

USI
Counseling Center

**Orr Center, Room 1051
(812) 464-1867
Monday-Friday
8 am-4:30 pm**



... when education needs a helping hand

**Director, unfilled position
Leslie Smith, Assist. Director
Brooke Orth, Counselor
Sarah Phillips, Counselor
Diana Rumsey, Adm. Assist.
Rosie Bigge, Adm. Assist.**

About the USI Counseling Center

While the campus community affords a wide variety of resources to help you adjust to college life, the Counseling Center's primary purpose is to provide psychological support to enhance your experience at the University of Southern Indiana as you pursue your academic and personal goals. The following are supportive services offered in the Center.

Primary Services

- Personal counseling
- Disability resources
- Substance abuse counseling
- Crisis intervention
- Consultation, outreach and referral to community agencies
- National test program proctoring

Other Counseling Services

Life Direction Counseling

- individual and group assessment
- life direction decision-making

Academic/Retention Support

- intervention assistance for excessive absenteeism
- help identifying and remediating obstacles to success
- assistance with hospitalizations, out-patient follow-up, or medical withdrawals

Internship Training

- bachelor's level intern supervision and field experiences

Veterans Administration Tutor Payment Service

- coordination of VA billing and payment of tutors for disabled vets

Workshops, Programs and Presentations

Work shops are available throughout the year at the request of members of the University community. Presentations are structured around the request of each group. Sample seminars include, but are not limited to, time management, eating disorders, gender issues, communication and self-esteem, suicide, grief resolution, substance abuse, and assertiveness training.

For Students: Tips for Adjusting to University Life

For many of you, the University may be your first experience living away from home for an extended period of time. It is a definite break from home. However, your usual sources of support may no longer be present to help you adjust to this unfamiliar environment. Here are some tips that may provide realistic expectations concerning your “new” living arrangements and social life on campus. In addition, you may benefit from the information about resources that is available through the USI Counseling Center.

1. The first few weeks on campus can be a lonely period and you may have concerns about forming friendships. When you look around it may seem that everyone else is self-confident and socially successful. The reality is that everyone is having the same concerns.
2. If you allow sufficient time, you can usually find peers at the University to provide structure and a valuable support system in the new environment. The important thing to remember when meeting new people is to be yourself.
3. Meaningful, new relationships should not be expected to develop overnight. It took a great deal of time to develop intimacy in high school friendships; the same will be true of intimacy in University friendships.
4. Increased personal freedom can feel both wonderful and frightening. You are able to come and go as you choose, with no one to “hassle” you. At the same time, things are no longer predictable. The strange environment, with new kinds of procedures and new people, can create the sense of being on an emotional roller coaster. This is normal and to be expected.
5. Living with roommates can also present special, sometimes intense, problems. Negotiating respect for personal property, personal space, sleep, and relaxation needs may become a complex task. This complexity increases when your roommates are of different ethnic/cultural backgrounds with very different values. Communicating your legitimate needs calmly, listening with respect to your roommates’ concerns, and being willing to compromise to meet each other’s most important needs, can promote resolution of issues.
6. It is unrealistic to expect roommates to become your best friends, and hopefully, you and your roommates will work out mutually satisfying living arrangements. But, the reality is that you each may have your own circle of friends.

7. Leaving home to attend school is both exciting and challenging. However, part of the challenge may be dealing with feelings of homesickness. Homesickness is very normal and common and is experienced by the majority of students who leave home for the first time. Even if you have spent time away from home previously, you are not immune from the discomforting feelings of missing family and friends, loneliness, self-doubt, concentration problems and preoccupation with returning home, which characterize homesickness. There are some basic strategies which have proven effective in moderating homesickness:

- a. Remember that homesickness is usually a temporary feeling. Give yourself time to adjust to new surroundings.
- b. Get involved with other students, classes and student activities. The sooner you adapt to your new surroundings, the less intense will be your feelings of discomfort in missing home.
- c. Call or write home, but avoid getting into the habit of going home every weekend. This is especially important during the beginning of the school year when many clubs, organizations and activities are just getting started. This is your opportunity to make new friends when many of you are “in the same boat”.
- d. Talk out your feelings with a counselor, friend, or resident assistant. Just “letting go” of your feelings can sometimes provide a new perspective and sense of relief.

For Parents: When Should You Get Involved in Problems at School?

It is tempting for parents to want to intervene in the common everyday problems their students face, in order to shield them from the inconveniences or pain of having to cope with those problems. But, it is generally best to encourage students to handle minor problems themselves as they find ways to adjust to the college environment and new relationships, develop appropriate coping skills, and deal with the everyday stressors that are common to adult life. However, some situations may arise that are difficult to handle for even the most experienced adult or mature student, and may even be hazardous to the health and wellbeing of your student.

Consult with the Counseling Center, Residence Life staff, or the Student Health Center if you notice any of the following:

- A problem situation that is potentially dangerous.**
- Repeated, tearful phone calls home.**
- Feelings of homesickness that last for weeks, without apparent adjustment.**
- Evidence of isolation.**
- Significant weight loss.**
- Frequent illness or fatigue.**
- Significant changes in behavior or mood.**
- Signs of depression.**

In addition to consulting with any of the above University staff members, encourage your student to set-up an appointment with a counselor in the Counseling Center before problems become serious. Our counselors are available to help determine options for dealing with stressors, both common and extraordinary, that may interfere with normal activities and contribute to health problems if left unattended. If the situation is one in which we are unable to assist your student, we will help locate the appropriate assistance either in another office on campus or through other community agencies and resources.