

## **Student Counseling Center (SCC) Procedures for School-Requested Basic Mental Health Evaluation Referrals**

- Students best engage in therapy when they seek treatment voluntarily; in general, we suggest that university administrators encourage students to initiate services on their own. If a university administrator is concerned about a student, regardless of whether the student exhibits the signs below, the university administrator can contact SCC for information about how to suggest that the student seek services from SCC.
- Students have the right to refuse to participate in the School-requested basic mental health evaluation or to allow the School access to the results and treatment recommendations from this evaluation. However, failure to allow SCC and/or School access to relevant mental health information means the School has no option but to proceed based solely on the student's behavior in relation to academic and technical standards.
- If a student does not initiate services, a School-requested basic mental health evaluation may be necessary. The purpose of a basic mental health evaluation is to ascertain whether a student poses an imminent danger to self or others. Possible reasons for considering a School-requested evaluation from SCC:
  - Student exhibits signs of possible **danger to self**
    - Writes a suicide note
    - Talks about wanting to die or kill self
    - Talks about being a burden to others, feeling hopeless, or feeling trapped
    - Withdraws or socially isolates
    - Displays extreme mood swings
    - Engages in self-harming behavior (e.g., cuts or burns self, takes overdose)
  - Student exhibits signs of being a **danger to others/disruptive to the community**
    - Engages in stalking behavior
    - Threatens damage to or intentionally damages property
    - Displays extreme mood swings
    - Isolates socially (i.e., not responding to phone calls or emails)
    - Makes concerning statement on social media sites
    - Demonstrates disruptive classroom behaviors (i.e., not responding to social cues, intimating other students or instructor)
    - Others students report complaints about identified student's behavior
  - Student exhibits signs of possible **eating disorder**
    - Seems significantly underweight
    - Doesn't eat adequately
    - Spends many hours exercising
    - Induces vomiting
    - Despite clear evidence of problem, refuses assistance or referrals for treatment
  - Student exhibits signs of possible **mental health condition**
    - Seems incapable of taking care of basic needs (not eating or sleeping or maintaining hygiene)
    - Seems out of touch with reality

- Engages in bizarre behavior and/or expresses bizarre beliefs
- Student exhibits signs of possible **substance abuse/concerns about misuse of prescribed medications**
  - Sudden weight loss or gain
  - Deterioration of physical appearance
  - Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination
  - Drop in attendance or performance in school
  - Anger outbursts or appears fearful or paranoid with no reason
  - Increased agitation or hyperactivity
- Procedures for school-requested evaluation
  1. Only the dean of a school, or the dean's designee, generally a dean for student affairs or academic affairs ("university official") may require a School-requested basic mental health evaluation. Other faculty or staff members concerned about a student who displays the signs described above should first address these issues with the dean or designee within the respective School ("School").
  2. The university official who is considering a School-requested basic mental health evaluation should consult the SCC director or in his/her absence, the SCC assistant director or other designee. During this consultation, the reasons for the possible School-requested evaluation will be reviewed and possible alternatives to a mandated evaluation will be explored. The SCC only accepts School-requested basic mental health evaluation referrals that can be completed in one 90-minute session (including 30 minutes for paperwork).
  3. The university official and SCC director (or designee) will discuss what information may be released to the student.
  4. The university official will meet with the identified student and provide, in writing, a referral letter for the student. The university official will complete the School-Requested Basic Mental Health Evaluation form, available on the SCC website <http://www.umaryland.edu/counseling/> and fax it to the SCC director (SCC fax: 8-5291). At the meeting with the student, the university official will notify the student of the health and safety reason for the School-requested evaluation and requirement for the student to complete a release authorizing the SCC to communicate with the School about the following:
    - Student's attendance
    - Results of the evaluation
    - Treatment recommendations
  5. The student will be responsible for scheduling the School-requested evaluation with SCC. The university official may assist the student in scheduling the evaluation by contacting SCC when the student is present to schedule the appointment.
  6. Evaluations will be conducted by SCC in a manner consistent with professional standards. At the completion of the evaluation, a letter documenting the results of the evaluation and treatment recommendations will be sent to the referring university official, copying the student.
  7. If a student fails to cooperate during the School-requested basic mental health evaluation or does not complete a release of information for SCC to provide results to the School, SCC will not conduct the evaluation and will refer the

- student back to the referral source. The university official will determine the appropriate response to the student's circumstances.
8. If a student asks to undergo an evaluation outside of the university, in lieu of a School-requested evaluation by SCC, the university official will make a decision on the request after consulting with SCC director (or his/her designee). If there is a conflict of interest (i.e., the student is a current SCC client, the student has a working relationship with SCC through other campus organizations), SCC will discuss options with the university official for the student to be referred off-campus for the evaluation.
  9. Depending on the situation, SCC may seek collateral information about the student from faculty or staff members who are familiar with the student. If the evaluation requires collateral information from outside sources, such as information from parents, roommates, dating partners, or outside mental health practitioners, the student will be referred to an off-campus mental health provider for a specialized assessment.
- Possible outcomes of the school-requested evaluation at SCC
    - The results of the evaluation and treatment recommendations will be based on the facts and circumstances of the particular situation. While not all-inclusive, the following list includes possible recommendations:
      - In the event that a student requires additional evaluation beyond the SCC's expertise or capabilities, the SCC will recommend that the student undergo a specialized evaluation with a provider outside of the university. The SCC will assist the student by providing referral options. SCC will require the student to complete a release authorizing the SCC to communicate information to and receive information from the outside provider. If the student refuses, SCC will not continue the evaluation process and will refer the student back to the referral source. The university official will determine the appropriate response to the student's circumstances.
      - If a student presents an imminent danger to self or others, the SCC will take action as appropriate under the circumstances to mitigate the danger, including for example providing appropriate notification to university officials, local police, mental health agencies, the student's family, and/or others as necessary.
      - Students may be recommended for weekly individual counseling and/or medication management services outside of SCC. The SCC recommends that the university official making the referral communicate directly with the outside mental health provider regarding student's attendance in treatment. The student may need to provide written permission authorizing communication between the student's academic program and the outside provider. If the treatment recommendations require additional information beyond attendance (i.e., progress towards counseling goals, compliance with medication), SCC may assist the university official to gather sensitive mental health information. The university official must request this type of assistance from SCC for select cases.