

University Life for Students with Pre-existing Mental Health Issues

The Transition to College Life

If you have engaged in psychiatric or psychotherapeutic treatment prior to arriving at Roosevelt University, and if you are currently taking medication for psychological difficulties, you are not alone. It is not uncommon for students to have past or current experiences with anxiety, depression, bipolar mood disorder, personality disorder, substance abuse or addiction, or eating disorders. Some students struggle as a result of physical, emotional, or sexual trauma, while other students have difficulty coping with relationship issues or losses. College life offers new challenges. Leaving home for the first time or moving out of your familiar surroundings to attend college can be a stressful transition. Periods of transition - even good transitions - are stressful for everyone in one way or another. Arriving at Roosevelt University may produce many different feelings, thoughts, and expectations. With the stress of learning to cope in your new environment, you may forget to attend to basic self-care such as taking prescribed medication. It is possible that you may change your eating and sleeping habits, which can alter the effectiveness of medication or alter your typical performance. In order to assist in a smoother transition the Counseling Center offers the following suggestions and information.

Suggested Actions Prior to Attending Roosevelt

Becoming an educated individual entails more than reading books and completing term papers. It also involves learning about, attending to, and planning for your personal health needs - including your psychological and emotional health. We encourage you to take charge by planning the best way to meet these specific needs:

- Make an appointment with your present mental health provider(s) to discuss the contents of this pamphlet.
- Discuss referral options with your current mental health provider if you are relocating geographically.
- Make arrangements for ongoing appointments with your current or a new mental health provider.
- Verify with your health insurance company that any medical or psychological services you may need in Chicago will be covered by your particular policy.
- Check with your insurance company to verify which facilities in the Chicago Metropolitan area will be covered.
- Arrange for necessary insurance company contact information to ensure that you have a way to obtain required medications or tests.
- If you do not have insurance or if your insurance does not cover out-of-state providers, it is important to consider purchasing the Roosevelt University Student Health Insurance Plan or any other insurance plan that would provide health and psychiatric coverage including medication.
- Plan how you will refill any prescription(s). Although there is no pharmacy on campus, there are many pharmacies nearby.
- If you need to have periodic lab tests to monitor medication efficacy, ask your primary care physician or psychiatrist for a written order for the necessary lab work.

- Special academic needs individuals may contact the RU Disability Services office at 312.341.3810.
- Develop an emergency plan. Know which hospital, clinic, or psychiatrist is available to you.
- Contact Roosevelt University's Counseling Center during drop-in hours to develop a plan responsive to new or increasing stressors and/or symptoms.
- If you live off-campus, prior to arriving at the University, develop a plan with your primary mental health provider, for symptom management or to respond to an emergency. You can also meet with a Counseling Center staff member to develop a plan responsive to new or increasing symptoms.

The Counseling Center

The adjustment to life at any school may lead to emotional and psychological issues, or result in an intensification of existing difficulties. Utilizing the Counseling Center services when you first notice changes in your daily functioning or to prevent difficulties from occurring may be critical in order for you to increase your success in school.

Services provided vary according to your specific needs; they may include:

- The development of a plan to best manage your personal and academic needs.
- Joining the Center's support group available at both campuses.
- Individual time-limited counseling or therapy.
- Referral to services outside the Center when appropriate.

The Counseling Center is staffed by licensed clinical psychologists, pre-doctoral psychology trainees, and/or post-doctoral fellows. There is no medical center on campus nor is there a psychiatrist on the Counseling Center staff.

Contact the Counseling Center during the first or second week you arrive on campus by coming to one of the drop-in hours. Call for the hours (312.341.3548), find them on our website at www.roosevelt.edu/counseling or drop by (Herman Crown Center 5th Floor, Schaumburg campus - room 114). If the drop-in times conflict with your schedule, call to arrange an appointment that is convenient for you.

Together, you and an intake therapist will determine whether joining the Center's support group would be most useful or whether a referral to a nearby agency would better serve your needs. The Counseling Center support group meets once a week during the spring and fall semesters at both the downtown and Schaumburg campuses. The focus initially is on transition and adjustment issues. A senior member of the clinical staff facilitates the group. Sometimes, an extern or post-doctoral fellow may co-lead the group.

Even if you plan to continue treatment with your current provider, it will be helpful to meet with a counselor in the Center to share your treatment history. Information is held in strictest confidence by all Counseling Center staff and will not be shared with any other campus office unless you first give your written permission. Your disclosures will not become part of your academic record. There are rare situations in which the Counseling Center may disclose information about you without your expressed permission. These exceptions are discussed fully with you at an initial counseling/information session.

This pamphlet is designed to help you and your family make the transition to college life a smooth, successful change. The Counseling Center staff hopes this guide will be useful to you in effectively planning the transition.

For Parents and Concerned Others

If you are concerned about a family member who may be experiencing psychological problems, encourage him or her to come to the Counseling Center for an assessment. You may contact us at 312.341.3548 for guidance in reaching out to them.

The Counseling Center’s communications with students who come to us for services are strictly confidential. We adhere to federal, state, and professional regulations regarding release of information that require a signed release and may limit what information can be released. Exceptions may prevail if a person is a danger to themselves or others.

If the student continues services with a provider at home and has met with us, the Counseling Center can consult with that provider if the student signs a Release of Information Form. The Center staff works cooperatively with other licensed health providers.

During the Center’s hours of operation, if the student is considered harmful to self or others, all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure his or her safety. This may include strongly recommending immediate further evaluation and/or treatment at one of the following hospitals:

CHICAGO CAMPUS

Northwestern Memorial Hospital
312-926-8100

SCHAUMBURG CAMPUS

Alexian Brothers Hospital Behavioral Health
800-432-5005

When the Counseling Center is closed, the student may call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. If a student resides in one of the residence halls, the student may ask a residence hall staff member for assistance.