

# FOR CONSULTATION

## Secondary Consultation

Counsellors consult with staff on a wide range of matters related to student welfare.

Confidential information or advice can be provided by Student Support staff by arranging a meeting time or by telephone.

Academic/teaching staff and General staff can also contact the service to assist with student referrals for counselling.

## REFERRING STUDENTS

Academic or teaching staff are often in the best position to recognise problems that students may be experiencing.

Students may openly disclose problems to staff, present in a distressed state, or staff may identify signs indicating problems such as poor academic performance or attendance, excessive requests for extensions, changes in behaviour or appearance (eg. increasing dependence on you, decline in personal hygiene), changes in a student's mood (eg. withdrawn, "down").

All staff play a vital and proactive role in helping students adjust to University life and succeeding in their courses, by supporting students and referring them to appropriate services.

Students may be referred to Student Counsellors as well as other Student Support staff working in the areas of chaplaincy, health services (drug education, health advice, Medical Centre), financial advice or student housing.

## How to Refer

### STEP 1: Suggest support options

If you feel a student may need some counselling support, explain to the student that VU has a professional counselling service which is available to all students free of charge, and suggest that this may be a useful option.

When referring students the following points may encourage them to seek help:

- Inform students that the services are free and confidential;
- Provide students with a brochure, telephone number or counselling web pages address;
- Offer to accompany a student to the service location, especially if the student is distressed
- Give the student a name/s of counsellors available;
- Point out that seeking help is a sign of courage or strength rather than weakness or failure, that things don't have to be "really bad" to see a counsellor; and,
- Inform students that many other students seek the help of counsellors and specialised staff may encourage them to access support.

### STEP 2: Support student to make an appointment

The student can be offered information on how to contact the service or it may be appropriate to assist with making an appointment by phone. (If the matter is urgent please indicate this when contacting the service, and be ready to provide some background on your specific concerns to assist in the referral process.)

If necessary...

### STEP 3: Student declines support, what now?

Not all students will take up your suggestion and often this is all you can do as the ultimate decision to seek help rests with the student. However, if the matter is serious and you are concerned, consult your supervisor, Head of Department or Student Support staff. Consider telling the student of your intentions. Please remember you should not hold serious anxieties about someone else on your own.

## For more Information

The flow chart "Practical guidelines for staff supporting students with possible mental health difficulties" (<http://www.studentmentalhealth.org.uk/chap721.pdf>) outlines the general referral process.

The [Student Counseling Virtual Pamphlet Collection](http://www.dr-bob.org/vpc/virtulets.html) "For Concerned Others" section available at <http://www.dr-bob.org/vpc/virtulets.html>

# ORIENTATION AND GROUP PROGRAMS

Counsellors are available to speak to new groups of student about our services. This is a valuable way to connect with students during the orientation period.

Counselling staff possess skills and expertise in a range of areas related to student well-being and are also available to run group programs for your students on topics such as: stress and time management, returning to study and peer support skills.

Contact us to book an Orientation session or complete a  [Group Request Form.pdf \(93KB\)](#) and email or fax it to us several weeks before the event.

# COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR VU STAFF

Confidential and independent counselling and other services are available to all staff of Victoria University through the Employee Assistance Scheme (EAP).

As an employee of the University you can access short-term assistance for work-related or personal issues that may be affecting your ability to function at work. Some of these issue include:

- conflict and tension - work and personal
- organisational change
- work-related stress
- emotional stress
- personal and career direction
- relationship or family problems
- grief and bereavement
- alcohol and drug problems
- gambling and financial problems
- legal matters
- EAP consultants are available to help you work through any concerns or issues you may be facing, as well as facilitate referral to external support agencies for longer-term assistance.

An important aspect of the EAP is that it is private and confidential. Everything discussed in the sessions is kept between you and the consultant you speak with, and your details will not be passed on to anyone at Victoria University.

Staff can ring the EAP provider OSA Group on 1300 361 008 any time of the day.

Further information (intranet site, login may be required): <http://intranet.vu.edu.au/hr/EAP.asp>

