

# Mental Health Services

San Diego City College

Spring 2009 Newsletter



## Conflict Resolution on Campus

As the economic downturn widens, many students and staff alike will experience greater pressures related to financial worries. We may see an increase in troubled students whose behavior may be disruptive in class or campus offices. Following is a short guide on how to de-escalate a situation with an angry student and how to calm oneself during conflict.

### Conflict-resolution with an angry or disgruntled student

Check in with yourself: What is my reaction to this situation/student? Acknowledge your feelings and take a deep breath.

Remain calm: No matter what you are feeling inside, it will be important to remain calm on the outside.

Listen to and acknowledge the complaint: Acknowledge the student's frustration through reflective listening. "I really hear your frustration about this situation. You registered for your classes on time but because financial aid did not come through you were not able to pay your registration fees and were dropped from

# SAN DIEGO CITY COLLEGE MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING CENTER

**BUILDING/ROOM A-221  
(619)388-3539**

Students can call or walk-in to schedule an appointment.

The Mental Health Program professional staff provides support and information regarding:

- Anxiety or Stress
- Continued Sadness or Depression
- Relationship and Family Issues
- Divorce or Separation
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Work-related Problems
- Studying or Test-Taking Problems
- Anger Management
- Difficulty Coping with Life Issues
- Eating Disorders
- Difficulty Sleeping
- Other Psychological Issues

We are also distributing homeless kits.

If you know of a student who has been displaced and is in need of personal hygiene items, please direct them to our office.

For Mental Health Emergencies, the San Diego County ACCESS LINE operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 1-800-479-3339

all your classes. Now the classes are full and you're worried about what's going to happen. I know that this is a stressful situation."

*Often when a person feels acknowledged and cared for, the anger softens. Conversely, blaming the student, even if you believe they caused the problem, will not de-escalate the situation. Likewise a student who does not feel their problem is being acknowledged will continue to feel uncared for and their anger will escalate.*

Assist the student with problem solving by positioning yourself as an ally: Let the student know how you can help them as well as what your limitations are. "I can... (express what you can do for the student)," and/or "Unfortunately, I can't/am not authorized to (express your limitations on what you can do to help the student.)"

If the problem is not immediately solvable, you can continue to empathize with the student while acknowledging that the situation will take time to resolve. Some students may need assistance in developing a **step-by-step plan of action**. Enlist help if you need it. This may include asking another staff person or supervisor to help you deal with the conflict.

Give referrals: This may include walking the student over to another office, setting up an appointment with someone who can assist them, etc. If a student is severely distressed they may benefit from talking with a counselor.

Don't forget self-care. A charged up, angry student can be emotionally challenging for anyone. After de-escalating a conflict you may need to take a 10-minute break to decompress by taking a walk or de-briefing with a colleague or supervisor.

*Adapted from The Texas State University Counseling Center*

## Mental Health Counseling Center Staff

### Leslie Easton, L.C.S.W.

#### Mental Health Coordinator

A licensed clinical social worker, Leslie worked at Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital and V.A. Hospital as a medical and psychiatric social worker for 18 years prior to coming to City College in 2000. In addition to her role as the Mental Health Coordinator, Leslie continues to run the Counseling Support Program that she developed for the Price Scholarship Program at City College. Leslie is a member of the Mental Health Task Force, the Veterans Task Force and the Food Pantry Committee.

### Danielle Castillo, M.S., MFTI

#### Adjunct Counselor

Danielle holds a Masters in Counseling (Marriage and Family Therapy) with an emphasis in multicultural counseling from San Diego State. She served as a clinician at Second Chance (Youth Building Success Program), Catholic Charities Clinical Services and Mesa College prior to joining the team at City College in 2006. She has also worked on numerous community projects, most recently rewriting curriculum for the Aja project in City Heights to incorporate a mental health component into their work with refugee youth.

### Abigail Rosenthal, M.S.W., C.P.R.P.

#### Adjunct Counselor

Abigail is an Associate Clinical Social Worker, a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner, and has a MSW from San Diego State. Her previous work experience includes nine years in Mental Health. She is fluent in Spanish.



### Brenna Egan-McGee

#### Part-time Intake Coordinator

Brenna is a fourth year undergraduate at San Diego State University studying psychology. She previously held a position as a Resident Advisor at San Diego State University and is in her fourth year as an SDSU Ambassador.

## MSW Interns, 2008 - 09 (S.D.S.U. School of Social Work)

### Nela Cavelis

Nela is in her final year of the MSW program at SDSU and has worked with youth and adult populations in mental health settings. She has also trained and worked in crisis intervention settings.

### Joyce Esther

Joyce worked as a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor and Licensed Professional Counselor in outpatient clinical substance abuse programs with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for over 10 years. She is currently in her second year of the MSW program.

### Elena Widman

Elena holds an undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of San Diego. After working for three years as a case manager with youth and their families, Elena is now in her first year of SDSU's Master of Social Work Program.

