



OSCC GUIDE TO OFF CAMPUS REFERRALS

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY®

Office of Student Care Coordination

Guide to Understanding Community Referrals

Many students need or want ongoing mental health support that may be more specialized, personalized, or for longer duration than is available at the UCC. Student Care Coordinators in the Office of Student Care Coordination (OSCC) are available to help you connect with a mental health provider off-campus and to provide support through this process. The following information offers helpful tips and questions that may further assist you in finding the right provider for your needs.

Step 1: Understand Your Insurance Coverage

It is helpful to determine your insurance benefits before scheduling your first appointment. To do so:

1. Call the customer service number on your insurance card and ask to speak with a representative. You should be prepared to provide your name, insurance ID number, date of birth, and home address. If you are covered by someone else's insurance plan (i.e., your parents), you may need to provide their information. You may also use your insurance company's website to find out information about your benefits.
2. Tell the representative that you are interested in understanding your mental health or behavioral health benefits. Please note that not all insurance plans provide mental/behavioral health benefits.
3. Consider asking the following questions:

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| ✓ Does my plan cover mental health outpatient visits? | ✓ Must I see someone in-network and how can I find an in-network provider? |
| ✓ Do I have a <u>deductible</u> *? If yes, how much is it? How much has been paid to date and how much do I have left to pay? | ✓ How do my benefits differ if I see a provider who is "out-of-network"? |
| ✓ What is my <u>co-payment (copay)</u> * per visit? | ✓ For how many sessions can I be seen? |
| ✓ What is my <u>co-insurance</u> *? | ✓ Do I need pre-authorization or a referral before meeting with a provider? |

*Deductible = The amount you have to pay before the insurance plan starts to pay its share.

*Copayment (copay) = A fixed amount you may be responsible to pay at the time of your appointment

*Co-Insurance = The percentage your insurance pays (after any noted deductible). You are responsible for the remaining portion. For example, if coinsurance is 80%, after your deductible is met, your plan will pay 80% of billed charges and you will pay the remaining 20%.

Step 2: Contact Potential Agencies or Providers

1. The OSCC can provide you with a list of providers who are in-network with your specific insurance. You may also search for providers on your own using your insurance company's online provider database or other platforms found on the OSCC's website.
2. In many cases, you will not reach a provider directly by phone on the first try.
 - Speaking slowly and clearly, leave a voicemail stating your **name**, **phone number**, a **brief description of the reason for your call** (your interest in asking some questions and scheduling an appointment), and the **best times to reach you**. You can expect to receive a call back within the next few days.
 - You may wish to call 2-3 providers on the list to determine a best fit.

3. When you speak with a provider, identify yourself as a Vanderbilt University student referred by the Student Care Coordination office and be prepared to briefly discuss your concerns and goals for therapy. Consider asking some of the questions below to get a sense of whether this provider might be a good fit for you:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Do you have openings for new clients? What is your availability (e.g., days/times)?✓ My concerns are ____ and I am looking for a therapist/psychiatrist.✓ What is your experience with my concerns/reasons for seeking therapy? How many clients have you seen with similar concerns to my own?✓ What is your counseling style? How do you typically run a session?✓ Do you have a professional license? If yes, what type? If no, are you being supervised by someone with a professional license? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What is the cost per session? What are your payment policies (e.g., forms of payment accepted, when is payment due, do you offer payment plans)? <i>(A Student Care Coordinator can help you understand any costs involved, but it's good to double check)</i>✓ I have ____ insurance. Are you an in-network or out-of-network provider? <i>(A Student Care Coordinator will refer you to clinicians listed as taking your insurance, but it's good to double check.)</i>✓ I do not have insurance. Do you offer any discounts or other arrangements such as a sliding scale or payment plans for students? |
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Step 3: Your First Appointment and Finding the Right Fit

1. You will likely be asked to complete and sign forms, either ahead of your scheduled appointment or when you arrive. These may cover services, payment, confidentiality, and questions about your history.
2. The first meeting with any new health care provider is often used to figure out why you are seeking help, the nature of your concerns, family and social history, and questions for you and the provider to get to know each other and to establish a foundation for your work together.
3. This is an important time for you to ask questions of the provider to ensure a good fit. In addition to the questions, above, you may also consider asking some of the questions below during your first appointment:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What can I expect during a session?✓ Do you assign homework or other assignments?✓ How long will treatment last? Is it ongoing or time-limited? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What are your strengths and limitations as a counselor?✓ What is your approach to working with my concerns?✓ Share with the provider what you believe would be most helpful and any past experiences, positive or negative, you may have had with treatment. |
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4. Because providers and clients work together, it is important to find a good match. This can take time! You may feel comfortable right away or it may take a couple of sessions. It is important to recognize that when you are working on concerns that are difficult to share, it is not uncommon to feel somewhat uncomfortable with any provider. If you have concerns about working with a provider, it may be helpful to discuss these. And if you decide that your provider is not a good match, it is okay to acknowledge this and try someone else. The Office of Student Care Coordination can assist with finding a new provider.

Office of Student Care Coordination

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