REFERRAL GUIDE

UCSI UNIVERSITY
Student Development & Counselling Unit (SDCU)
Student Affairs Office, 3rd Floor, Menara Gading, South Wing
No.1 Jalan Menara Gading, UCSI Heights,
Cheras, 56000 Kuala Lumpur

Prepared and Distributed by The Student Development & Counselling Unit
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A. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT & COUNSELLING UNIT SERVICES

The Student Development & Counselling Unit (SDCU), is a student service unit within the Student Affairs Office which provides psychological counselling and consultation services to currently-enrolled undergraduates and graduates of UCSI University. The Unit offers counselling to support students’ growth and development emotionally, interpersonally, and intellectually. The following counselling services are offered for a student’s unique needs:

- Crisis intervention
- Short-term individual counselling
- Couples counselling
- Group counselling
- Alcohol & drug counselling
- Workshops and psycho-educational groups
- Referrals
- Outreach presentations
- Consultation
- Peer education training

Common Concerns
A student may be referred to the Student Development & Counselling Unit for help over a variety of concerns. Some of the most common include:

- Time management
- Eating disorders
- Relationships
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Self-esteem
- Family issues
- Adjustment to university
- Anger management
- Study skills
- Stress management
- Sexuality
- Substance abuse
- Life transitions and loss
- Sexual assault

Assessment of the Student
During the initial interview, a counsellor will assess the student’s needs to determine the appropriate services required. Students whose needs cannot be met by the Student Development & Counselling Unit may be referred to other departments or services on campus and/or in the community.
B. ELIGIBILITY

Counselling is available to currently-enrolled, fee-paying UCSI University students.

C. RECOGNIZING DISTRESSED STUDENTS

University students often encounter a great deal of stress during the course of their academic experience. While most students cope successfully with the challenges that these years bring, there are students who find that the various pressures in life are unmanageable or unbearable.

As individuals who work closely with students, you may encounter these distressed students in your offices or your classrooms. Many of these students have not sought counselling and may be unaware of the services available to them. Thus, your role could be a crucial and positive one in identifying and referring students who are in distress.

What to Look for
The following signs may indicate a need to refer a student to the Student Development & Counselling Unit:

- Marked changes in academic performance (e.g. excessively anxious when called upon, dominating discussions)
- Infrequent class attendance with little or no work completed
- Dependency (e.g. the student hangs around you or makes excessive appointments to see you during office hours)
- Chronic fatigue, lack of energy, or frequently falling asleep in class
- Abrupt/marked changes in behaviour and/or appearance (e.g. hygiene, dress)
- Bizarre/inappropriate behaviour and/or garbled, disjointed thoughts
- Alcohol/drug abuse
- Behaviour which regularly interferes with the decorum or effective management of your class
- Overtly suicidal thoughts (e.g. referring to suicide as a current option or indirect reference to suicide or death)
- Overt references to harming someone else
- High levels of irritability, including unruly, aggressive, violent, abrasive, or otherwise disruptive behaviour
- Normal emotions that are displayed to an extreme degree or for a prolonged period of time (e.g. fearfulness, tearfulness, nervousness)
- Expressed uncertainty and anxiety over emotional stability, family situation(s), and/or relationship problems
- From your interactions with the student, you may also observe content that is disturbing in his/her work. Examples of disturbing content might include:
  - Written or verbal content that seems disjointed and fragmented, indicating disorganized or incoherent thinking
  - Preponderance of expressed negative themes such as violence or death
  - Dramatic departure from the student’s typical social demeanour or affections
D. MANAGING DISTRESSED STUDENTS

You need to realise that you may not be able to detect every distressed student; nor will every student you approach be willing to accept your assistance. Thus, you may want to call the Student Development & Counselling Unit for a consultation to discuss your concerns about a student. One of our counsellors will help you determine what may be the most helpful approach for that particular student.

How to Handle the Interaction
Highlighting the need for counselling can be an uncomfortable and challenging task. Whenever possible, it is best to present your suggestion for counselling in an honest, non-threatening way that expresses your support and concern. Attempting to trick or deceive the student into counselling is not advised. At times, it may be helpful or necessary for you to walk the student to the Student Development & Counselling Unit. The following includes some additional suggestions for encouraging a distressed student to seek counselling:

- Talk to the student in private if you feel safe doing so
- Show concern and interest
- Be specific regarding the behaviours that have contributed to your concern
- Listen carefully
- Repeat the essence of what the student has told you
- Be honest and direct
- Avoid criticizing, sounding judgmental, or offering advice outside your area of expertise
- Emphasize that seeking help is a sign of health and maturity, not weakness
- Encourage and discuss with the student your intention of referring him/her to the Student Development & Counselling Unit and that he/she need not go through this problem alone. Please remember to complete the Student Referral Form and submit the form to the counsellor.
- Give the Student Development & Counselling Unit phone number (+603-9101 8880 Ext. 3161/3164/3167/3180) and location (3rd Floor, South Wing, Student Development & Counselling Unit, Student Affairs) and encourage him/her to initiate contact
- If necessary, assist the student with scheduling by calling from your office in the student’s presence
- If the student resists help and you are worried, contact the Student Development & Counselling Unit to discuss your concerns

Upon calling, the student will be given the first available appointment. Remember that, with the exception of emergencies, pursuing counselling is optional and the choice should be left open for the student to either accept or refuse counselling.

E. EMERGENCIES

If the situation is urgent enough to require immediate attention, call the Student Development & Counselling Unit and let us know the situation is urgent. Students in crisis can be seen by an on-
call counsellor on the same day so as to manage the crisis or for referral. We consider a situation to be an emergency when there is:

- Imminent danger of physical harm to self and/or others,
- Disabling emotional distress (e.g., insomnia, uncontrollable crying, agitation), and/or
- Gross impairment in thinking, behaviour, etc.

In case of emergencies occurring after 6 p.m. and/or on weekends, please contact the UCSI University Guard House through Security Department at +603-9101 8880 Ext. 3189. If you feel there is immediate danger to the students, yourself, or someone else, call IPD Cheras at +603-9284 2222 or Hospital UKM at +603-9145 5555 at once.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY

We understand that you may be interested in the progress of the student you have referred. However, we are bound by the principles of confidentiality as defined by the Counsellors Act 1998 (ACT 580).

**ACT 580 Guideline:**
Counsellors have a primary obligation to respect the confidentiality of information obtained from persons in the course of their work as counsellors. They reveal such information to others only with the consent of the person or persons’ legal representative, except in those unusual circumstances in which not to do so would result in clear danger to the person or to others. Where appropriate, counsellors inform their clients of the legal limits of confidentiality.

The following examples may clarify this principle:

**What we can do**
- Answer your questions concerning steps to help students obtain Student Development & Counselling Unit services
- Offer you general information about psychological concerns.
- Ask the student to follow up with you or the referring party.

**What we cannot do without written authorization**
- Say whether a student is being seen here or has kept an appointment
- Discuss the content of sessions
- Discuss treatment plans or progress

In some cases, the student may find it in his/her best interest that the information be shared with a faculty, staff, family member, or significant other. This is done with the student’s own written authorization and clear explanations of the purpose and content of any disclosure. The only exception would be a counsellor’s estimation of imminent danger to the student or to others.
G. REFERRAL SOURCES

**CAMPUS RESOURCES**

Co-Operative Education and Career Services (CECS)
+603-9101 8880 Ext. 3172 Monday-Friday: 9:30am – 4:30pm
No charge for enrolled UCSI students

Student Development & Counselling Unit (SDCU)
+603-9101 8880 Ext. 3161/3164/3165
Monday-Friday: 9:30am – 4:30pm
No charge for enrolled UCSI students

UCSI Guard House (Security Department)
+603-9101 8880 Ext. 3189/3170
24 hours telephone hotline

**COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Hospital UKM
+603-9145 5555
24 hours telephone hotline

IPD Cheras
+603-9101 9284 2222
24 hours telephone hotline

The Befrienders (Kuala Lumpur)
03-7956 8144 or 03-7956 8145
24 hours telephone hotline
www.befrienders.org