

BU Counseling Center: Quick Tips

The decision to seek help is an important one. Sometimes, it's a very difficult decision to make. It can be especially difficult if there is a waiting period between when you requested counseling and your first session. Below are some tips that may relieve any stress you experience during the waiting period.

- **Maintain your schedule:** Stick to a routine. Take a shower, get dressed, go to class, keep to the structure you normally have during your day.
- **Focus on things you can take action on:** Shift focus away from the things you can't do anything about. Brewing and stewing deepens a rut, doing and moving can steer you out of it.
- **Eat healthy food regularly:** Skipping meals robs you of the energy you need to cope. Try to avoid caffeine in soda, coffee and tea if you're feeling jittery or anxious. Lean meats provide vitamin B12, which fights insomnia and depression; baked or mashed potatoes can be a quick fix for a foul mood because it causes the release of serotonin in your brain, and even dark chocolate contains theobromine which is shown to have a mood enhancing effect. A balanced diet fuels a healthy mind and body.
- **Seek support from safe friends or family members:** Isolating yourself can make things worse. Also, talking things through with people you trust can provide you with a sense of comfort knowing you are not alone.
- **Keep a journal:** Take time to write down what you are thinking and feeling. Often, writing about your thoughts and feelings will give you a different perspective and help clarify what you want to discuss in counseling.
- **Look for ways to temporarily divert yourself from your difficulties:** Watch TV, play a game, go window shopping.
- **Remember other times you have been in similar situations and how you coped:** Life will not always feel this difficult, remember you have gotten through tough times before.



- **Get a Reasonable Amount Of Rest:** Either too much or too little sleep can worsen your mood. Most college students function best with at least 7 hours of sleep. Try to get enough sleep, but be careful of sleeping too much. Some people find that staying in bed is a great way to avoid things they don't want to do; the trouble with hiding in bed is that when they finally get up, they're even further behind.
- **Do some kind of physical activity:** Physical activity can make you feel better emotionally and reduce stress. Try to remain active, even if the physical activity is as simple as a walk around campus.
- **Participate in activities that are relaxing or comforting to you:** Make time for this. It is just as important as social and school obligations.
- **Take time to nurture yourself spiritually:** Go to church, attend chapel, or just enjoy nature. Pray, read uplifting books, speak to a trusted pastor or spiritual leader.
- **Find ways to laugh:** Spend time with those who make you laugh. Watch a funny movie or read a funny book. It is said that "laughter is the best medicine."
- **Make time to give back:** While many of us feel too stressed and busy to worry about helping others with their burdens, altruism is its own reward, and can actually help you relieve stress.

More Quick Tips...

While you wait for your appointment with a Counseling Center staff member, remember that there are many options for help, as well as, other places on the Baylor Campus that can provide academic and spiritual assistance.

The counseling center offers unlimited free group counseling. **Group counseling** is a proven effective treatment for many psychological issues and provides the added benefit of a supportive community.

Paul L. Foster Success Center can provide assistance with academic concerns including career counseling, study skills, academic accommodations and free tutoring. 254.710.8212

Spiritual Life offers Pastoral Care, a ministry of compassion and guidance offered by someone trained in matters of faith. Chaplains at Spiritual Life are available to offer direction and guidance. 254.710.3517

Mental Health services are also available in the **Waco community**. A list of referrals can be obtained from a staff member at the Baylor University Counseling Center. Finding a counselor in the community can be a great option for students who desire a relationship with a therapist long-term, over the course of their Baylor career.

If are experiencing a crisis, or are considering harming yourself or someone else, please contact one of the following services:

- *During Business Hours:* Call the main Counseling Center phone number (254) 710-2467 or come by our office, located on the second floor of the SLC.
- *After Hours & Weekends:* Call the main Counseling Center phone number (254) 710-2467 and a recording will provide directions on contacting an On Call Counselor.
- *Off-Campus Alternatives:* Call the DePaul Center at (254) 776-5970, MHMR at (254) 752-3451, a local hospital or 911.

Here is a short list of things you can do to help take care of yourself that can have a powerful effect on how you feel daily:

Regular medical care	Take time off when sick	Gather flowers/stones/sea shells	Bake bread or cookies
Buy yourself a gift for no reason	Give yourself affirmations	Find things that make you laugh	Reread favorite books
Take a class or learn a new hobby	Go to the library or a museum	Wear clothes you like	Have experiences of awe
Take "staycations" or day trips	Allow yourself to cry	Identify what is meaningful for you and notice its place in your life	Watch your favorite childhood movie
Spend time with others whose company you enjoy	Stay in contact with important people in your life	Make time away from the phone/Twitter/Facebook	Get adequate sleep 6-8 hours preferably
Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out	Take a lunch break during the work-day	Spend time with nature	Cherish your optimism and hope
Be open to not knowing	Arrange your work space so it is comfortable and comforting	Be open to inspiration	Make time for reflection