

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CAPS

RA/GA Training

**Counseling and Psychological Services
University of Pennsylvania
215-898-7021**

After hours emergency number – (215) 349-5490 (Ask for CAPS clinician on-call)

What does CAPS do?

- CAPS deals with an array of psychological concerns affecting all Penn (undergraduate and graduate) students.
- Typical issues range from adjustment, stress, relationships, identity development, depression, anxiety, academic performance to serious psychological disorders (such as bipolar and eating disorders).
- CAPS sees over 2200 students per year for individual and group counseling. In addition, CAPS provides outreach and consultation services to the campus community.

How does counseling help?

- Research demonstrates counseling is extremely effective in helping alleviate/reduce symptoms of psychological distress, including anxiety and depression.
- Therapy also helps by allowing students to talk about their concerns in a confidential and nonjudgmental environment, to obtain specific advice, and develop skills to problem solve their particular concerns.
- CAPS research has found that students typically report significant reduction in their symptoms between 1 to 10 sessions.

How to help your resident?

- Find a private and comfortable place to talk.
- Listen rather than problem solve.
- Validate their experience.
- Avoid judging and criticizing.
- Communicate reasons for your concern in a genuine and caring way.
- Discuss how counseling can be beneficial and challenge stereotypes they may have of counseling.
- Offer to go with them to CAPS.
- If none of these suggestions works, consult with a CAPS clinician.

What do you do in a mental health crisis?

- Crises of psychological nature do and will happen.
- Crises can involve suicidal/homicidal threats and behaviors, extreme anxiety and agitation, bizarre thoughts/behaviors, and highly disruptive behaviors.
- **STAY CALM!** Immediately contact the on call supervisor. Never leave the person alone.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality. Remind student your effort is geared towards helping them so they may obtain the most appropriate care based on their situation.
- Have the supervisor call the CAPS after-hours number as needed **(215-349-5490)** and ask for the CAPS on-call clinician.