

SS001: Counseling and Psychological Services

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1.0 Mission and Purpose

The mission of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Westfield State University is to support the holistic well-being of our students. We are committed to providing high-quality, confidential mental health services that foster personal growth, emotional resilience, and academic success. Our purpose is to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where students can explore their concerns, develop coping strategies, and thrive in all aspects of their university experience. We believe that mental health is a vital component of a successful and fulfilling life, and we are dedicated to helping students navigate the challenges and opportunities of their college years.

2.0 Services Offered

CAPS provides a comprehensive range of services designed to meet the diverse needs of the Westfield State student community. Our services are delivered by a team of licensed and experienced mental health professionals.

2.1 Individual Counseling

Individual counseling offers a private and confidential space for students to discuss a wide array of personal, academic, and social concerns. These one-on-one sessions are tailored to the unique needs of each student and can address issues such as anxiety, depression, stress management, relationship difficulties, identity exploration, and adjustment to university life. Our counselors utilize a variety of therapeutic approaches to help students gain insight, develop new skills, and make positive changes in their lives.

2.2 Group Therapy

Group therapy provides an opportunity for students to connect with peers who are facing similar challenges in a supportive and confidential setting. Led by our trained counselors, these groups focus on specific topics, such as anxiety management, social skills, grief and loss, and mindfulness. Participating in a group can help students reduce feelings of isolation, gain different perspectives, and learn from the experiences of others.

2.3 Crisis Intervention

For students experiencing a mental health crisis, CAPS offers immediate support and intervention. A crisis may include thoughts of self-harm, overwhelming emotional distress, or the impact of a traumatic event. Our on-call counselors are available to provide urgent assistance, assess for safety, and develop a plan to ensure the student's well-being. After-hours crisis support is also available through our ²⁴/₇ hotline.

2.4 Psychiatric Services

Our psychiatric services include evaluation and medication management for students who may benefit from psychotropic medication as part of their treatment plan. These services are provided by a board-certified psychiatrist and are integrated with our counseling services to ensure a comprehensive approach to care. An initial assessment will determine if medication is an appropriate option, and follow-up appointments are scheduled to monitor progress and make any necessary adjustments.

3.0 Eligibility and Access

All currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students at Westfield State University are eligible for CAPS services. There is no additional charge for our services, as they are covered by the student health fee. Students can access our services throughout the academic year, with limited availability during the summer and winter breaks.

4.0 How to Access Services

We strive to make our services as accessible as possible to all students.

- **Location:** Our main office is located in the Student Health and Wellness Center, Room 210.
- **Hours of Operation:** Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.
- **Contact Information:**
 - **Phone:** (555) 123-4567
 - **Email:** caps@westfieldstate.edu (for general inquiries only; do not use for urgent matters)
 - **24/7 Crisis Hotline:** (555) 123-HELP (4357)

5.0 Appointment Scheduling

To schedule an initial appointment, students can call our office during business hours. The first appointment, known as an “initial consultation,” is a brief assessment to understand the student’s needs and determine the most appropriate services. Follow-up appointments for individual or psychiatric services will be scheduled based on the outcome of this consultation.

6.0 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a cornerstone of our services. All interactions with CAPS, including your records and the content of your sessions, are kept strictly confidential. Information is not shared with anyone outside of the CAPS staff without your written

permission. However, there are legal and ethical exceptions to confidentiality, which include situations where there is an imminent risk of harm to yourself or others, or in cases of child or elder abuse. Your counselor will discuss these exceptions with you at your first appointment.

7.0 Related Resources and Referrals

In addition to our direct services, we provide referrals to other on-campus and community resources to ensure students receive the support they need.

- **Academic Success Center:** For tutoring, study skills workshops, and academic coaching.
- **Disability Resource Center:** For accommodations and support for students with disabilities.
- **Office of Student Life:** For involvement opportunities, student organizations, and leadership development.
- **Community Mental Health Agencies:** For specialized or long-term care that is beyond the scope of our services.

8.0 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: How many counseling sessions can I have?

A: CAPS operates on a short-term counseling model. The number of sessions is determined on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with your counselor to best meet your needs.

Q: What if I need to cancel an appointment?

A: If you need to cancel or reschedule, please call our office at least 24 hours in advance. This allows us to offer the appointment time to another student.

Q: Are my parents or professors able to find out if I am receiving services?

A: No. Due to our strict confidentiality policy, we cannot release any information about your use of our services without your written consent.

9.0 Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1.0	September 1, 2023	Division of Student Affairs	Initial document creation.