

Welcome to the Counseling Center

While you wait...

We understand that waiting for your first counseling appointment can be difficult, and we thank you for your patience. Here are some tips to consider while you wait:

- ❖ Seek support. Who else can be a supportive person to you? A friend, parent, CF, or Peer Assistant?
- ❖ Work towards the basics:
 - Sleep – although this may be hard to come by these days, it is vital to your overall mental health. Try to get an extra hour or two per night.
 - Eat – our bodies run on the food we put into it. Choose foods with less processing, and more natural coloring. Keep yourself hydrated with water, as this serves your whole system well!
 - Move – exercise or move your body in enjoyable ways.
- ❖ Take a step back and look at your schedule. Are there things you can eliminate, at least temporarily?
- ❖ Breathe. Slow, intentional breaths are helpful for everyone.
- ❖ Remember: “The human capacity for burden is like bamboo - far more flexible than you'd ever believe at first glance.” - Jodi Picoult

Important points to consider as you prepare for your first counseling appointment:

Our services are available to all currently enrolled Gustavus Adolphus College students. There is no additional fee for services obtained through our Counseling Center. We provide counseling to help students resolve personal, social, family, and/or academic concerns that may be interfering with their ability to get the most out of their college experiences.

During your initial “intake” appointment, the counselor will review your specific concerns, background history, and goals for counseling – all in an effort to best understand you in a holistic, contextual framework. This intake process usually takes one or two meetings. Dependent on your specific concerns and goals, your counselor may recommend individual or group counseling. We may also connect you with other on- or off-campus resources, especially if your concerns require more specific or intensive support than we can provide (for instance, an academic problem that could best be helped by tutoring or career counseling, or a situation that deserves more intensive or long-term therapy).

If individual counseling is recommended, you will likely continue to work with the therapist with whom you initially met, assuming the relationship is a good fit. In individual counseling, we work to help you clarify your own thoughts and concerns rather than provide only advice or directions. Individual counseling sessions are typically 50 minutes in length and are scheduled according to your individual situation, with contingencies for emergencies. Some students come for only one or two counseling sessions, while others come for more. Up to twelve individual sessions per year are available to students. Beyond individual and group counseling, we are also happy to offer consultative support (for example, concern for a friend) and couples counseling, as requested.

Group therapy is another great mode of treatment for many student concerns. Depending on your concerns, group therapy may be the recommended mode of treatment. Groups generally consist of 6-8 students and

provide a confidential space for students to share their concerns, learn ways in which to manage their concerns, and provide and receive support to/from their peers. Group topics and availability vary and can be discussed with your counselor.

Finally, a feeling of trust and safety is critical for you to grow and learn about yourself. Therefore, the confidentiality of our work is taken seriously, both in individual and group therapy. No one outside of the Counseling Center will be given any information about you without your written permission. We consider the very fact of your coming here to be your own business. We are, for instance, willing to talk with your parent, but only if you give us permission to do so. There is no record anywhere else of your visit in the Counseling Center, as your counseling file is not part of your academic record and no one outside of the Counseling Center has access to it at any time. Our counseling records are destroyed according to Minnesota state law. There are exceptions to confidentiality mandated by Minnesota law, as described in the Informed Consent form, which outlines Counseling Center policies. You will be asked to review and sign this form in your online preparation. Professional organizations guide our practices, including: *The American Psychological Association, the Minnesota Board of Psychology, the Minnesota Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy, and the Minnesota Board of Social Work.*

Should you at any time have concern about your experience in the Counseling Center, please consult with your Mental Health Counselor. If you are not satisfied or have further questions, please contact the Director of the Counseling Center, the Dean of Students, or your counselor's professional board of practice.

We look forward to seeing you on:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Your appointment is with: _____

If a change is necessary please call 507-933-7027, preferably at least 24 hours in advance.

Prior to the day of your appointment, please complete the New and Returning Client Information found on the Counseling Center website or by typing in (you must type the https://) :

<https://wise.gac.edu/titanium>.

Please allow yourself 15-25 minutes to complete and electronically sign four pages of information. We recommend using a computer rather than a portable device.

Thank you. We are glad you are here.