

FAQ for Students

What is counseling?

A common misconception about counseling is that it is only appropriate for people who are experiencing severe mental illness. In actuality, most people can benefit from receiving support from a counselor at some point in their lives, and each year one out of every three students meets with a Deerfield counselor at least once. Counseling is an opportunity for students to speak individually with a trained professional about a wide range of concerns and develop successful strategies for coping with or working through them.

How often will I meet with a counselor?

Some students meet with a counselor one or two times, while others may meet monthly, biweekly, or weekly with a counselor. The frequency and duration of counseling will be jointly determined by the student and his or her counselor and may vary over time according to the student's needs.

What kinds of things do students talk about with the counselors?

The counselors recognize that being a student at Deerfield can be challenging at times and are available to provide support to any student seeking help. Speaking with friends, family, and teachers often can be helpful for students, but sometimes students can benefit from speaking to a trained professional in a safe, confidential, and nonjudgmental environment. Any concern is appropriate to talk about with a counselor, including (but not limited to):

- Academic performance
- Anxiety
- Body image or eating concerns
- Depression
- Divorce or other family issues
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Gender identity
- Homesickness
- Loss of a friend or loved one
- Procrastination
- Race, ethnicity, nationality, or other cultural identity
- Relationships with family, friends, or others
- Self esteem
- Sexual orientation
- Sexual assault (link to how to report sexual assault safely)
- Sleep issues
- Stress management
- Substance use (alcohol, drugs, tobacco)

Who will know if I'm seeing a counselor?

In most cases, no one will be notified that you are meeting with a counselor. Counseling is most effective if students are able to share information in a confidential way, and the counselors are dedicated to honoring and protecting students' privacy within the limits of safety and the law.

Parents/guardians are not contacted by counselors unless a counselor has significant concerns about a student's well-being. Counselors are mandated reporters, and as such are required by law to contact the proper authorities if there are concerns about abuse or neglect. If a parent/guardian directly contacts the counseling office inquiring if their child is being seen by a counselor, the counselor will confirm that the student is in contact with the counseling office but will not provide details about what is being discussed in counseling without first discussing this with the student.

There are times when deans, teachers, or advisors may express concerns about students to the counseling office. In such cases, the counseling office may acknowledge whether the student is in contact with the counseling office but will not divulge confidential information without the student's permission.

The counselors do work closely with other members of the Health Center staff, including the Medical Director and nurses. Information is shared within the Health Center on a need-to-know basis in order to provide the best possible medical care.

How do I make an appointment?

To make an appointment to see a counselor, you can either email counseling@deerfield.edu or you can reach out to one of the counselors directly ([Joshua Relin](#), [Cassiel Owens](#), or [Susan Watson](#)). In your email, please provide information about which days/periods would work best for you to meet. A counselor will contact you to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

In the case of an emergency, go to or call the Health Center (413-774-1600) and ask to speak to the counselor on call. If it is after curfew, please call Deerfield Security (413-772-9880) to escort you to the Health Center.