College students and counseling [1]

Dear Alice,

How many college students seek counseling?

?Educated neuroses?

Answer

Dear Educated neuroses,

The exact number in any given year is not fully known, but at Columbia, approximately 3,200 students seek counseling at Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) [2]. In addition, there are probably also a number of students seeking counseling services elsewhere. This represents an increase over numbers in the 90s which may be due to a decrease in the social stigma of seeking mental health services.

While definitive numbers may be hard to come by, the American College Health Association [3] conducted a study on the top ten health concerns of college students in 2007. Depression and anxiety were both among the top 10 complaints, with depression being the fourth highest. Some studies have found that college students may still hesitate to access mental health services, but there are a number of reasons why college students often seek out counseling. They include:

- Depression
- Relationship issues
- Eating disorders
- Stress adjusting to the college environment

? to name a few.

Most campus counseling centers, including CPS, are short-term, offering several sessions for students who want to talk about anything from dating to depression to stress management. When a counselor and student agree that longer-term counseling would be useful, CPS will refer students to trusted counselors in the community.

For Columbia students and affiliates who have paid the health service fee (which includes all full-time students), there are a number of counseling resources on campus:

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) [2] is located on main campus and is open
to all Columbia students and affiliates, graduate or undergraduate.

- The Dean Hope Center of Educational and Psychological Services [4] is located at Teachers College and is open to community members as well as students.
- The Rosemary Furman Counseling Center [5] is a counseling resource for students at Barnard.
- Counseling Center of JTS [6] for students at the Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Center for Student Wellness [7] provides counseling services for students in any school at Columbia's medical center campus.

Outside of Columbia, there are additional counseling resources:

- The National Suicide Prevention Hotline [8] (1-800-273-TALK) is a free resource, available 24 hours a day.
- New York Presbyterian and Columbia Psychiatry [9] telephone referral line (212-305-6001), available 24 hours a day, offers a range of mental health services. A clinical psychologist answers the phone during regular business hours but after hours, an answering service can connect you with help in the event of a crisis.
- The New York City Free Clinic [10] offered through NYU's medical center offers a full range of health services at no cost.
- Outside of New York, Mental Health America [11] can help you find local counseling.

Whether you choose therapy at a counseling center or in private practice, it can be beneficial in working through a variety of life issues. Many people wait until an issue reaches a crisis stage before seeking therapy but therapy can be helpful in addressing even concerns that seem minor.

Take care,

Alice!
Category: Counseling [12]

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How long should I be in therapy? [17]
Legit reasons to go to therapy/counseling? [18]

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