

VCCS Psychiatry Services Informed Consent

Based on your situation, your counselor may recommend a consultation with our part-time Consulting Psychiatrist who is a member of the Vassar College Counseling Services (VCCS) Clinical Team. Some students may benefit from a medication evaluation and receiving psychotropic medicine from a medical provider. This medication consultation is another resource to allow you to explore all treatment options and to help you make informed decisions.

There are a few things you should know in advance:

1. The doctor will never force you to take a medication. You will be fully informed about all medication options and will be able to make the choice most comfortable for you.
2. Medication tends to work most effectively when taken in conjunction with therapy. Additionally, our consulting psychiatrist is at VCCS for limited hours and she works closely with our VCCS counselors to track clients' functioning. Therefore you will need to be in counseling with a VCCS counselor in order to be eligible for medication services.
3. You will not be scheduled with the medicating prescriber unless you have been seen by your counselor at least once between each psychiatrist visit.
4. Dr. Mary Cruser, the Consulting Psychiatrist, works in collaboration with Deborah Zale, Physician's Assistant, from Health Services to allow greater numbers of students to receive treatment as well as to ensure back-up coverage. You will be asked to sign a release to allow them to share relevant medication information to support you. [Note: the Physician's Assistant will not have access to the personal counseling notes in a student's counseling record. If you are uncomfortable signing the release, our counselors will be happy to assist you in finding community psychiatric referrals instead.]
5. You may be referred by Dr. Cruser to Ms. Zale for follow-up and for routine continuity of care purposes. Should complications arise related to your medication then Ms. Zale will consult with Dr. Cruser and can refer the student back to Dr. Cruser for additional psychiatric guidance.
6. Dr. Cruser prescribes medication through the Health Services's e-prescribing software. This will allow the Health Service to assist you if there is any problem with a medication going through to the pharmacy.
7. If you have questions or concerns about your medication and the prescriber is unavailable, you should inform your counselor or the Director of Counseling Services, who may then consult with your prescriber based on your situation.
8. Medication appointments are in limited supply, so please give us 48 hours advance notice if you need to cancel so we can offer the time slot to another student.
9. Should you miss more than one medication appointment without contacting us, there is no guarantee you will be able to be seen by the doctor within 2-3 weeks from the time you contact us, and your case may be reviewed with the possibility that you may be referred out for continuity of care.
10. Counseling Services provides short-term treatment and reserves the right to refer students off campus for longer-term care as deemed appropriate.
11. The Consulting Psychiatrist is only available during the academic year; so it is your responsibility to devise a continuation of care plan with other medical providers to receive medication during the summer months. Feel free to ask your prescriber and your counselor for assistance locating resources should you need it.