

## Parents, Family and Support People

Entering college, no matter whether you are a high school graduate, a returning student or changing careers, can provide an opportunity to adjust and change in many ways. It is a time of transition when students need much support. This is a time in your student's life when they are exploring, succeeding and failing while forging their own path. All of these lead to feelings and issues that are part of being human. Counseling is available to help students address issues if they are getting in the way of functioning both in and out of the classroom. Transition to college is challenging for many students. Counselors are available to assist with skill-based counseling such as time management, organization and study strategies, test anxiety, communications skills and self-care.

Counseling is free and confidential. This service is available for all students enrolled at Kirkwood. We have licensed mental health counselors on campus to assist students with all types of needs.

### Academic Issues

Many times the academic concerns counselors see have to do with personal organizational concerns, such as time management and stress management. Counselors also talk with students about different study strategies that might fit their learning style as well as coping strategies for test anxiety.

There are also times when a student doesn't know how to talk with an instructor or work with a group. Counselors might help them identify the problem, and find an appropriate solution and build skills in order to do so.

### Personal Issues

- Homesickness
- Self-Esteem
- Relationship
- Grief
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Body Image/Eating Disorder

Students come to counseling for a variety of personal issues as noted above. Counselors work with students to find coping strategies to assist them in resolving the stressors that get in the way of their academic and social functioning.

Statistics about college students in counseling are gathered under the term mental health. Mental health can include issues of adjustment, acquisition of new skills and the desire to change behaviors.

Colleges are seeing more students coming in who have previously received mental health counseling and/or medication. We offer continued counseling services during the college experience. Students who have never seen a counselor are invited to meet with us.

### When do I encourage my student to meet with a counselor?

- Level of stress is rising
- Student may appear overwhelmed
- Student is having difficulty coping
- Student is asking for help you can't provide
- You are getting more and more distressed phone calls or communication shuts down
- Student reveals a trauma, crisis or loss

### How do I encourage my student to meet with a counselor?

- Speak positively about counseling as a resource on campus
- Share your own experience and how it was helpful
- Talk about counseling as a resource many students utilize while in school
- Assure your student counseling is confidential

As a parent or support person, it is important to remember these services are available. **Counselors abide by FERPA rules. We offer confidentiality to your student.** You are welcome to call and tell us of any concerns, but we are not allowed to share that we know your student without a signed release from your student.

You are in a position to explain to your student that college counseling is about dealing with their personal challenges (academic, emotional or interpersonal). This type of counseling is different from what your student might have worked with in high school where the counselors do it all. In college, Career Services, Academic Advising and Counseling are all specialized and available to students as required or needed.

