



Frequently Asked Questions

What is *Let's Talk*?

Let's Talk is a program for Edgewood College students that provides easy access to informal and confidential support and consultation with counselors from Personal Counseling Services (PCS). All students are welcome to use this program. There is no appointment or fee necessary. Students are seen on a first-come, first-served basis, and usually there is not much of a wait. Please check the PCS web page for updates on where and when *Let's Talk* is being held.

What happens at a visit to *Let's Talk*?

When you come to the site, look to see if the office door is open. If it is, please come on in. If the door is closed, have a seat in a nearby chair and wait for the next available consultation slot. You may need to wait a few minutes until the consultant opens the door. When the two of you meet, the 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* consultant is already meeting with someone?

If the 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 in a nearby chair and wait for the consultant to come out and greet you. The wait is usually not long. Since *Let's Talk* is on a first-come, first-served basis, know that students will be seen in the order they arrive. Please honor if someone else was waiting for the consultant before you, and know that you will be seen as soon as possible within the *Let's Talk* time frame.

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

Students come in with a variety of concerns; no topic is off limits. Common concerns often include: stress, relationships, academic performance, financial struggles, sadness, worry, and family problems. These are also questions and concerns that many students discuss at their first scheduled appointment at PCS (called an Intake appointment).

How is *Let's Talk* different from counseling at PCS?

Counselors at PCS provide ongoing counseling, which usually consists of regularly scheduled 45-50 minute counseling appointments. *Let's Talk* is not formal counseling; it is a drop-in service where students can have a brief, informal conversation with a consultant from time to time.

What is the difference between *Let's Talk* and the PCS Intake appointment?

Let's Talk is an informal drop-in service, to provide brief consultation and support in locations outside PCS. The PCS Intake takes place in our Wellness Center offices in Dominican 122 and is the first step toward linking students with ongoing counseling services. As such, part of the process of the Intake appointment is reviewing and signing formal paper work, as well as assessing symptoms, distress levels and getting a more thorough history from each student.

What is the difference between *Let's Talk* and drop-in Crisis Appointments at PCS?

Let's Talk is an informal drop-in service, to provide brief consultation and support in locations outside PCS. Drop-in Crisis Appointments takes part in the PCS offices, and are a service for students in crisis (for example, with serious concerns about their own safety or the safety of others, serious mental health symptoms, or recent traumatic experiences), needing immediate therapeutic support. If a student presents to *Let's Talk* in crisis, the consultant will assist the student in receiving the necessary services. This might include guiding or walking the student to PCS for a Crisis Appointment, or accessing other emergency treatment.

Who should visit *Let's Talk*?

Let's Talk is open to all Edgewood College graduate and undergraduate 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.



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I think I have a problem that would benefit from counseling, but I don't know anything about it. Would going to *Let's Talk* help me figure out what to do?

Absolutely. The consultant will help you talk through your issues and help you determine the best way to get help. If you feel comfortable coming to PCS, these would also be concerns you could bring to a counselor at an intake appointment.

I was offered an appointment at PCS a week 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 PCS directly and explain your situation.

I went to PCS and spoke with a counselor. The counselor recommended a referral to a therapist in the Madison community. 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, PCS cannot provide unlimited, ongoing counseling to every student who requests it.

I am currently seeing a therapist at PCS and would like to talk with someone sooner than my next appointment. Can I go to *Let's Talk*?

If your next appointment is not soon enough, it is best to contact PCS directly to see if you can be seen sooner by your therapist. If you are experiencing a crisis or emergency, please call 911, contact PCS for a Crisis Appointment, or call campus security. If you are unable to do this, a *Let's Talk* counselor can help facilitate this process and get you appropriately connected.

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

The best thing to do in your situation is to talk directly with your counselor or call the Director of PCS to request a counselor change. Counselors are eager to get your feedback, positive or negative. Often, an open conversation about your concern helps smooth out any wrinkles and helps get things back on track.

What else do I need to know?

Although *Let's Talk* 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* 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* consultant can help you determine whether formal counseling at PCS would be useful to you and, if appropriate, assist you in getting connected at PCS.

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

Conversations with *Let's Talk* consultants are confidential, with a few rare exceptions. Counselors may need to share information in an emergency when there is an immediate threat of harm to self or others. By law, counselors are mandated reporters of child abuse. This means if you are under the age of 18 and report being abused, your consultant is legally required to notify proper authorities. If you are over 18 and report direct knowledge of abuse to a minor or vulnerable population, your consultant may need to report such abuse to authorities. In the event that there is an emergency or you are referred to PCS, the *Let's Talk* consultant will ask your permission to include a brief reference to *Let's Talk* in your official medical record to make sure you receive appropriate care. Finally, *Let's Talk* consultants may discuss with each other their contacts with students, in order to assess the program and make adjustments to provide the best care. Information is collected about attendance, so that we can keep track of the students we are serving and those we need to continue serving. Students have the option of maintaining their anonymity by not disclosing their name.

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* consultant.

The above information was adapted with permission from Cornell University and UW- LaCrosse. Their dedicated efforts to provide innovative services to students and willingness to share these resources with other universities are deeply appreciated.

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The Wellness Center