



OFFICE OF COUNSELING SERVICES

INDIANA UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST

A Department of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Faculty Scripting: Referring Students

While the Counseling Office strives to be an open and welcoming environment for all students, we realize the efforts to get them there are incumbent upon the entire campus. Faculty members have unique, but challenging opportunities to effect these referrals. The Counseling Office wants to work in collaboration with you to assist students that you feel would benefit from our services. The following is a script that you can feel free to use. Make it your own without moving too far away from the purpose and point it is attempting to make.

Meet with your student in a setting that is private and comfortable for you and the student. (Depending upon the concerns you are having, you may want to have a colleague close by and leave your door open.)

Focus on the facts. “I have noticed that you are not as engaged in the classroom as you once were and in the interest of your participation points, I thought it would be best to speak to you about it.”

Why you are concerned. “It is the beginning/middle (wherever you are) of the semester and I find it is better to address concerns before it is too late.”

Identify the behavior. “When you are late/disruptive/inappropriate, by (name the behavior), it has a negative impact on the flow of class and the benefit for everyone, including you and me.”

Ask questions. “Are you having trouble with the material? Are you having some personal issues that may be affecting you in class? Is there some way that you feel I can assist you?”

Make offers to assist. “You can earn your participation points through other ways if you feel too nervous, I am willing to be understanding for 2 class sessions until you can find child care.”

Make the referral. “Are you aware that there are support offices on campus? The Writing Lab, Student Support Services, and The Counseling Office are offices that you can use as needed for free. The overall goal is success academically and otherwise.” It seems like you could benefit from talking to someone in the Counseling Office to help you sort things out. I have brochures and would be more than happy to help you make the call if you are interested. It is definitely worth a try to reach out.”

Provide physical brochure: “As you can see, the Counseling Office is open during daytime classes and this brochure lists all the different issues students have that they can assist with”. (During this time it is usually appropriate to disclose personal information if it is relevant and true about some similar struggles you may have had in college and how you can imagine the stress they might be under). “Would you like to use my phone to make an appointment or would you want to think about it and decide later?” “I am in between classes and can walk you to their office if you want me to”.

Thank them and set goals and expectations. “I am glad that you took the time to meet with me because I am concerned and want to help you be successful.” “I am hoping that you will take into consideration what we have talked about because the overall semester experience works best when we all are at our best.” “I believe the referral information I gave you will help and strongly encourage you to seek out those services.”

It is not appropriate to force services on anyone if they are not open to the referral. Services in the Counseling Office are voluntary. If you feel the student could pose a threat to themselves, you, or anyone on the campus community, you should not hesitate to contact IUNPD at 980-6501 or make a referral to the Behavioral Consultation Team by contacting Jennifer Rines, Interim Dean of Students. Email: deanstnw@iun.edu Phone: 219-981-4296

The process of referral is often layered and wrought with concerns. Some students are very open to the process immediately and have been looking for help. Others are resistant and less willing to own their issues and take responsibility for making changes through the counseling process. Either way, you should look at the time taken as productive; and at least planting a seed whether they are open to it at the time or not.

After the referral is made, it is up to faculty to continue to monitor the classroom behavior and decide when or if it is appropriate to intervene by way of academic intervention, disciplinary actions, referral to the Behavioral Consultation Team, or contact with IUPD. Due to HIPAA and confidentiality, no information can be disclosed about any client being seen in the counseling office unless that client signs a release of authorization or there is a threat to the safety of the campus community, including the student in question.

While this scripting is intended to guide you in your discussion with a student you are wishing to refer, it in no way is comprehensive in its scope of situations or circumstances that might precipitate a counseling office referral. It is to be used as an example of some situations that could occur that might necessitate a counseling referral. **Your knowledge of your student, your classroom management skills, as well as your understanding of the wide continuum of normalcy in an academic setting should be your primary source of thorough consideration of the action(s) you will take to contribute to a creative, effective, successful, and safe learning environment.**