

Pro-active counseling confronts problems

Students get help, gain perspective at counseling office

by Jennifer V. Colvin
Editor in Chief

With finals looming and stress levels at a maximum, students nationwide are looking to find ways to "beat the blues."

According to *US News and World Report*, college campuses are "incubators of economic, academic and psychological tensions." Some students say they have known this all along; what they want are ways to deal with those tensions.

At Behrend there is help... and that help is Sue Daley, M.A.

Staff psychologist for the past four years, Daley runs the Personal Counseling Office, which not only counsels students and faculty, but organizes self-help programs and the development of outreach programs.

From anxiety to drinking problems, Daley says she uses a pro-active approach to counseling.

Pro-active counseling acts in advance to deal with an expected difficulty like anxiety or stress management.

disorders, drugs and alcohol, self-acceptance, and stress management.

Using her pro-active approach, Daley has implemented programs to help students with drinking moderation and relaxation techniques.

Daley says that the most important thing people should do is to move beyond the problem and try to solve it.

"Self-medicating (drinking, etc.) is getting old. People are asking 'What can I do for myself?' They need to make real life-style changes," said Daley.

According to her, a good way to practice moderate drinking is to get involved in a hobby or activity that doesn't involve drinking, like racquetball or photography.

Another way Daley says she tries to keep people from staying in the problem is to help them face their fears and find whatever impasse or concern is actually bothering them.

"The impasse or concern usually is the reason for their problems," explains Daley.



Photo by Jennifer Colvin

PRO-ACTIVE COUNSELING: Sue Daley, staff psychologist, talks with a student in her office located first floor, Reed Building. According to one student, Daley is "very approachable. Not only is she concerned with helping somebody, but she acts as if she really cares."

- Female Student

She (Sue Daley) did not do anything that I could not have done by myself, but she helped me to focus my attention on what I needed to do to solve my problem.

One female student said she went to the Counseling Office because she was depressed. "I found myself doing things like sobbing in the Registrar's Office for no reason. Basically, I guess I was having panic attacks," she said.

She added that she went to the Counseling Office because she was reluctant to go to her friends. "People don't always understand things like that -- I lived off-campus and didn't know anybody. It was a trust issue. I trust Sue." She added that she had gone to a counselor when she was a student at University Park and wasn't as happy with the services.

"You have to find someone you're comfortable with, someone you trust," she said.

Another student said he went to see Daley when a professor recommended he go. He said that Daley was willing to help with anything.

"She's very approachable. Not only is she concerned with helping somebody, but she acts as if she really cares. The way she explains about dealing with your problems is exceptional; it doesn't matter what size [the problem is], she's willing to help. She was a blessing to my mental health," he said.

"I would really like to be more pro-active," says Daley. "[I try to make programs] addressing anxiety: What is it and how do you fix it?"

Daley said that there are seven major areas students express problems with: Depression, anxiety, self-esteem, eating

disorders, drugs and alcohol, self-acceptance, and stress management.

Another student said that she went to the office because of class problems. "I went to see Sue Daley because I was having problems with one of my classes. I was too stressed out. Sue listened to my problems and helped me gain my perspective. She did not do anything that I could not have done by myself, but she helped me to focus my attention on what I needed to do to solve my problem."

According to Daley, most of the students who come to the Personal Counseling Office are facing anxiety problems. The second biggest problem for students at Behrend is depression.

For students with severe depression, Daley often consults with Dr. Robert Johansen, M.D.

Johansen is a psychiatrist who can not only prescribe medicine for treatment, but can admit students to the hospital without having to wait hours in the emergency room, as Daley has done with some students in the past.

Johansen said as a psychiatrist he is more involved in prescribing medicine now than in the past.

"People are going to psychologists instead of psychiatrists now; they come to me for severe emotional disorders and the prescription of meds," said Johansen.

As a consultant for Behrend, Johansen works with Daley on students who suffer from severe depression.

"Depression is a blend of nature and nurture," Johansen explains

depression as a bell-shaped curve with one extreme being genetic and the other being environment. He explains that some people's depression can be from genetics or environment with everyone somewhere in between.

According to him, students have a lot of stresses in college life.

"Changes in extreme cause changes in how people react," he said.

He said that when people are under extreme stress or unstable, they find the last stable period of their life. Hopefully, he said, that

period was not long ago. But sometimes, people unconsciously have to revert further back to when they were younger and "go

after day as if the person is moving under water. This is severe depression."

I'm concerned that it's still one person representing 3400 students. People have to wait for an appointment; when people are most vulnerable is when they will make changes.

- Sue Daley

into and abyss."

"They get to a certain point where they cannot cope," he added. "It's a pervasive feeling of disturbance that dominates day

Johansen said signs of depression are loss of appetite, sleep and emotional ability, as well as irritability, low energy level, low enthusiasm and

ultimately, in severe cases, suicidal thoughts.

He suggests a way to overcome depression is to invest interest in his/herself with a hobby; something to put energy into.

Above all, Johansen said he would stress to all college students they should develop an attitude of trying to cope.

"Be comfortable with yourself; be aware of pressures and don't try to escape through drugs. Recognize challenges and deal with them one at a time. Make healthy decisions and change what you can," he added.

Counseling services on campus started 10 years ago in the office of a psychology professor who began counseling students. The professor lobbied to get a service going, which later resulted in the Counseling Office.

Daley said that the need for counseling on campus is growing with the student body. She said that the office is overwhelmed with requests for counseling and regrets that some students have to wait for an appointment.

According to her, waiting for an appointment can be bad for the student because the student makes an appointment when they are vulnerable and ready to talk or get help.

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- Dr. Robert Johansen

Daley said she wanted to stress that the actual value of the office was not herself.

"The value of this office is not Sue Daley. The students make significant changes how they go about their lives; they are ready to give up but with counseling and a little CPR they get bouyant and off and going again. I just try keep students focused on being a college student," she said.

Ways to Beat the Winter Blues

1. Avoid the **chemical haze**. Using stimulants such as non-prescription drugs, alcohol, caffeine and tobacco can only add to feelings of stress.
2. Call up an old friend you haven't seen in a while.
3. Take in a movie or show at least once a week. Rent interesting videos.
4. Buy yourself flowers and keep fresh flowers in the house all the time.
5. Burn the fireplace and sip a hot drink in front of the fire. If you don't have a fireplace, get a fish tank and watch the fish glide around.
6. Always have your favorite music playing - something inspiring or pretty will help.
7. Go caroling.

HOLIDAY AUDIT					
	Thanksgiving	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	New Yrs Eve	New Yrs Day
Who do you want to spend the time with?					
What do you want to do?					
What would please you on these dates?					
What stresses or upsets you on these dates?					
What do you <u>not</u> want to do on this date?					
For what you now have available to you... design how you would like to spend this time.					



Photo by Jennifer Colvin

OUTSIDE HELP: Other than Sue Daley, there is one other counselor available on campus for students to speak to and a consulting psychiatrist off-campus.

Holiday Audit - At Holiday Time

List traditions, activities, objectives, and events that I ...

Enjoy | **DO NOT Enjoy**

What stresses me most?

Actions Which Promote Emotional Healing

1. Accepting that it is normal to have painful feelings.
2. Giving yourself permission to feel your normal emotions, including pain.
3. Expressing your feelings to at least one other person.
4. Staying in contact with supportive friends and/or relatives.
5. Maintaining a realistic perception of your life and yourself.
6. Engaging in a problem solving which promotes growth.

"from You can beat depression by Dr. John Preston"

STRESSED? SHY? HARD TO ASK FOR HELP?

OH, NO!

WHY NOT CONTACT YOUR PERSONAL COUNSELOR SUE DALEY ON

E-MAIL? SXD21@PSU.EDU

8/OR CALL 898-6164 FOR APPOINTMENT

-ALL CONTACTS ARE CONFIDENTIAL-

DO NOT DESPAIR