

Promoting At-Promise Student Success

Student Feels Uncomfortable Accessing Counseling Services

Purpose: This vignette explores how a student may benefit from counseling services, but has a difficult time accessing support because individuals in their network have negative perceptions of attending counseling.

Student Vignette: LaTasha (18-year-old woman who has yet to declare a major) began college excited to explore potential career pathways. She had been a cheerleader in high school and graduated in the top 10% of her class. LaTasha earned an academic scholarship that requires her to maintain a 3.5 GPA. The first semester, she actively participated in a first-year seminar and a college transition program. When you met with her before winter break, LaTasha shared she was considering a few majors: teaching, psychology, or social work. Her goal was to find a career where she could help people. In February, you notice that LaTasha is uncharacteristically low on energy and sad. When you ask if LaTasha is okay, she responds, “My mom and I got into a big fight over break and I am not sure I will be able to go home this summer. I don’t want to talk about it.” You encourage her to consider visiting the counseling office. LaTasha responds, “I don’t think that is for me.” She shares how no one in her family had gone to counseling and they were not comfortable with the idea of therapy. She admits that she doesn’t what therapy entails.

Guiding Questions:

1. Have you had a situation where a student would benefit from counseling services, but did not feel comfortable going? What reasons did they give? When have you been able to successfully connect students to support?
2. What might be the steps to providing support for this student that leverages different people and offices on campus? How might you connect with the counseling office?
3. Consider your specific role (e.g., academic advisor, program director, faculty, registrar, etc.). How would you respond to this situation?
4. How could you collaborate with colleagues across campus to support this student? Who could assist in developing a plan of action? What specific issues should be addressed in the plan?
5. What policies or practices across campus could be adjusted to support students in similar situations? Who would take a lead on exploring how to make those changes? How could you play a role in moving forward these changes?