WHAT IF IT’S AN EMERGENCY?

If the student is in crisis, immediate attention is warranted. Call CAPS at 973-655-5211 during business hours and tell the receptionist that you have an emergency. The student will be seen as soon as possible. If CAPS is closed, call University Police at 973-655-5222 and they will contact the on-call psychologist.

If a student talks or writes about suicide, this should be taken seriously. Suicide is often considered as an option when a student feels depressed, hopeless, trapped or out-of-control. Making an assumption that talk of suicide is aimed at getting attention can be a potentially fatal mistake.

IDENTIFYING AN EMERGENCY

Crisis situations include:
- The student is in significant distress and appears unable to care for himself or herself
- The student expresses thoughts about suicide and/or a plan or intent to harm themselves or somebody else
- The student is displaying psychotic symptoms, such as appearing confused and/or agitated, hearing voices, expressing unintelligible speech and/or bizarre, paranoid or clearly false beliefs about something

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REFERRAL IS MADE?

Once a student calls or walks into CAPS, an appointment is made the same or next day for a telephone screening. The screening is approximately 15-20 minutes with a CAPS staff member who determines options for best helping the student. This screening can be done in person if the student attends a Let’s Talk session. After this initial point of contact, an initial interview will usually be held within a few days, depending on the urgency of the situation and the flexibility of the student’s schedule. The initial interview is intended to learn more about what is troubling the student and to assess what services would be most helpful.

If it is determined that the student’s needs would be better met by an off-campus facility or private practitioner, a referral for off-campus services will be made. If short-term counseling at CAPS is appropriate, regular appointments will be scheduled, usually for 45 minutes once a week. At busier times of the year, it may be a week or two before regular appointments begin, but students are encouraged to utilize Let’s Talk for support as often as they like in the meantime.

WHO PROVIDES SERVICES AND WHAT IS OFFERED?

CAPS is staffed by psychologists, a social worker, a part-time psychiatrist and selected graduate students who work under close supervision. The services are included in the Student Services Fee and are provided with no additional out-of-pocket expense. Confidentiality is maintained in accordance with ethical standards and New Jersey state law. No information, including whether a student has made an appointment, can be shared with anyone without the written consent of the student utilizing services.

Services include short-term individual therapy, support and therapy groups, psychiatry services, consultation and referrals, 24/7 emergency on-call, Let’s Talk drop-in hours, as well as programming through the department’s Office of Outreach and Prevention, located in the Student Center.

For Let’s Talk hours and locations, and for a list of CAPS groups and programs provided by the CAPS Office of Outreach and Prevention, please visit montclair.edu/caps.

ABOUT MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Building on a distinguished history dating back to 1908, Montclair State University is a leading institution of higher education in New Jersey. Designated a Research Doctoral University by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, the University’s nine colleges and schools serve more than 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students with over 300 doctoral, master’s and baccalaureate level programs. Situated on a beautiful, 252-acre suburban campus just 14 miles from New York City, Montclair State delivers the instructional and research resources of a large public university in a supportive, sophisticated and diverse academic environment.
INDICATORS A REFERRAL MAY BE NEEDED
A student who is experiencing more stress than he or she can handle may exhibit one or more of the following:

- Marked decline in quality of course work, class participation, quality of papers or test results
- Increased absence from class or failure to submit work
- Repeated requests for special consideration
- Disruptive classroom behavior
- Littleness, lack of energy or falling asleep in class
- Prolonged depression, suggested by a sad expression, apathy, weight loss or tearfulness
- Nervousness, agitation, excessive worry, irritability, aggressiveness or non-stop talk
- Impaired speech or disjointed, confused thoughts
- Extreme mood changes or an inappropriate display of emotions
- Threats against other people
- Coming to class or other activities intoxicated or smelling of alcohol
- Extreme dependency on faculty or staff, including spending excessive time visiting during office hours or at other times
- Use of office hours to address personal issues
- Marked decline in personal hygiene
- Marked change in the student’s participation with peers; isolation
- Frequent physical complaints, such as tension headaches, stomachaches or other symptoms of physical pain
- Direct statements indicating family problems, personal loss, sexual or physical assault, or reported episodes of racial or gender discrimination
- Talk of suicide, either directly or indirectly, such as, “I won’t be around to take that exam anymore” or “I’m not worried about a job, I won’t need one” or “I wish I could just go to sleep and not wake up”
- Comments in a student’s paper that cause concern, such as essays that focus on despair, suicide or death
- Indication of harm or threat of harm including self-injurious behavior (i.e., cutting)

STUDENTS AND STRESS
Please keep in mind that every student experiences stress differently, and many disturbances are temporary. However, you may become concerned by brief extreme changes or significant changes that continue over time. If there is doubt about the seriousness of the problem, consult a CAPS staff member regarding how to address the situation.

HOW DO I MAKE A REFERRAL?
Referrals can be made directly to CAPS in Russ Hall or to Let’s Talk drop-in, one-on-one consultation hours hosted at specific times during the week at multiple locations throughout campus. Let’s Talk hours are staffed by CAPS therapists.

One way to introduce the topic of counseling to a student is to summarize what you see as the content of the problem. Be direct, specific and non-judgmental. For example, say something like, “I’ve noticed that you’re falling asleep in class and I’m concerned,” rather than “Why are you constantly asleep in my class?” If a student approaches you, listen to his or her expressed thoughts and feelings. Let the student know that you recognize that he or she is in pain and that you want to help. Tell the student that you recommend a referral to CAPS or Let’s Talk so that he or she doesn’t have to deal with the problem alone.

Sometimes people are resistant to counseling because they stereotype that counseling is for “crazy people,” the belief that they should be able to handle things on their own, or fears about what counseling might be like. Explain to the student that everyone needs help dealing with problems from time to time and that counseling can provide a sensitive and caring person who will listen to concerns and help identify ways to cope more effectively.

To bring a student to the attention of the Dean of Students Office for support and assistance, please complete the Student of Concern Form on the Dean of Students home page at montclair.edu/dean-of-students.