

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN I FIRST CONTACT CAPS?

Coming to counseling is a very courageous step. It can be hard talking to someone you don't know about personal concerns. Students commonly ask what will happen my first time at CAPS. Knowing this information can help people feel more comfortable.

1. **To make an appointment, call (973)-761-9500 or come to Mooney Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Floor Rm. 27.** Tell the receptionist you are interested in making an initial appointment. The receptionist will ask for your name, student ID number, and phone number. Please have your schedule ready as this will help expedite scheduling. You will not be asked for any personal information to make an appointment. *\*If you feel it is a psychiatric emergency, please let the front desk know this.*
2. When you come to CAPS (Mooney Room 27) for your first appointment (initial intake/ assessment), you will be asked to fill out paperwork which asks important questions to help us get to know you and your concerns better. This typically takes students 15-20 minutes. *If you have a physical disability, a counselor will meet you in a private, accessible location.*
3. A counselor will come to the waiting area, introduce themselves, and then you will go together to their office to talk in private. The first time you meet with a counselor it will usually be for about 50 min-hour, depending on the concern.
4. During the first meeting/assessment, some of the following will be asked about:
  - What is concerning you right now.
  - History of mental health counseling, any medications you are taking, physical concerns.
  - They will ask if you are having suicidal thoughts or if this is ever something you have thought about.
  - They will want to know more about you, your family, where you grew up, what school is like for you, your friends, supports, etc.
  - If you feel uncomfortable talking about the above, please tell us. The counselor does not intend for you to feel uncomfortable but, wants to understand enough about you to be able to determine how we might best meet your needs.
  - This is an opportunity for you as the student to share what you feel you want/ need from counseling.
5. Prior to leaving the session you will be invited to ask questions about counseling. This is a mutual process, and it is important that each student is comfortable.
6. Please note that the initial assessment IS NOT COUNSELING or Treatment. It is an assessment or evaluation of what you need at this time.
7. The counselor will discuss with you their recommendations of what they feel would be most helpful. This may include self-help exercises, workshops, group counseling, individual therapy, or a referral to a specialist. The first counselor you meet with may or may not be the counselor you will meet with regularly -it will depend on your concerns, our recommendations, and schedule flexibility.
8. You may not feel better when you leave. True counseling and treatment is a process and takes time. However, hopefully, you feel proud to have taken the *first* step!

**Counseling & Psychological Services, CAPS**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Mooney Hall, 973-761-9500**