Students come to counseling for many different reasons. Counseling may be of help to you if you feel concerned about…

- Problems with relationships
- Experiences of abuse and/or sexual assault
- Family problems
- Issues related to sexuality
- Feeling out of control
- Something you’ve never told anyone, but wished you could
- Feeling sad, alone, stressed-out or anxious
- Issues of race ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status
- Experiences of oppression or discrimination
- Not being assertive enough
- Worrying about your appearance or your weight
- Eating too much or too little
- Drinking or using drugs
- Problems with school or studying
- Mood swings
- Thoughts of suicide

It's also okay if you aren't exactly sure what the problem is — we can help you talk about that, too.

OUR STAFF

The Furman Counseling Center staff is made up of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, post doctoral fellow, doctoral interns and externs in these fields. As a group, we represent a wide variety of professional interests and specializations, including multicultural issues, wellness, abuse/sexual assault, sexual identity, women’s issues, eating disorders, alcohol and substance abuse, and social justice. All of us are committed to providing services in ways that recognize, respect, and value the diversity of Barnard students.

WHAT HAPPENS IN COUNSELING?

You can expect your counselor to be someone who is interested in listening to your concerns, and who will assist you in understanding them better so that you can deal with them more effectively. Your counselor will ask you some pertinent questions about your background and experiences, and will help you clarify your own goals for the therapeutic process.

WHAT ELSE CAN I EXPECT?

- It's normal to feel anxious the first time that you come for counseling. This is very common, and students usually feel more comfortable after a couple of appointments.
- In session, you can talk about whatever is concerning you at the time. Your counselor is willing to openly discuss whatever is troubling you, and you don't need to worry about starting at the “right place.”
- Remember that change takes time, and counseling is not a "quick fix" for your problems. Your counselor will help you explore your feelings and thoughts, examine your options, weigh alternatives, and move toward goals that you set for yourself – but she/he will not, for the most part, tell you what to do.

EMERGENCIES

For psychological emergencies Monday through Friday between the hours of 5 pm and 9 am, weekends, and holidays, call our After-Hours Emergency Line at (866) 966-7788.

In addition, there is always a Residence Life staff member on call, and the front desk in your building can connect you to that person. Barnard Security can be reached at 854-3362.

COUNSELING GROUPS

We’ve seen that, for many students, being in a group is not only a good way to work on the issues that bring them to Counseling Center, it is often the best way. Students have rewarding, supportive experiences in our groups, even when they were initially hesitant about joining.

Research also indicates that groups can be especially effective at reducing the shame and isolation associated with many struggles. You can learn more about counseling groups and what they’re like by visiting our website, and if you would like to join a group (or just have questions), give us a call.

CONFIDENTIALITY

What you talk about with your counselor is CONFIDENTIAL. That means that we will not inform your parents or professors of what you discuss during sessions. If you want any of this information to be released to anyone outside Counseling Services, you must give your written permission. Furthermore, your counseling records will never become part of your academic or administrative records at Barnard. There are limits to confidentiality having to do with risk to your safety or the safety of others — these will be explained to you fully in writing.

OUR SERVICES

Short-term individual counseling (10 session maximum)
Group counseling
Crisis intervention
After-hours emergency line
Outreach presentations and workshops
Consultation to students, faculty, staff
Psychiatric evaluation and short-term medication monitoring
Referrals for long-term therapy and medication monitoring
Self-improvement mini courses
Listening Hours: walk-in consultation in residence halls, Elliott and Plimpton 2 evenings/week.
FAQ
Q. If I go to Counseling Center, doesn’t it mean that something is really wrong with me?
A. No! Most students experience normal pressures and concerns during their college years, and counseling is a resource that can help them cope and make the most of their time at Barnard. At times students may experience anxiety, depression, or anger, and counseling can help students deal with these feelings. Some students have difficulties that require specialized therapy and/or medication, and Counseling Center can help identify the most appropriate course of treatment and resources.

Q. Wouldn’t it be better for me to be a stronger, more independent person and solve my problems by myself?
A. Taking advantage of every resource to solve problems is a sign of health, not weakness. Counseling can be a powerful tool that helps you understand yourself and your situation better, so that you can become freer and more self-sufficient.

Q. I don’t think my problem is very serious … can I still come to Counseling?
A. Yes! We’re here to help students with all kinds of questions and concerns, as well as more serious emotional difficulties.

Q. I’ve heard that Counseling Center prescribes medication for everyone.
A. In fact, the opposite is true: most of the students we work with do not need medication. However, if you have symptoms that might respond well to medication, your counselor owes it to you to suggest this. You should feel free to explore any concerns, questions, or hesitations that you have about medication with your counselor, or with one of our psychiatrists. Even when a medication is suggested, the final decision is yours.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?
It’s easy to begin working with a counselor. To make an appointment, simply call 854-2092. You will speak with our front desk staff member, who will schedule an appointment with a counselor for you. Counseling sessions are free for Barnard students who have paid the Health Service Fee.