

# Mental Notes

A Monthly Newsletter

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## Student Mental Health Problems and Disturbing or Disruptive Behavior

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When students experience personal problems affecting their mental health, academic performance often suffers, sometimes to the point of endangering their ability to remain in school. In addition to the personal impact of such issues, an individual's mental health problems can also have a deleterious effect on interpersonal relationships with family members, friends, classmates, faculty, and staff. When mental health problems are present, they can sometimes result in disturbing, disruptive, and sometimes even dangerous behavior.

When **disturbing behavior** is displayed on campus, it usually causes us to feel concerned, alarmed, afraid, or frustrated, but it seldom has any direct impact on other students, faculty or staff at the university. Some examples of this type of behavior include: a student making a joke about killing himself; a student appearing unduly anxious and perspiring excessively when making a class presentation; and a student revealing that a family member has been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

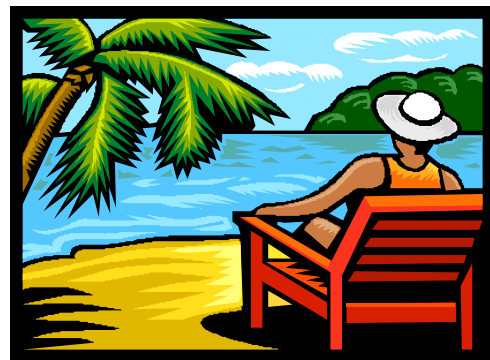
This behavior can be addressed in several ways. One way to respond to it is to simply ignore it. However, a more helpful approach may be to discuss the situation directly by having a private conversation about the disconcerting behavior with the student. If deemed appropriate, mental health professionals at Counseling Services can be consulted and/or the student can be referred to Counseling Services or the most appropriate person for further discussion such as a dean

or other Student Affairs professional.

**Disruptive behavior** is behavior that interferes with the educational process of other students, perhaps even by preventing faculty and staff from carrying out their teaching responsibilities. Some examples include: physical confrontation; verbal abuse of another person; behavior that dominates the classroom and takes over the educational process; and physical acting out towards university property (e.g., throwing furniture or smashing doors). This type of behavior can be dangerous as well as disruptive. As such, securing a safe environment should be top priority.

Examples of appropriate responses include addressing the student directly and asking him or her to stop or leave the room, or consulting with the appropriate campus personnel such as the University Police, the Dean, the Judicial Affairs Office, etc. At most, a disruptive student is at risk of harming him/herself and/or others and at the least, his or her behavior can be demanding and time-consuming. On occasion, such behavior might warrant crisis intervention by Counseling Services staff who may be able to assist the student and any others who may have been directly effected.

If you have concerns about students or questions about handling disturbing or disruptive behavior, please contact Counseling Services at X3-6683 or visit our website at <http://counserv.uno.edu>.



Back by popular demand!!!

## Relaxation Sessions

Feeling Stressed?  
Would you like to feel less stressed?

Counseling Services announces the return of our **FREE** relaxation sessions. Each session includes a combination of progressive muscle relaxation and guided imagery. Sessions are open to students, faculty, and staff.

**When:** February 28  
March 13  
March 27  
April 10  
April 24  
May 8  
**Time:** 2:00 - 3:00 PM  
**Where:** Kirschman Hall  
Room 401\*

For disability related accommodations, please call Adrian Péré at 280-6683.



How often do you have an opportunity to express your opinion or make-known your needs with the knowledge that someone will listen and seriously consider what you have to say? At Counseling Services, we are hear to listen and...**We want to hear from you!** Please visit the **Counseling Services Website** and tell us what you think and need by completing a short **Needs Assessment Survey**. It will only take a few minutes of your time and all responses are anonymous. Thanks in advance!