

news

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many complaints have been issued to the state regarding the hospital's closure, the state does not appear to be listening. Practical action steps become difficult to determine if the government has already made its decision, so I suggest doing your own research with the aim of finding ways to support the community. The

N&O and Wake County's 10 Year Action Plan of 2006 are two good sources with which to start with.

Because the tide of homelessness has the potential to dramatically increase, think about organizing a small food drive among your friends, donating clothing or volunteering with agencies like the Ra-

leigh Rescue Mission who provides temporary shelter to the Triangle's homeless. Although you may not see the results of these crises firsthand or feel their aftereffects, these collapses are affecting real people just like us. That is something worth remembering. ■



Photo courtesy City of Raleigh

COUNSELING CENTER: HERE TO HELP YOU!

by Caitlin Griffin
Staff Writer



Photo courtesy R.L. Hampton Group

Since 1983, the Meredith College Counseling Center has provided free counseling to staff and students regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental illness or disability. It is surprising, however, that many members of the Meredith community do not know that this phenomenal resource exists and is available to anyone. In a recent interview, Beth Meier, the Director of the Counseling Center, answered some questions about the Counseling Center to inform more faculty and students about the services offered right here on campus.

Meredith faculty and students may choose to visit the Counseling Center for a multitude of reasons, and the center welcomes diversity of clientele and personal issues. When a student visits the Counseling Center for the first time, a counselor asks her to fill out a form that asks about her most pressing concerns. The counselors later compile all of the retrieved data and update it year-to-year based on what students say

they worry about the most. According to Meier and recent student reports, the primary concern is stress and anxiety, the secondary concern is fear of failure and the tertiary concern is depression. Within the top ten student concerns are financial worries, weight and body image, family conflict, adjustment to college, perfectionism and general conflict in relationships.

Any faculty member or student who is currently enrolled in at least one class at Meredith can take advantage of the services offered by the Counseling Center. The Counseling Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the exception of holidays. Staff and students can call the Counseling Center (919-760-8427) or email counseling@meredith.edu to make an appointment to see a counselor, and a typical appointment lasts 45-50 minutes.

All services provided by the Counseling Center are short-term and focused on emotional, psychological and interpersonal development.

Typically there is a 12-session limit, and many people benefit from just one or two sessions in which they can speak freely about whatever is weighing heavily on their minds. In special cases, however, the number of sessions can be extended for a person who needs more support.

The Counseling Center strives to be a place where staff and students feel comfortable sharing whatever is on their minds without fear of judgment or consequence, so the counselors adhere to a strict policy of confidentiality. Anything a student says to a counselor in a private session remains undisclosed to anyone else without her written consent, unless the student threatens to harm herself or someone else or the counselor is required to present records regarding a client as part of legal proceedings. On occasion, counselors may ask their clients for permission to share their issues with other counselors so that they can receive feedback from fellow professionals about how best to help those clients. In this case, the client may opt to sign an authorization form giving her counselor permission to discuss their sessions with another counselor, or she may choose not to sign the form without suffering any consequences.

In 1999, Meredith College hired its first Disability Services Coordinator and established Disability Services on campus. Disability Services is part of the Counseling Center. It is rare for the two centers to be combined at larger universities, but quite common at smaller schools. The goal of Disability Services is to provide resources, such as counsel-

ing and personal accommodations, to help students achieve their academic goals. The disability counselors understand that not all students who have disabilities want or require accommodations, and thus it is solely the student's responsibility to meet with a counselor and request these accommodations in writing.

The Meredith College Counseling Center always endeavors to improve its services to faculty and students. Meier asserts that as part of their training, all counselors are required to attend annual workshops and conferences on professional development, and she expresses her gratitude that money is specifically allotted for this cause: "We are fortunate that this is the culture of our field. Professionals [counselors] are always willing to share with each other what works...It [counseling] is a cooperative field, not a competitive field, and keeping current about what works for clients is just one key to success."

When asked why she enjoys what she does, Meier says, "It's so empowering to work with staff and students who can identify that they are unhappy with some aspect of their lives or themselves and really want to take action to make things better. It's rewarding to work with individuals who are so motivated to grow." ■