

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
COUNSELING CENTER

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

BE BOUNDLESS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1	On-Campus Resources: Contact Information	9
PART I: WHAT IS THERAPY?	2		
PART II: STIGMA & OTHER OBSTACLES	3	PART IV: OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES	11
Stigma	3	Finding a Therapist	11
Therapists	3	How to Pay for Services: With or Without Insurance	12
Confidentiality	4	State Mental Health Benefits	13
Insurance	4	NAMI	13
PART III: ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES	5	Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's)	13
Therapy	5	Food Pantry	14
Case Management	6	Sexual Assault & Relationship Violence	14
Academic Supports	6	PART V: TESTIMONIALS	15
Academic Advisors	6	Morgan (Sophomore, Psychology Major)	15
Disability Support Services	6	Jane (Junior, Education Major)	15
Housing & Residence Life	7	Sean (Senior, Business Major)	15
Employment	7		
Tutoring	7		
Financial Aid	7		
Social Clubs	8		



INTRODUCTION

Mental health is important, but it is not always simple. Everyone has a different experience. Maybe you have never even thought of seeing a counselor, or maybe you've seen one for years. Regardless, this guide is intended to help you with mental health resources as you transition into college. There will be bumps in the road, but there are lots of resources to help!

Keep in mind that mental health support is not just therapy or counseling (these two things mean the same thing, by the way), but can be wide reaching. Mental health support can include things like social support, adequate sleep, having enough to eat, financial assistance, home sickness, and finding a sense of belonging. At the University of Washington, we provide students with a **Mental Health Toolkit**, to aid them in their journey. Just know that there are transitional periods where things get harder! But these times, much like our emotional states, are only temporary.

Help is available, no matter what avenue you take. Use this guide in whatever way makes sense to you. And know that trying something new, no matter how small, is a good first step (including reading this guide)!

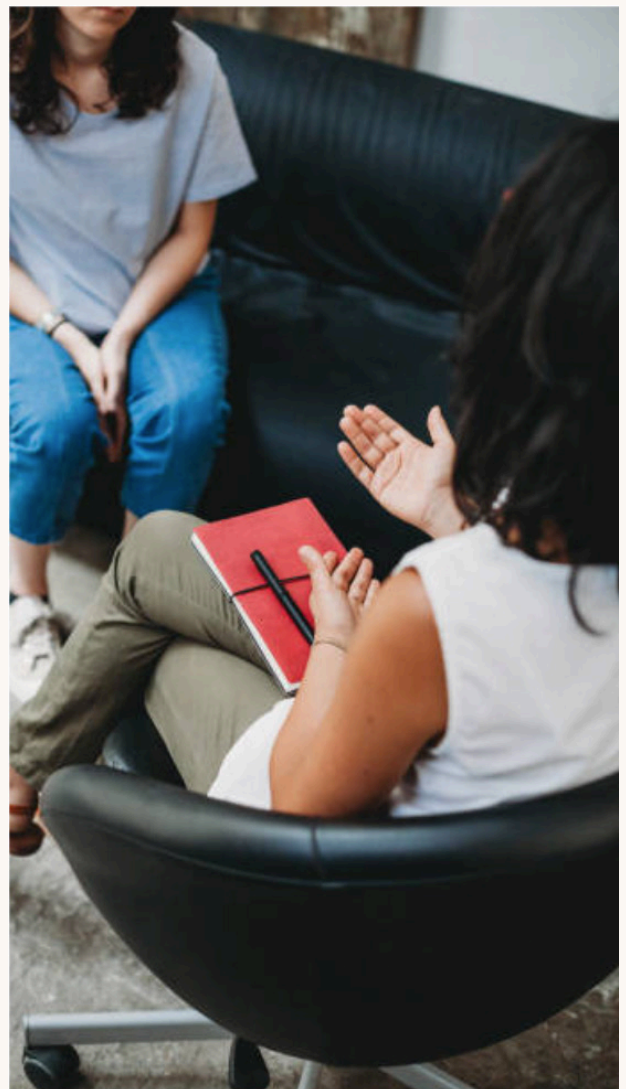
Always remember that you deserve to be heard and deserve the support to succeed. Do your best not to feel ashamed of asking for help. The thought that maybe you don't need help, or perhaps even that you don't deserve help, only gets in the way. You deserve to be successful. You are worthy of other people's attention.

MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT

Has tools for up to 14 mental health categories.

Contains the following resources:

- > Videos
- > Articles
- > Quizzes
- > Surveys



PART I: WHAT IS THERAPY?

Yes, I know we just said mental health support is not just therapy, but therapy can also be extremely beneficial. Put simply, therapy is a relationship. It is a therapeutic, professional relationship, which may be different from your bond with friends and family. It is a safe space to explore topics. So safe, in fact, that the therapist cannot share anything you say to them, within certain legal limitations. This aspect of therapy is called confidentiality.

Like any relationship, some people are better fits than others. You should expect to have chemistry or at least a good rapport with your therapist. Sometimes you might meet with someone and decide that they wouldn't be a good person to work with. That's okay! You need to find someone who works best for you.

Once you find a therapist who clicks, you then need to build a relationship with them.



The therapist provides the framework, and you provide the content. Be prepared to talk about personal topics! Think about what you want to address, and keep things in mind throughout the week. Some people might keep a journal of topics they want to talk about with their therapist in the next session. You can certainly explore topics once you meet with your therapist, but know that you'll have to put in the work to see the benefits. It may be painful to explore issues with your therapist, but go slowly and tell them what you need. You should always feel safe and in control, with the option to stop at any time. There are also different flavors of therapy: individual, couples, family, and group. It will depend on what is available on campus or what you might find off campus. Individual therapy is most common, but your school may offer other options. Don't be afraid to ask!



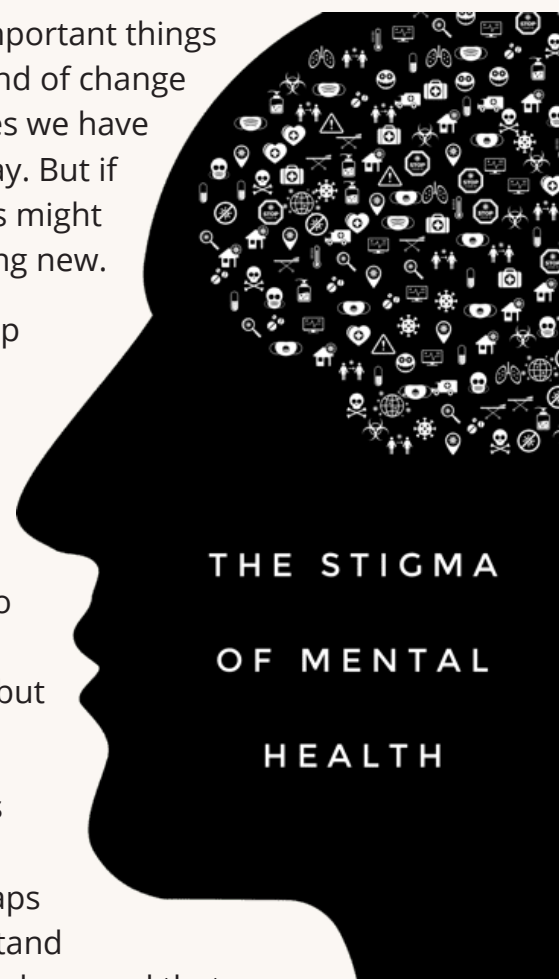
PART II: STIGMA & OTHER OBSTACLES

STIGMA

We could talk about logistics all day, but one of the most important things to mention are the obstacles to getting help. Making any kind of change is hard, and it's easy to convince ourselves that the struggles we have are just the way it is, that no one could really help us anyway. But if you do have struggles, it is worth thinking about how things might be different if you were to take a chance on trying something new.

It is hard to be authentic and genuine. It can hurt to open up about what you're thinking and feeling. Often it does cause distress to talk about these things, which is the first step towards healing. People don't tend to get better by bottling things up, pushing them down, and pretending they don't have a problem. Not only does it provide relief to address the issues, but it can also put you in a position to help others. It is the same thing as that one person in class who asks a question that five other people are wondering, but who are too timid to ask themselves.

Some common challenges are being raised to believe "boys don't cry!" or to "man up!" Or, if you are in the military, concerns that a diagnosis will impact your career. Or, perhaps still you have the feeling that no one could possibly understand your issues, that they would be viewing it through their own lens, and that therapy just wouldn't work. We all have these ideas we pick up throughout our lives, and sometimes they no longer serve us. It's worth reconsidering if it means the possibility of a more fulfilling life.



THERAPISTS

Therapists are people too. At some point, you must have met someone who rubbed you the wrong way and didn't feel like someone you can trust. Lots of people become therapists, and it's possible you had a bad experience with one. Whether you didn't click or you felt they actively did something poorly, this is a valid experience. You might draw the conclusion that, therefore, all therapists are worthless. But you might be surprised when you find someone who fits and really helps. It's possible: all you have to do is take the chance.

CONFIDENTIALITY

As far as keeping your information private, therapists are bound by confidentiality through **HIPPA**. What this means is that legally they cannot share information unless there is a danger of harm to yourself or others. You also have the option of signing a Release of Information (ROI) if you want your therapist to talk to your medical doctor. Your therapist should cover this in more detail during your initial meeting.

You have all the say in what happens in session. Sometimes therapists in training or students like to shadow sessions to learn. Does this make you uncomfortable? Then tell your therapist no! They must respect this, and if your therapist is pushy or makes you uncomfortable, it may be time to find another one.



INSURANCE

You might feel additional strain as you try to navigate insurance, cover the cost of therapy, find that therapists have waitlists, etc. Therapy is a complex system. This guide might be the first step, but numerous resources are available along the way.

There is one caveat to all of this: you have to put in the work. Unfortunate, but true. You have to be the one to pick up the phone. You have to find a way to be vulnerable. You have to make strides to be reflective, thoughtful, and intentional. Progress doesn't happen overnight. There is not a therapist who will magically cure you in one fifty minute session. This is a good thing! It means that the path is gradual and designed to fit you. You might feel challenged, pushed, and a bit uncomfortable, but always cared for.

Change is hard. But you have the ability to change. It might just take a bit of time.

PART III: ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

THERAPY

Most campuses have a counseling center of some kind where they offer mental health therapy. Typically, these services are free or included with your tuition. Might as well use them if you're paying already!

To take advantage, look up services on your school's website or even ask your RA. You do normally need to make a phone call to schedule an appointment. They will ask for your student ID, your schedule, and preferences about your counselor, such as gender. You may be able to get booked for a session right away. Be aware that as the semester goes on, counselors will get busy, and it will become harder to find a timely appointment. If you think you might want to see a counselor, go ahead and schedule the appointment as soon as possible. Don't wait!

It's important to know that on-campus counseling is typically short-term. Often, these offices will have a limit on how many sessions you may get with a counselor. If you need more regular care, check out the Off-Campus Resources section about finding a therapist in the community. Your on-campus counselor may also be able to help connect you with a long-term off-campus counselor once your sessions expire.



CASE MANAGEMENT

Many schools now see the value of case management, a way to say the point person that helps you logistically figure things out. This can be a person to talk to, develop a plan for success, and be your personal social worker providing you with resources. This person should be knowledgeable about available resources and may be able to support you as you search for solutions. Often, this is an excellent first step if available, as it will be an actual person you can talk to, ask for support, and stay in touch with to ensure you get what you need.

ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

There are numerous offices on campus. Depending on your college, they may go by different names, but the following are standard resources that you should expect to find. If not, there should be equivalent resources available!

Academic Advisors Academic advisors are the people to talk to if you are concerned about your class schedule. They will help you schedule classes to stay on track for graduation, ensure you take all appropriate classes toward your degree, and help you drop a class if you feel overwhelmed. Often, you will have a dedicated advisor whose sole responsibility is to take care of this aspect of college for you. However, sometimes this role is given to professors or other staff who serve multiple roles. No matter how your school does academic advising, be sure to meet with your advisor, even if only to introduce yourself and get to know them.

Disability Support Services Disabilities support services, sometimes called accessibility services, help with accommodations. These services usually require that you have a documented disability. Professors and other faculty members are required by law to adhere to these accommodations, so if there is ever an issue, go directly to the disabilities support office and talk with them about how your accommodations can be successfully implemented.



Housing & Residence Life Many colleges require that you live your first year on campus, and it may be the first time you've shared a room with another person! Housing and Residence Life oversee this portion of your college experience. If you have an issue with your roommate, your first step is your RA. Or, if you end up without reliable housing, your college's residential services can often offer emergency housing for a day or two.



Employment Near the end of college, you may start looking for a job. Or, maybe you're looking for an internship over the summer. Either way, the Career Center can meet with you to punch up your resume, help with job search techniques, or discuss anything related to your career. Job hunting is stressful no matter when you do it, and it's nice to have someone to guide you through the process.



Tutoring Tutors, learning resources, writing lab, math lab: there is often more than one place to turn if you need direct academic support with your studies. Ask your professor, look online, or ask your case manager! These resources directly support the reason you came to college in the first place: to go to class. They can be incredibly helpful!



Financial Aid The financial aid office is your place to talk about money and tuition. They may be able to help you find scholarships, figure out FAFSA, access emergency financial aid, and more. Like other resources, it's worth the time to meet with the financial aid office, if only to explore what they have to offer and share what issues you may be facing.



SOCIAL CLUBS

If you're looking for belonging, there are a variety of social groups to explore! There should be an office that will help you, or at the very least a club fair which you can peruse. Still, some common examples are Greek life (both sororities and fraternities), LGBTQA+ groups, black student unions, club sports, spiritual groups, and a variety of other organizations! Beekeeping, aquaculture, thespian, and volunteer-oriented clubs are all also on campuses throughout the United States. If you don't see a club that fits your interests, consider starting one!

In addition to clubs and social groups, there are often many centers and offices that offer well-being resources. On most campuses, there are women centers, DEI and LGBTQ+ offices, multicultural/international organizations, mental health groups, and more.



These spaces are geared towards providing inclusive communities of support where you are free to be yourself and connect with others like you. Ask your student affairs and campus life representatives about the university-established resources available to you.

Most colleges and universities have resources posted on their student services and/or mental health web pages that are exclusive to students of that institution and aren't widely available to the public. Be sure to take a look at your own institution's website to see what resources may be available to you. If you still have questions, be sure to call, visit, or email your institution's applicable student services office. The following page contains some examples from The University of Washington, to give you guidance as to what sorts of resources you should expect at your own college.

ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES: CONTACT INFORMATION



24/7 UW Confidential Mental Health Counseling: **CALL:** 1.866.775.0608

- > (If calling from outside the US or Canada, dial **001.416.380.6578**).
- > **Online UW Mental Health Chat:** Chat with a My SSP counselor on the [My SSP website](#) or on the My SSP app ([Apple App Store](#) | [Google Play](#))

LiveWell Confidential Advocates – Sexual Assault, Relationship Violence, stalking, or sexual harassment support

- > **VISIT:** livewell.uw.edu/survivor-support-advocacy | **CALL:** 206.543.6085

Health & Wellness: (109 Elm Hall) | **CALL:** 206.543.6085

- > Health and Wellness provides various programs that support, advocate for, and educate UW Students. Some of their programs and consultations include, but are not limited to:
 - > Alcohol & Other Drug Consultation and Education
 - > Suicide Intervention
 - > Sexual Assault, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Harassment Advocacy

Q Center – LGBTQIA Support

- > **VISIT:** sites.uw.edu/qcenter | **CALL:** 206.897.1430

Financial Aid- Financial Support

- > **VISIT:** washington.edu/financialaid | **CALL:** 206-543-6101

Mental Health Clinic: (Hall Health Center) | **CALL:** 206.543.5030

- > This clinic is available to all UW students. They provide their student body with exceptional and evidence-based care. The clinic offers various services in order to assess and treat student's mental health concerns.
 - > Short-term individual counseling
 - > Help getting connected to longer-term therapy, if appropriate
 - > Free appointments for brief support and help connecting with services
 - > Psychiatric services, including medication for depression, anxiety, and other symptoms
 - > Same-day appointments for those in urgent need
 - > Help finding and connecting with other on- and off-campus support

FURTHER REFERENCES:

- > [Mental Health Resources for UW Students PDF](#)
- > [Mental Health Resources Webpage](#)
- > [UW Counseling Center Webpage](#)

PART IV: OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES

FINDING A THERAPIST

What if you don't find the support that you need on campus? It's a daunting prospect to find a therapist out in the wild, but it is certainly doable. Keep in mind you still need to find a good fit. You may go through the whole process of reaching out to several counselors and finding one with openings who fits your schedule, and they still may not be a perfect fit. So frustrating! So, where do you start to make the process as easy as possible?

The first thing would be to dig out your insurance card or ask your parents what insurance provider you have. Once you know the name of your insurance, you know which therapists to look for in your search. Make sure you ask or double-check to confirm the therapist takes your insurance. See the next section for more information.

But wait, you haven't even started looking for a therapist yet! If you are already in contact with the counseling center, they may have a referral process or a list of therapists they recommend. This is a good start.

Another option is www.psychologytoday.com. Click "Find a Therapist" at the top and enter your location.

Each provider will have a bio, including the issues they specialize in, the different insurances they take, the cost for sessions, and more. Don't go just by a therapist's picture. Reach out to a handful of therapists at the same time and see who is available.

Many therapists will offer a free consultation. Typically, this is done over the phone, and it gives you a chance to get to know the clinician, ask questions, and explore if they are a good fit. This also provides the therapist with the information they need about you to know if they can effectively suit your needs. Therapists will often have specializations and will work better for some people than others. If you get a bad vibe from the person you speak with, you are under no obligation to work with them. That's the point of the consultation!

It may take time and work to find a therapist that fits your needs, but it is well worth it in the end.



HOW TO PAY FOR SERVICES: WITH OR WITHOUT INSURANCE

It's great to be covered by insurance and take advantage of those benefits, but it can also be a confusing process. Once you have your insurance card, you should check your provider's website. In order to access your provider network, you will likely need to create an account if one hasn't already been set up.

A network means all the doctors and other healthcare services that are directly covered by your insurance. On your insurance network's website, you may see something like "Find a Doctor" or "Find a Provider." Using this link and selecting "mental health therapist" or similar wording will allow you to search for therapists directly associated with your insurance. This makes sure that they are covered!

Okay, here are some basic aspects you should know about insurance. A co-pay is the cost that you are expected to pay at the time of service, which your insurance does not cover, and is typically around \$15 - \$25 per session.

Many therapists will have a sliding scale, so if you don't have insurance, they may be able to offer you a lower bill to fit what you can afford. Alternatively, newer therapists often charge lower rates, to help them build up a clientele and name for themselves. It is also common for therapists privately practicing to operate on self-pay models without insurance. These options can all be helpful if you are underinsured, especially if you obtain a cheap rate from a therapist; however, above all else, you still want to work with someone who's a good fit for you.

Maybe you found a great therapist who doesn't take your insurance. That sucks. But all hope is not lost! Ask your therapist about a superbill. This is a document they can provide you that you then submit to your insurance provider for reimbursement. For insurance to accept, you must have a diagnosis, including on the superbill. The main downside to the superbill is that you need to pay out of pocket and then wait to be reimbursed. It also varies from insurance to insurance how much they will reimburse you. Superbills are not a perfect system, but they can be helpful, especially if you talk with your therapist about a sliding scale as well.

UW: ACCEPTED INSURANCE

Commercial Insurance

- > Aetna
- > Bridgespan
- > Beacon Health Options
- > Community Health Plan
- > Evernorth (formerly Cigna)
- > First Choice Health PPO
- > Magellan
- > Optum/United Healthcare Community Plan
- > PacificSource
- > Premera Blue Cross / Lifewise (ISHIP & GAIP)
- > Regence Blue Shield (King, Pierce, Snohomish)
- > Tricare (HealthNet Federal Services)

WA State Medicaid

- > Coordinated Care of Washington
- > Molina Healthcare of Washington
- > Amerigroup Washington

STATE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

If you are having trouble accessing employee, school, and/or private mental health resources of any kind, know that there are also many state-associated or funded mental health resources you can use. State mental health services are often free and staffed by highly trained professionals. For instance, in most states, there are peer support helplines that provide specially-trained assistance for people living with emotional and mental health challenges; counselors of color networks, which help people of color connect with therapists of their own ethnicity, language, and/or religion; and crisis centers, which provide physical assistance 24/7 during mental health emergencies. Check your state's websites to see the resources that are available to you.



NAMI

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is a nonprofit mental health organization nationwide. NAMI provides support groups, runs a helpline, offers mental health education, holds conferences and fundraising events, helps connect you to other mental health resources, and much more. To understand what services your state's NAMI organization provides, visit their website. With around 1000 state and local affiliates, there are multiple NAMI affiliates in each state, so it is almost certain that there is one near you. NAMI is a great option to pursue for off-campus resources, as it is one of the largest and most established mental health organizations in the United States.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (EAP'S)

Are you working full-time? An EAP is your job's way of giving you resources and could cover something like a certain number of counseling sessions for free. Your employer does not conduct the therapy, but they foot the bill of an independent, confidential therapist. These vary between jobs and might also be available to part-time employees, so check with your manager or co-workers to see if there is something like this is available to you.

FOOD PANTRY

If you are struggling with food insecurity for any reason, you should know that food pantry services are available to you. In almost every community, there are food banks that provide free food and, oftentimes, free clothing, toiletries, and cleaning supplies. There are almost always organizations in your community that can connect you to food banks throughout your area as well as additional resources such as financial assistance, housing, and healthcare clinic access, even on campus. For example, the University of Washington has a food pantry for students, faculty, and staff as part of its “Any Hungry Husky” program.

SEXUAL ASSAULT & RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

If you have experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, sexual harassment, or anything similar, many resources are available to help. Colleges have offices and organizations that provide safe and confidential support to those who have experienced sexual intimidation or assault of any type. These services do not report anything to law enforcement or the college itself unless you specifically request them to do so. There are also often many nonprofit and state-sponsored sexual assault programs and resources available, such as hotlines, legal advocates, and crisis centers. Many states have online directories for you to view all the sexual assault resources available. Once again, with all these resources, privacy is key: any information you provide will not be shared with anyone else unless you officially approve the action. Know that, no matter what, there are many people, organizations, and resources to help and support you.



PART V: TESTIMONIALS



MORGAN (SOPHOMORE, PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR)

"I was really nervous about starting therapy sessions with the on campus student health center, but once I had my consultation with my counselor, all of my anxiety went away. The team working at the front desk was amazing at helping me understand my insurance benefits, and my counselor made me feel really comfortable opening up. I'm so glad I took this step, and I would be happy to talk to any students who may be feeling worried about making an appointment."



JANE (JUNIOR, EDUCATION MAJOR)

"I put off reaching out for a long time because I thought that therapy was for people with bigger problems than me. I actually found out that a few of my buddies already have monthly sessions with a counselor on campus, which really surprised me. I guess people don't talk about it that much, so I assumed no one really did it. Once I started going, I realized that you can go talk to someone even if you just want to talk about feeling stressed about class or something. It doesn't have to be something major."



SEAN (SENIOR, BUSINESS MAJOR)

"I only went to a couple of sessions with the on campus counselor, but they helped connect me with the LGBTQA+ group on campus. I didn't really feel like I needed 1:1 sessions, but I wanted to find a community with similar experiences to mine to connect with. Even if your goal isn't individual therapy, the student health center is still a great place to start to help you learn more about groups, clubs, and communities on campus that might be a place for you to feel more comfortable or help you make friends."