Off-Site Walk-In Service

Let’s Talk is a new service beginning Monday, February 10th that will provide easy access to informal and confidential conversations with staff (see bios on page below) from the University Counseling Center. Staff members hold walk-in hours at sites around campus Monday - Wednesday. No appointment is necessary.

Speaking with a Let’s Talk staff can help provide insight, support, solutions, & information about other resources.

Let’s Talk is:

✓ Free
✓ Confidential
✓ On campus

Hours

• Times and locations may vary per site. Stay tuned…. a Let’s Talk website is coming soon!

• Listed below are our Spring 2014 hours. Please consider using our phone consultation @ (518)442-5800 or consultation@albany.edu, if you need to talk to someone when a Let’s Talk site is not available.

Locations All students are welcome at all locations.

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Counseling Ctr. Staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>1:00-3:00pm Career Services-Science Library Room G50</td>
<td>Bernier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>1:00-3:00pm Athletic Dept.-P.E. Building Basement Office #B2</td>
<td>DeWitt-Parker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>2:30-4:30pm Educational Opportunity Complex Office LI-94-I</td>
<td>Cimini</td>
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Questions about Let’s Talk?
Please contact the University Counseling Center @ 518-442-5800 or consultation@albany.edu
**Frequently Asked Questions**

Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about the "Let’s Talk" program.

**What is “Let’s Talk”?**

"Let's Talk" is a program that provides easy access to informal confidential conversations with staff from the University Counseling Center (UCC). Consultants hold walk-in hours at sites around campus Monday through Wednesday. There is no appointment or fee necessary.

**What happens at a visit to “Let’s Talk”?**

Appointments are first-come, first-served. Usually there is not much of a wait. The consultant will listen closely to your concerns and provide support, perspective, and suggestions for resources.

**How is “Let’s Talk” different from a traditional Counseling Center appointment?**

Staff at the Counseling Center provide ongoing counseling, which usually consists of weekly or bi-weekly 45-50 minute appointments. "Let's Talk" is not formal counseling: it is a drop-in service where students can have an informal conversation with a consultant from time to time.

**Who should visit “Let’s Talk”?**

This service is open to all UAlbany undergraduate and graduate students. "Let's Talk" is the best fit for the following:

1. students who are not sure about counseling and wonder what it's like to talk with a counselor;
2. students who are not interested in ongoing counseling but would like the perspective of a counselor;
3. students who have a specific problem and would like someone with whom to talk it through;
4. students who have a concern about a friend and want some thoughts about what to do.

**I’m trying to figure out where to go for help because I’m in immediate crisis. Can I go to “Let’s Talk”?**

If you or a friend is in immediate crisis or danger, please contact the Counseling Center during office hours or contact UPD (911 or 442-3131) or CDPC Mobile Crisis (549-6500) after hours and on weekends. Let’s Talk is not designed to be a crisis intervention service.

**The most convenient site for me is in the Athletic Department, but I’m not a student-athlete. Can I go there?**

Certainly. All sites are open to all students.

**I called the Counseling Center and was offered an appointment 10 business days from now. Can I stop by “Let’s Talk” in the meantime?**

If you believe you need to be seen sooner than the appointment you were given, it's best to call the UCC directly and explain your situation.
I'm currently seeing a counselor at the Counseling Center, and I would like to talk to someone sooner than my next appointment. Can I go to “Let's Talk”? If your next appointment is not soon enough, it's best to contact your counselor directly to see if he or she can see you sooner.

I'm currently seeing a counselor at the Counseling Center, and I'm not happy with how things are going? Can I go to “Let's Talk” instead? The best thing to do in this situation is to speak directly with your counselor. Counselors are eager to get your feedback, positive or negative. Often, an open conversation about your concern helps smooth out any wrinkles. If, after talking with your counselor, you prefer to transfer to someone else, just ask your counselor directly, either in person or by e-mail.

What else do I need to know? Although Let's Talk staff are professionals, Let's Talk is not a substitute for psychotherapy or formal counseling and does not constitute mental health treatment. Let's Talk staff provide informal consultations to help students with specific problems and to introduce them to what it's like to speak with a counselor. Your Let's Talk consultant can help you determine whether formal counseling at the Counseling Center would be useful for you and, if appropriate, assist you in scheduling an appointment.

Let's Talk visits are confidential. Are there any limits to confidentiality? Conversations with Let's Talk staff are confidential, with a few very rare exceptions. Consultants may need to share information in an emergency when there is an immediate threat of harm to self or others. Staff are required by law to report when a minor, elderly person, or someone otherwise incapacitated and unable to act on his/her own behalf is being abused. Let's Talk consultants keep brief written notes of their contacts with students, and in the event that there is an emergency or a student is referred to the UCC, other Counseling Center staff may see these notes. Let's Talk visits are not documented on a student's official university record.

Other questions? We don't want anything to be a barrier to students accessing help. If you have additional questions, we encourage you to discuss them with a Let's Talk consultant.


Meet the Let’s Talk Staff

Joseph E. Bernier, Ph.D., a native of Massachusetts and professionally educated at the University of Minnesota, has worked with and counseled students for more than thirty years. Dr. Bernier has a strong belief in the benefits of sensitive, frank, and practical conversations. He conveys this value when talking with students, as well as in his teaching and supervisory roles as doctoral internship training director at the Counseling Center. Dr. Bernier is a well-traveled individual, both in the places he has visited and in the life experiences he has had, and these diverse interests and experiences immeasurably add to his ability to talk with students. As the nineteenth century writer Mark Twain (The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, among others) once said, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness”. Dr. Bernier began his career as a psychologist at the University, then pursued work in other college and hospital settings, and has been in his current role with the University Counseling Center for the last twenty-three years.

M. Dolores Cimini, Ph.D., was born in White Plains, New York. Her parents emigrated to the U.S. from Italy, and Italian was the first language she spoke while growing up. Dr. Cimini completed her bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Barnard College, Columbia University and her Ph.D. degree in Clinical Psychology from the University at Albany. A long-time friend of the Educational Opportunities Program, she focuses on helping students realize their strengths and supports their success through mentoring and counseling. Dr. Cimini enjoys getting to know each student and is eager to learn about the rich diversity that makes them who they are – from race and ethnicity to religion and spirituality to gender and sexual orientation to disability and other aspects. In addition to serving as the Assistant Director for Prevention and Program Evaluation at the University Counseling Center, Dr. Cimini is the Director of the Middle Earth Peer Assistance Program. She is committed to supporting student success and helping students find doors to opportunity. Dr. Cimini travels with a guide dog named Savanah, a Black Labrador retriever – Savannah is always ready to make our students smile and give a doggie hug to anyone who wants one.
Joyce DeWitt-Parker, Ph.D., was born in Yonkers, New York and grew up in North Carolina. She earned a B.A. in Psychology from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and a M.S. degree in Counseling and Human Development from Troy State University in Alabama before returning to New York. She is a proud alumna of the University at Albany, with a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. Dr. DeWitt-Parker has worked with vastly different populations, including active military and veterans, student athletes, and many others who have had diverse life experiences. She enjoys helping students discover the interconnection of mind and body and offers a positive, strength-based, and culture-centered approach in her work. Her interests include sport psychology and eating concerns. She enjoys travelling and has also lived and worked abroad, in Spain. One of her favorite quotes is “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, “What are you doing for others?”” by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.