

National trends reflected at Elon

Hannah isn't alone in her search for emotional guidance – there has been an increase in the number of college students attending counseling services across the nation.

The National Survey of Counseling Center Directors, conducted by the American College Counseling Association, found that 10.6 percent of college students in the United States sought counseling in 2011, an increase from the 9 percent of students who sought counseling in 2006.

"These national trends are reflected here at Elon," said Chris K. Troxler, a counselor with Elon University Counseling Services. "They are absolutely true, without a doubt."

Troxler noted that 11 percent of the total Elon student body attended counseling services at least once last year. The center saw 8.4 percent of the student body in 2002, he said, so Counseling Services has experienced a significant increase in the number of students seeking counseling.

Many believe this increase, at Elon and on a national scale, is due to an increase in the amount of pressure college students perceive today.

"The argument has been made that things are more stressful on students now than they used to be," Troxler said. "The survey conducted by the ACCA reports an increase in the usage of counseling by students but also an increase in the seriousness of personal issues."

Counseling as a way of coping

Several individuals who have attended counseling at Elon say the program is beneficial, including Elon junior Krista Kuntz.

She had a particularly rocky start to her freshman year of college – her ex-boyfriend from high school was stalking her online.

"If he saw pictures of me with other guys on Facebook, he would accuse me of trying to make him jealous," Kuntz said. "He would try to see when Elon's breaks were so he would know when I was coming home. He even tried to find out my flights."

The stress from her situation eventually turned to feelings of severe anxiety and depression.

"I was terrified all the time," Kuntz said.



Photo by Merissa Blitz.

She finally broke down during a meeting with her College Writing professor, who immediately got on the phone and made an appointment for Kuntz to see a counselor the next day.

The counselor advised Kuntz to stop all communication with her ex-boyfriend. She was diagnosed with Generalized Anxiety Disorder and mild depression and put on anti-anxiety medication, and she continued to go to counseling

for the remainder of her freshman year, until she felt she no longer needed help.

Kuntz said going to counseling and getting on medication was the best decision she ever made, adding that counseling gave her the strength to cut off all ties with her ex-boyfriend and move on.

"As soon as I talked to someone and got on medication, it was like all of those anxious thoughts were gone," she said. "I've been the