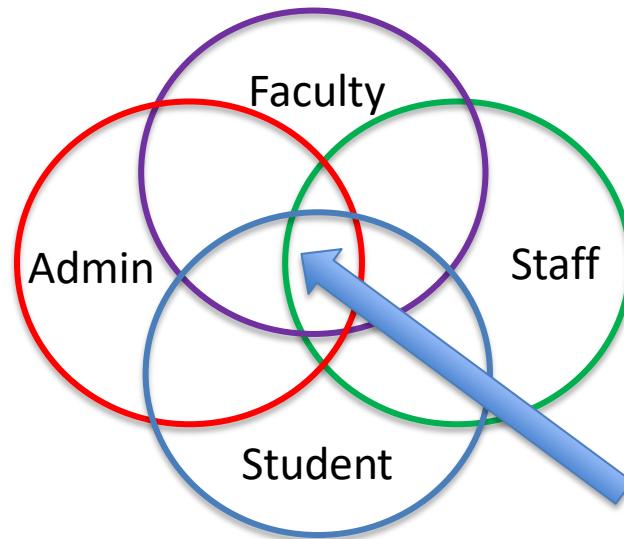
Current Mental Health Concerns of Students

- Anxiety
 - Academic Success
 - Social Success
 - Sense of Belonging
 - Returning to Grounds
 - COVID-19 (trauma, grief)
- Depression/Mood Disorders

Current Mental Health Concerns of Students

- Adjustment and Interpersonal Concerns
- Affinity Group Concerns/Identity Concerns
- Disordered Eating/Body Image Concerns
- Substance Abuse
- Severe or Acute Mental Illness (psychosis, bipolar disorder, etc.)

The impact [of trauma] on the community



Signs of [traumatic] stress

- Flashbacks
- Intrusive memories
- Nightmares or bad dreams, difficulty sleeping
- Avoiding thoughts, feelings, people, or places
- Displaced anger, irritability, tension
- Difficulty concentrating or focusing on work
- Difficulty with recall, or remembering precise details
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling numb or in shock
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Feeling unsafe or mistrustful
- Difficulty communicating feelings to others
- Dissociation

Ways to help students

- Listen.
- Your willingness to reach out and connect with students lets them know you care, and that you're also impacted by the world around you.
- Be an ally and help to empower students.
- Display genuine interest and awareness of differences among students.
- Redirect students to other resources on Grounds – CAPS, SDAC, ODOS, OAAA, MSC, LGBTQ Center, IRC, ISO, RAs, Religious leaders, etc.

Helpful vs. unhelpful approaches with students

| Helpful Approaches | Unhelpful Approaches |
|---|---|
| Be gentle and patient. | Don't force conversations that are clearly unwanted. |
| Acknowledge the potential impact on academic functioning or productivity. Offer accommodations, if needed, with specific parameters. | Don't ignore students who are hurting, especially when you notice a change in their behavior. |
| Consider creating opportunities for students to process their feelings together. Establish ground rules, to promote a welcoming and non-judgmental classroom environment. | Don't discourage students from talking to one another, as long as the dialogue is helpful and respectful. |
| Acknowledge that you do not have all the answers. Redirect students to other appropriate resources. | Don't discourage students from asking questions, being curious, or thoughtful. |

How to recognize your limits

- Acknowledge your own emotions and be kind to yourself.
- If you feel unable to adequately support students, then redirect them to other university resources. Be helpful, rather than avoidant.
- Be aware of what you need from others, as well as what you have to offer. Try not to exhaust your emotional resources all at once.

