

Policy: Student Mental Health and Wellness

Responsible Party: Associate Dean, Clinical Education and GME, (Will transition to Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs)

COCA Element: 5.3

Review Frequency: Annually and as needed.

Mental health challenges and stress can affect any COM student. Significant resources are available at UNC to provide support for student mental health and wellness. A link to the description of those student resources and instructions for those seeking crisis support can be found below

<https://www.unco.edu/dean-of-students/mental-health-support/>

In addition to the services provided to all UNC students, UNC COM will have a full-time (1 FTE) mental health counselor dedicated to serving osteopathic medical students. The counselor will:

- Be available for both In-person and virtual sessions.
- Serve at both the UNC COM building and the UNC Counseling Center, ensuring discrete accessibility for all students

The dedicated UNC COM counselor will be supplemented by the UNC Counseling Center's resources, providing additional support when needed.

Process for Accessing Mental Health Counseling:

1. Initial Contact: Students seeking mental health counseling can contact the UNC COM counselor directly via email, phone, or in-person visits at the COM building.

2. Appointment Scheduling: Students can schedule appointments for both in-person or virtual sessions based on their preference and counselor availability.

3. Confidential Support: All counseling sessions are confidential and conducted in accordance with university and federal privacy policies.

4. Referral to UNC Counseling Center: If additional or specialized support is required, the UNC COM counselor will facilitate a seamless referral to the UNC Counseling Center.

Policy Reviewed and Approved by Deans Council 12/12/24

Support for OMS 3 and OMS 4 Students on Clinical Rotations:

Students in the OMS 3 and OMS 4 years who are engaged in clinical rotations at community-based sites will also have access to mental health support services. The UNC COM counselor will provide:

- *Virtual Counseling Services:* Students on rotation can schedule virtual appointments to ensure continuity of care.
- *On-Demand Support:* Students experiencing acute mental health crises while on rotations can contact the UNC COM counselor for immediate assistance.
- *Community-Based Resources:* For rotations located far from campus, the counselor will assist students in identifying local mental health resources and coordinating referrals as necessary.

Students on clinical rotations are encouraged to reach out proactively and utilize these services to ensure their mental health and wellness while managing the challenges of their clinical education.

Encouragement for Students:

Students are encouraged to utilize these resources to address mental health challenges, stress, or other wellness concerns as part of their holistic medical education experience.