

When do I need emergency mental health care?

You might need to go to the hospital if you:

- Are seeing or hearing things (hallucinations)
- Have bizarre or paranoid ideas (delusions)
- Have thoughts of hurting yourself or others
- Are thinking or talking too fast, or jumping from topic to topic and not making sense
- Feel too exhausted or depressed to get out of bed or take care of yourself
- Have problems with alcohol, substances or other self-destructive behaviors
- Have not eaten or slept for several days
- Have tried therapy, medication and/or other supports and still have symptoms that interfere with your life
- Need to make a major change in your treatment or medication under the close supervision of your doctor
- Are unable to care for yourself independently and you don't have family or other caring adults nearby

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

You may request consultation to support your transition back to WCU in the aftermath of a mental health emergency from these key campus resources:

Office of Student Affairs -

Can assist in streamlining communication with professors and provide assistance in academic, residential, personal or health-related services as needed. This is a good resource to help you determine which campus office can provide the best transitional support. 828 227-7234

Residential Living –

Can assist explaining any conditions pertaining to a smooth re-entry to the residence halls. 828 227-7303

Counseling Center –

The Counseling Center staff can work with you and your care providers so that you fully understand the recommended discharge plan and that you have the means and resources to engage in your after care plans while also getting back on track academically. 828 227-7469



Western Carolina University
Counseling and Psychological Services

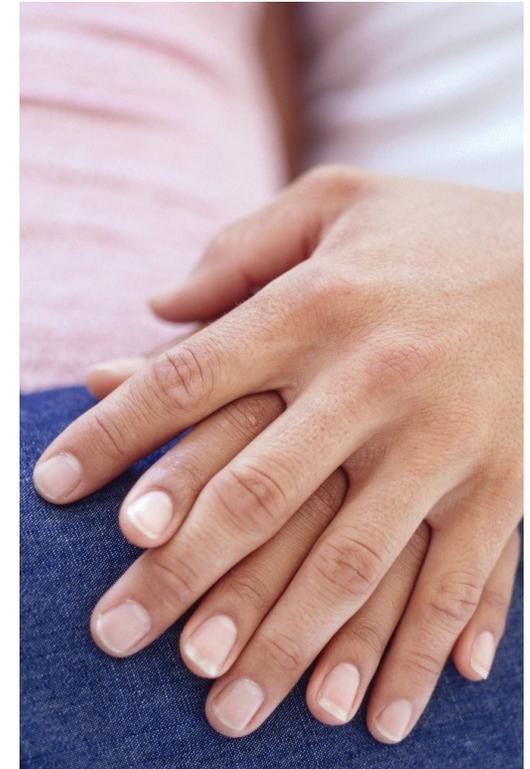
225 Bird Building
Cullowhee, NC 28723
Phone (828) 227-7469
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<http://www.CounselingCenter.wcu.edu/>

WHEN LIFE HAPPENS

*Getting Back On Track After
The Emergency Room or Other
Mental Health Crisis*

Helping Hands Supporting Recovery



How can hospitalization help?

The hospital is a safe place where you can begin to get well and develop strategies to cope with the stresses that have made your mental health symptoms worsen.

You can work with professionals to stabilize your severe symptoms, keep yourself safe and learn new ways to cope.

You can talk about traumatic experiences and explore your thoughts, ideas and feelings.

You can learn more about events, people or situations that may trigger negative reactions and how to cope with or avoid them.

How can I make the most out of my emergency mental health care and/or hospitalization?

You might want to ask a loved one to help you go through hospital check-in procedures as well as consult with the WCU on-call counselor for assistance in accessing academic accommodations that may pertain to your situation. Ask your loved one to help you communicate with campus and community emergency responders if needed.

You have the right to have your treatment explained to you. You have the right to be informed of the benefits and risks of your treatment and to refuse treatment you feel is unsafe. Make sure the people treating you know your needs and preferences, especially with regard to loved ones to include in your treatment and aftercare plans.

It may take time to get used to the routine in the hospital. If your symptoms are severe, some things may not make sense to you. Try to get what you can out of the activities. **Concentrate on your own mental health.** Listen to what others have to say in groups. Keep a journal of your own thoughts and feelings.

Ask your providers to assist you in developing a clear and comprehensive “after-care plan” to support your continued recovery and your transition back to college. Review the Student Handbook’s <http://www.wcu.edu/4595.asp> Personal Welfare, Continued Enrollment and Conditional Return policy with your providers thoroughly and hold them accountable to explaining your treatment recommendations in order to prevent further crisis when you return to school.

How do I stay well while balancing school work and other life commitments?

Authorize communication between your current mental health care providers and the WCU Counseling Center to facilitate your transition back to school. The Counseling Center serves as the confidential consultation resource that protects a student’s privacy needs while also verifying a student’s readiness to return to independent living and/or the demands of academic study. Students may or may not utilize Counseling Center services for their ongoing mental health care (pending the student’s preferences and the Center’s service limitations.)

Know your treatment and stick with it. Make sure you write down clear instructions

of your treatment recommendations. Ask for clarification as needed.

Learn all you can about your illness and steps you can take to support your continued recovery. Recognize your symptoms and triggers and develop multiple strategies to help minimize setbacks and maintain recovery.

Prioritize the things you need to do and concentrate on one thing at a time.

Help your loved ones help you.

Take it easy at work and/or school.

Explain to your supervisor and co-workers that you have been ill and you need to take things slowly. You don’t have to talk about your illness or personal situation.

Useful Recovery-Related Websites

<http://halfofus.com> mtvU and the Jed Foundation launched this website, **Half of Us**, to raise awareness about the prevalence of mental health issues on campus and connect students to the appropriate resources to get help.

<http://www.activemindsoncampus.org/> Active Minds is the nation’s only peer-to-peer organization dedicated to the mental health of college students.

<http://www.webtribes.com> WebTribes is a network of online community support sites for people who suffer from life-consuming ailments such as Addiction, Anxiety, Depression, OCD, and HIV/Aids. While not a substitute for professional therapy, the peer support is widely used and valued.