



Counseling & Mental Health Center **817-257-7863**
24/7 Counseling Helpline **817-257-7233**
In case of emergency, call the TCU Police **817-257-7777**

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Let's Talk?

Let's Talk is an outreach program provided by the Counseling & Mental Health Center (CMHC), and it is designed to provide private and confidential walk-in consultations, primarily for students. These informal consultations are considered different from counseling. They are not a "clinical" service, and therefore...

- **There is no required paperwork**
- **No formal intake**
- **No appointments**

What kinds of things can we talk about in a visit?

You are encouraged to talk about whatever is important to you. Many visitors want to talk about some form of stress, unhappiness, lack of understanding, or other difficulty they are experiencing. Common issues include problems with roommates, romantic partners, family members, academic performance, substance abuse, uncertainty about the future, coping with insensitive and offensive behaviors, etc.

Just how private and confidential is it?

Let's Talk consultants are ethically and legally bound to maintain a professional standard of privacy and confidentiality. In most cases, the consultant will never confirm or deny to anyone other than CMHC staff that you have visited Let's Talk, let alone reveal what was or was not discussed. In fact, unless the consultant knows you in some other way, the consultant will not acknowledge knowing you if you cross paths elsewhere. Furthermore, all visitors are welcomed to remain anonymous if they prefer. The only exceptions to confidentiality are when the consultant's professional judgment is that the visitor or someone else is in immediate danger, such as when a visitor reveals suicidal or homicidal thoughts. Under those circumstances, the consultant is ethically and legally bound to report it and try to assist the visitor in getting immediate help. Taking these steps may require calling the CMHC, or TCU Police, or Campus Life, or all of the above.

Does Let's Talk work with faculty or staff members?

While this service is primarily for students, we also engage with faculty and staff. Faculty and staff members may drop in with questions about the interactions between academics and mental health, and how they can be more helpful to their students. Members of the faculty and staff are welcome to share their observations about particular students with our consultants, but under no circumstances will our consultants discuss their interactions or lack thereof with any particular student. Faculty and staff members who have concerns not related to their students are also welcome, and will be provided with referrals to other services more suited to their needs, such as TCU's Employee Assistance Program or other providers not directly affiliated with TCU.



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What should I expect when I visit?

The consultant will welcome you, ask whether you want the door open or closed, and make the Let's Talk Busy notice visible to anyone else who might approach. As with any polite conversation, you will be invited to share your name, while also being told that it is fine to remain anonymous. During your visit, the Let's Talk consultant will listen, empathize, assist with problem-solving, provide helpful information, and offer advocacy and referrals. Because Let's Talk is not a clinical service, we do not require a signed consent for treatment or statement on limitations of confidentiality as would be done in counseling. Likewise, we do not customarily have a formal conversation about confidentiality at the beginning of Let's Talk visits. However, at some point the consultant might need to clarify the limits. For example, if a visitor was on the verge of disclosing something that might require breaking confidentiality, the consultant would stop the process to discuss the issue. When consultants make referrals or encourage the use of another service, they will request that you follow up to let them know what happened.

Each visitor will also be asked to complete a short Service Feedback form, which they can do on paper or online, remaining anonymous in either case.

Are there time limits on visits?

We have no specific time limits. The length of the visit is determined by a few things, including whether or not anyone else is waiting, and the amount of time the visitor needs. Usually visits don't take more than an hour, and many of them are much shorter. When someone else is waiting for a visit, the consultant may say something like, "It seems like someone else has arrived. That doesn't mean we need to wrap up right now, but let's think about finishing our conversation in about 10 or 15 minutes."

Is there a maximum number of visits?

No, however, Let's Talk should not be used as a substitute for routine counseling. If it becomes clear that a visitor would benefit from regular counseling appointments, the consultant will encourage going to the CMHC. Rarely, a visitor will be so reluctant to go to the CMHC that it may be best to visit Let's Talk multiple times. Under those circumstances, we will continue to welcome the visitor, while also periodically raising the possibility of going to the CMHC for actual counseling.

How do you keep records?

Because Let's Talk is an informal consultation service, we do not write clinical notes or enter anything into a visitor's records. However, good practice requires that we gather general data on the use of this service. Therefore, for each Let's Talk contact, the consultant will record things such as the time and duration, the visitor's presented issues, and any actions taken or recommended by the consultant. Nothing will be included in these notes to specifically identify the visitor.

Is Let's Talk unique to TCU?

No, in fact the model for this program was designed at Cornell University, and many other colleges and universities are successfully providing their own versions of it. TCU has adapted it to our own campus culture in order to make it easier for students, faculty, and staff members to get whatever help they need.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

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