What is Let’s Talk?

“Let’s Talk” is a program for UW–Madison students that provides easy access to informal and confidential support and consultation with counselors from UHS Mental Health Services (MHS). Counselor consultants hold drop-in hours at sites around campus Monday through Friday. Any student is welcome at any site. No appointment is necessary and no fee is charged. Students are seen on a first-come, first-served basis. The wait is usually not long.

What happens at Let’s Talk?

When you come to a site, see if the office door is open. If so, please come in. If the door is closed, have a seat and wait until the counselor consultant comes to greet you. When you meet, the counselor consultant will listen closely to your concerns, possibly ask questions and provide support, perspective, and suggestions for resources.

What should I do if the Let’s Talk counselor consultant is already meeting with someone?

If the counselor consultant is already meeting with someone, the office door will be closed with a sign indicating that the office is occupied. In this case, have a seat and wait for the counselor consultant to greet you. The wait is usually not long.

What are common concerns that people bring up at Let’s Talk?

Students come with a variety of concerns; no topic is off limits. Common concerns include: stress, relationships, academic performance, financial struggles, sadness, worry, and family problems.

How is Let’s Talk different from counseling at Mental Health Services?

Counselors provide ongoing counseling, which usually consists of weekly or bi-monthly 45–50 minute appointments. Let’s Talk is not formal counseling; it’s a drop-in service where students can have an informal consultation with a counselor consultant from time to time.

What is the difference between Let’s Talk and an access appointment?

Let’s Talk is an informal drop-in service, to provide consultation and support in locations around campus. An access appointment takes place in our East Campus Mall offices and is the first step toward linking students with counseling services. Part of an access appointment is reviewing and signing formal paper work, and assessing symptoms and distress levels.

Who should visit Let’s Talk?

Let’s Talk is open to all UW-Madison undergraduate and graduate students. Let’s Talk is the best fit for the following people:

• Students who are not sure about counseling and wonder what it’s like to talk with a counselor.
• Students who are not interested in ongoing counseling but would like the perspective of a counselor.
• Students who have a specific problem and would like someone with whom to talk it through.
• Students who have a concern about a friend and want some ideas about what to do.
I think I have a problem that would benefit from counseling. Would going to Let’s Talk help me figure out what to do?

Absolutely. The counselor consultant will help you talk through your issues and help you determine the best way to get support. If you feel comfortable with the counselor consultant, it is sometimes possible to meet with them at UHS in an on-going way.

I am a non-student partner of a UW student, and I am covered by SHIP insurance. Can I come to Let’s Talk?

Yes, the counselor consultant will help you with your immediate concerns and assist you with referrals for ongoing support.

I was offered an appointment at UHS Mental Health Services 14 days from now. Can I stop by Let’s Talk in the meantime?

It’s best to call UHS directly if you believe you need to be seen sooner than your scheduled appointment.

I went to UHS and spoke with a counselor. They recommended a referral to a therapist in Madison. Can I come to Let’s Talk instead?

Since regular counseling appointments are not available at Let’s Talk, following up with the referral is a good idea. Unfortunately, MHS cannot provide ongoing counseling to every student who requests it.

I am currently seeing a therapist at UHS, and I’m not happy with the way things are going. Can I go to Let’s Talk instead?

Express your concerns directly to your counselor. Counselors are eager to hear feedback—both positive and negative. Often, an open conversation about your concerns can resolve any issues.

What else do I need to know?

Although Let’s Talk counselor consultants are professionals, Let’s Talk is not a substitute for psychotherapy or formal counseling and doesn’t constitute mental health treatment. Let’s Talk counselor consultants 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 counselor consultant can help you determine whether formal counseling would be useful to you and, if appropriate, connect you with UHS.

Let’s Talk visits are confidential. Are there any limits to confidentiality?

One exception is that counselors may need to share information in a situation in which safety for yourself or others is a concern.

Let’s Talk counselor consultants keep brief written notes of their contacts with student in the event that there is an emergency, or when a student is referred to UHS. In these situations, other UHS counseling staff may see these notes. Information is also collected about attendance, so that we can keep track of the students we serve and those we need to continue serving.

Let’s Talk visits are never reported on a student’s official university record.

We don’t want anything to be a barrier to students accessing help. If you have further questions about confidentiality, we encourage you to discuss them with a Let’s Talk counselor consultant.