

The University of Macau

Referral Guidelines for Psychological Counselling Service

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Keywords: counselling, mental health, psychological, psychological counselling centre, student

1. **Objective**

The Psychological Counselling Centre of the Student Affairs Office offers counselling service to UM students. This document serves as guidelines for UM staff members when encountering students who may be in need of psychological counselling.

2. **Scope of Service**

All current students of the University of Macau can be referred to the Psychological Counselling Centre of the Student Affairs Office.

3. **Indications that a referral may be needed**

- Need for better self-understanding, to enhance interpersonal relationships, to explore and develop potential, and to improve emotional wellness;
- Sudden changes in school performance, e.g. a severe drop in grades and class attendance;
- Marked changes in body weight, personal grooming and hygiene;
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional response which is obviously inappropriate to the situation;
- Feeling difficulty in adjusting to university life and powerless in coping with problems;
- Feeling sad, anxious, stressed, or troubled for an extended period of time;
- Highly disruptive behaviour (hostile, aggressive, and violent);
- Inability to communicate clearly (garbled, slurred speech; unconnected or disjointed thoughts);
- Loss of contact with reality (seeing/hearing things which "aren't there"; beliefs that are significantly at odds with reality or probability);
- Threats of self-harm or harm to others (*Call 999 immediately in case of emergency*).

4. **Special remarks for making referrals**

- It is usually helpful that you discuss the possibility of using psychological counselling service with the student before making a referral. An anonymous referral often makes it difficult for our psychological counsellor to develop trust with the student. In fact, most students appreciate candid caring and support from people around them in their times of difficulty;
- Except in dangerous situations, e.g. threats of self-harm or harm to others, the decision to accept or reject the referral is ultimately the student's;
- A referral may be made for consultation purposes, where our psychological counsellor meets with the student, makes an assessment and offers recommendations to the staff member who made the referral;
- A referral may be made for counselling purposes, where our psychological counsellor meets with the student, makes an assessment, and develops a treatment plan according to the student's needs;

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- Under the obligation of confidentiality, all student information is kept confidential. Our psychological counsellor is unable to disclose any information about the student to anyone, including the staff member who made the referral, without a written consent from the student. If the referrer wants to know about the counselling progress of the student, please contact the student directly.
 - If you need immediate psychological support during non-office hours, please contact the University Security Centre (Tel: **8822 4000**). The student in need may also use the 24-hour Macau Caritas Life Hope Hotline (Tel: 2852 5222 / 2852 5777) or the Emergency Room (Tel: **999**) in case of emergency.

5. Enquiry

Our psychological counsellors are willing to discuss with you any concerns you may have about student mental health. You may reach our counsellors for any enquiry regarding our psychological counselling service.

- Email: sao.counsellor@um.edu.mo
- Tel: 8822 9000
- Website: <https://scs.sao.um.edu.mo>
- Address: E31-2009, Student Activity Centre