

SETTING UP YOUR FIRST COUNSELING APPOINTMENT

Call the Main Campus Counseling Center at **202-885-3500** and ask to set up an "intake appointment"

Note: Intake appointments can only be set up by phone for patient confidentiality.

Note: Your intake appointment may occur up to 2-3 weeks from the date you call, depending on availability.

Alternatively, you can go in for a brief, drop-in appointment to meet with a clinician any weekday during their urgent care hours from **2-4 pm in Mary Graydon Center 214** if you are in a crisis.

These drop-in appointments are brief (10-15 minutes) and are helpful to students who need a quick consultation, a referral to campus resources or community mental health providers, or help with an urgent concern. After completing paperwork, the clinician you meet with will help you sort out your concerns, gather some background information, and discuss with you your options for obtaining further assistance. If needed, your initial consultation clinician may schedule an additional appointment to further clarify your concerns and possible courses of action. Some students find that they need only one or two sessions to help them feel "back on track." With your permission, a graduate clinician-in-training at the Center may also participate in your initial meeting.

Have the following information prepared when setting up an appointment:

- Student ID #
- First and Last name
- Phone #

Your first appointment must be on main campus because conscientious business practices require that initial assessments be conducted in a setting that best addresses and fulfills a broad spectrum of safety and confidentiality requirements. This allows us to adhere to the most appropriate ethical guidelines and practices established by the field of psychology. In addition, having more clinicians on site for the initial meeting allows for more resources, flexibility, and support if needed.

YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT

You will be asked to show up 30 minutes prior to your scheduled time to fill out paperwork.

- You will be asked to bring your student ID to the intake appointment.
- The Initial Consultation clinician will ask personal questions to get an idea of the presenting concerns. They will ask generally about medications, moods, personal and family history, etc. Based on the responses, they may ask more specific questions to have a more thorough understanding of the concerns so that the Center can provide students with access to the most appropriate resources.
- This will not be a full counseling session.
- If you would prefer to have your counseling sessions on WCL's campus rather than main campus, any subsequent appointments can be on the WCL campus, depending on scheduling availability of counselors.

GETTING TO THE COUNSELING CENTER

Shuttle:

- You can get on either shuttle at the stop on Nebraska Ave (outside of the Warren building) and get off at main campus at the “Ward Building” stop, which is the first stop on the far side of the traffic circle when coming from WCL.
- Upon exiting the shuttle on main campus, turn right to walk onto campus through the Bastille Gates. As you enter the AU Quad, the campus center (Mary Graydon Center) will be at your 10 o’clock. [Alternatively, if you are facing the Bender Library, the Mary Graydon Center is on your right.]
- The Counseling Center is on the second floor of the Mary Graydon Center in Suite 214.

Ride-share app:

- Type in “Mary Graydon Center” and you will be dropped off on the covered “bridge” road with Bender Arena on one side and a Starbucks on the other.
- Putting in “Bender Arena” will also work.

Walking:

- If entering campus with the AU School of International Service on your left, continue going straight past the library and turn right before the AU School of Communication.

Mary Graydon Center on Maps:

- [AU Website Link](#)
- [Google Maps Link](#)
- If you have issues getting to the building, call Mary Graydon Center info desk (202-885-3500) and they will assist you.

FAQs:

How do I know if I need counseling?

Though there are many factors to consider in deciding whether or not to pursue counseling, a mental health screening may provide some guidance. Try ours here: <http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/AMERICAN>

How soon can I be seen?

This depends largely upon your availability and the availability of counselors.

How long will my first appointment take?

50 minutes to an hour.

Is there a cost for AU counseling services?

No. All services are free. Off-campus, private counseling costs will vary depending on your insurance.

Is there a cost for off-campus counseling?

This often depends on the student's insurance and care needs. There are low-fee and no-fee options available in the community, including **free counseling** through the DC Bar [Lawyer Assistance Program](#) (LAP). Established in 1985, the DC Bar LAP is a **free** and confidential program assisting lawyers, judges, and law students suffering from any number of problems.

Outside of the DC Bar LAP, when referring a student off-campus, the Counseling Center asks students to contact their insurance company to determine if they have any deductible and/or co-pay. Some students have \$0 deductible and \$0 co-pay, which means they pay nothing out-of-pocket. However, some students do have deductibles and co-pays. If students believe they cannot afford to use their insurance, often, these will be based off of the student's income.

Can I pick my counselor?

You may give your preferences, but counselors generally depend upon availability.

When are you open?

The AU Counseling Center is open from 9 am to 6 pm on Mondays and Thursdays, and from 9 am to 5 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Should a student require urgent care, the Counseling Center offers walk-in urgent care on Mondays through Fridays from 2 pm to 4 pm in Mary Graydon Center 214.

Counselors also meet with clients at WCL in the Student Affairs suite's Counseling Room (C107E). Days and hours will vary by semester. These counselors are not available for walk-in appointments, but through scheduling after you have gone to an intake appointment on main campus.

What does WCL have on campus for counseling needs?

We have a licensed clinician on-site multiple days per week for personal counseling. Your first counseling session (intake session) will be on AU main campus, and then you can move your meetings to the WCL campus.

Where on WCL campus is counseling held?

In the Student Affairs Counseling Room, C107E.

How many sessions can I have with my counselor?

6-8 sessions per school year.

What is time-limited therapy?

Time-limited therapy means you meet with your counselor for 6-8 sessions. Many students find their concerns can be addressed within this time-limited counseling, while others may need longer-term counseling services offered off campus. AU's counselors are qualified to provide referrals to counselors in the community based upon your specific needs.

Will anyone know I am in counseling?

Counseling Center policies, ethical principles of mental health professionals, and DC Law all emphasize the importance of protecting client confidentiality. A Counseling Center clinician will not speak with anyone about your confidential concerns without your permission. There are rare exceptions to this, such as situations involving danger to life or safety and situations involving court-issued subpoenas, which a clinician can discuss with you. Students under the age of 18 who voluntarily seek services are generally afforded the same confidentiality as an adult student.

Other FAQs from the AU Counseling Center page:

<https://www.american.edu/ocl/counseling/faq.cfm>