

Scope of Practice for Frederick Community College Counseling and Wellness Services

Introduction

Frederick Community College's Counseling and Wellness (C&W) Services are committed to supporting our student body's mental health and well-being. Our mission at Frederick Community College Counseling and Wellness Services is to provide high-quality, accessible, and confidential mental health support that fosters personal and academic success. We are dedicated to promoting holistic wellness and addressing the diverse needs of our student body, ensuring equitable support for all students in their journey towards achieving their dreams.

As the primary mental health resource for currently enrolled students, we offer free and confidential services to help manage personal, academic, and emotional challenges. Our short-term, solution-focused approach promotes resilience and enhances students' ability to succeed academically and personally. When a student's needs exceed our services, we provide referrals to appropriate external support and resources, ensuring comprehensive care.

Eligibility

General:

Counseling services at Frederick Community College are available to all currently enrolled students. FCC Counseling and Wellness Office does not offer counseling services to FCC employees. Employees may utilize the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for counseling needs.

Students Under 18:

In accordance with Maryland law, students aged 12 and older can consent to receive mental health services without parental consent. Exceptions may apply for specific types of services. For more information, refer to the [Maryland Department of Health's guidelines on minor consent](#).

Summer:

Students enrolled in summer courses are eligible for counseling services during the summer term. Those not enrolled but who were registered in the previous spring and upcoming fall semesters may also access services.

Withdrawal:

Students who withdraw from all courses are no longer eligible for counseling services, except for a transitional session to provide appropriate referrals.

Graduating:

Students who are graduating can access counseling services until the end of the academic term in which they graduate.

Groups Not Eligible:

Certain groups, such as alumni and individuals auditing courses, are not eligible for counseling services. This ensures resources are dedicated to currently enrolled students.

Lifetime Utilization Limits:

C&W services are intended to be short-term; student utilization during their entire academic experience at FCC is limited. Students who have received extensive services at C&W are not eligible to receive further treatment at C&W, regardless of current enrollment. This limit applies to students who have previously received 20 or more sessions of individual or couples counseling. Students can typically access up to eight sessions per academic year. These limits ensure that services remain available to all students in need.

Group counseling sessions do not count toward the lifetime limit. Students who have exceeded their lifetime utilization limit remain eligible for unlimited group treatment throughout their academic experience.

Exceptions:

Exceptions to the above guidelines may be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the student's unique circumstances and needs. Individuals who are not eligible for C&W services as defined above but wish to be considered for treatment may submit a request to livewell@frederick.edu.

Free:

All counseling services are provided at no cost to eligible students.

Confidential:

All services provided by the Counseling and Wellness Center are confidential, meaning the information you share with an FCC clinician cannot be shared with anyone outside of the C&W Office without your express written permission. Exceptions to this confidentiality include if you disclose plans to cause serious harm or death to yourself, another individual, or an animal. Your clinician is also legally obligated to report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children under 18, individuals with developmental disabilities, or elderly individuals. If any of these issues arise, your clinician will inform you about the steps to be taken. You have the right to complete a "Release of Information" form to allow the C&W Office/your clinician to communicate with other care providers or resources you use. This allows us to provide you with comprehensive care.

Services Offered

Frederick Community College's Counseling and Wellness Services provides a range of mental health support services to currently enrolled students. These services include:

1. Individual Counseling: Short-term solution-focused therapy to address personal, academic, and emotional challenges.
2. Group Counseling: Supportive group sessions on topics such as stress management, anxiety, depression, and relationships.
3. Couples Counseling: Support for student couples in resolving relationship issues and improving communication. At least one partner must be a currently enrolled student.
4. Crisis Services: Immediate intervention and risk assessment for students experiencing mental health crises.

5. Walk-In Services: Timely support for urgent, non-emergency issues without an appointment.
6. Consultation Services for Faculty and Staff: Guidance and support for faculty and staff in addressing student mental health concerns.
7. Outreach Programs: Workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns to promote mental health and well-being across the campus community.

Stepped Care Model

The Counseling and Wellness Services employs a Stepped Care Model to ensure students receive the most appropriate mental health intervention based on their current needs. This model allows for flexibility and responsiveness, providing the least intensive yet effective intervention at each step:

1. Self-Help and Digital Resources: Students are encouraged to utilize self-help materials and digital mental health resources such as apps and online workshops.
2. Workshops and Group Programs: Participation in psychoeducational workshops and group counseling sessions focused on common student issues.
3. Low-Intensity Interventions: Brief solution-focused counseling sessions for specific issues or concerns.
4. Moderate-Intensity Interventions: Short-term individual counseling sessions for students with moderate levels of distress or more complex issues.
5. High-Intensity Interventions: Intensive therapy for students with high levels of distress or complex mental health needs.
6. Specialized Services: Referral to external services for students requiring long-term or specialized care.

Comprehensive Services Framework

By incorporating the Stepped Care Model, Frederick Community College's Counseling and Wellness Services ensures that students receive tailored support that matches their level of need, promoting a healthier and more supportive campus environment.

Counseling Services Can Address Issues Including:

Common Issues:

- Stress, anxiety, depression, relationship issues, academic challenges, adjustment difficulties, loneliness, guilt, low self-esteem, grief and loss, and certain levels of substance misuse.
- Romantic relationship difficulties, sexual concerns, roommate problems, family issues, couples (all parties must be FCC students)
- Cultural concerns, Impact of oppression, power, privilege, identity, intersectionality
- Developmental concerns, identity development, adjustment to college, life transitions

- Academic concerns, performance anxiety, perfectionism, underachievement, low motivation
- Other concerns, which may include the effects of trauma, sexual assault, abuse, family history, spirituality, body image, food preoccupation, healthy lifestyle choices

Crisis:

Crisis intervention services are available for students experiencing immediate mental health crises. This includes risk assessments and appropriate referrals for high-intensity care.

Consultation:

Consultation services support faculty and staff in addressing student mental health concerns, providing referral guidance, and promoting a supportive learning environment.

Outreach:

Outreach programs include workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns aimed at promoting mental health and well-being across the campus community.

Counseling and Wellness invites all students to make an initial telehealth triage appointment to meet with one of our counselors and discuss their concerns. During this initial meeting, the counselor, in collaboration with the student, will recommend services within Counseling and Wellness or the community depending on the student's individual needs, the Center's scope of service, and availability at the time of assessment.

In order to use its resources most effectively, Counseling and Wellness utilizes brief counseling to assist students in addressing issues common in a college setting. Depending on utilization of the Center, session limits may be enacted for individual counseling. The number of group sessions and attendance in workshops is unlimited, as appropriate.

Services Outside Our Area of Support

Certain services are beyond the scope of what is provided by the Counseling and Wellness Services at Frederick Community College. These include:

- Long-term therapy for chronic mental health conditions.
- Intensive treatment for severe psychiatric disorders.
- Comprehensive psychological evaluations.
- Treatment for substance abuse requiring detox or rehabilitation programs.
- Court-mandated counseling.
- Services requiring specialized therapeutic techniques not available at the college.
- A history of multiple hospitalizations, chronic suicidality, and/or self-injury behaviors; history of repeated suicide attempts.
- Evidence or risk of progressive deterioration in mental or emotional functioning, requiring intensive intervention.
- Indication that short-term therapy may be detrimental or non-beneficial.

- Presence of psychotic symptoms without the willingness to remain on medication for stabilization of symptoms.
- Inability or unwillingness to provide the necessary information to assess symptoms thoroughly.
- The presence of significant drug and/or alcohol problems such as substance dependence, primary substance abuse, and/or past failed treatments.
- The presence of a long-standing eating disorder with no period of remission, no previous treatment, or which may pose a medical danger.
- Students who engage in assaultive, harassing, verbally abusive, disruptive, or threatening behavior towards Center faculty/staff or other clients.
- Request for formal psychological evaluation for the purpose of employment clearance, determining eligibility for vocational rehabilitation or disability benefits, or documentation for emotional support or service animals.
- Learning disability, neuropsychological, or ADHD assessment.
- Court-mandated assessment or treatment requirements: Counseling and Wellness does not provide mandated counseling services with the exception of several “assessment-based” services that have been designed specifically as a resource to the student conduct process and to the assurance of safety. Some of the reasons for this policy include:
 - Mandated counseling places Counseling and Wellness in an unproductive, punitive role (and potentially injures our reputation as a helpful resource in the campus community),
 - Mandated counseling is inconsistent with professional standards and ethics of emotional health professionals,
 - Making counseling a condition of something has the potential to undermine any benefit that could have come from counseling otherwise,
 - Mandated counseling has shown little efficacy (and therefore is not an effective use of time/resources for any involved parties)

Referrals and Denials

Criteria for Referral:

Referrals are made when a student’s needs exceed the scope of services provided on campus. Criteria for referral include complex or chronic mental health issues, severe symptoms, need for specialized services, and reaching the maximum session limit.

Partner Organizations:

Frederick Community College partners with several local mental health organizations, including the Frederick County Mental Health Association (MHA), to ensure students receive the necessary support. MHA provides initial assessments and up to three sessions paid for by FCC. Further sessions are the student’s responsibility.

Follow-Up on Referrals:

The Counseling and Wellness counselors are not case managers and are not responsible for ensuring that clients follow up on referrals provided. Such contacts are encouraged, however, in cases with a moderate or higher level of risk or instability.

Denials:

Students whose needs fall outside the scope of services provided will receive assistance in identifying appropriate external resources and referrals to ensure they receive the necessary care.

By clearly defining the scope of services, eligibility criteria, and referral processes, Frederick Community College's Counseling and Wellness Services can effectively manage resources and provide high-quality mental health support to the student body. This structured approach ensures that all students have access to the appropriate level of care and support, promoting a healthier and more supportive campus environment.