

Glossary of Wellbeing Terms

An Introduction to the Language of Mental Health Care



presented by
the English Language Center
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in partnership with
the Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion;
Peabody College; and the University Counseling Center

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About this Glossary

Welcome to the Glossary of Wellness Terms. A glossary is a collection of terms related to a specific topic, in this case mental health. This glossary was developed to support international students transitioning to campus life at Vanderbilt University (VU). Viewed as a tool to help you as you become familiar with campus programs and services, the glossary focuses on language that students may come across when first interacting with the University Counseling Center (UCC).

Supporting students' mental health is an important focus of university programming. However, the university acknowledges that how we interpret, respond to, and communicate about mental health is based on our lived experiences, which include culture and language. The glossary was developed in response to this understanding and the strong desire of the university to help international students engage with campus mental health services.

In the glossary, you will find common terms that students may encounter during early communication with the UCC. These terms may be found on the UCC website or orientation materials or may turn up during your initial use of UCC services. Each page of the glossary is dedicated to one of the selected terms along with a written definition. Also included on each page are an audio reading of the term's definition, links for other related terms within the glossary, and information about where to go to seek mental health support. The glossary concludes with a comprehensive list of the 44 terms found within the resource.

Why should you use this glossary? Unlike a typical dictionary, the terms within this resource were selected based on potential student need and defined within the UCC context. Also, having an organized list of "first-contact" terms in one place can be a timesaver, and the glossary design supports a deeper understanding of the terms' meanings and interconnectedness. To use the glossary, we suggest you start by browsing through it to get a feel for the types of terms included and how it's organized. Then, as you begin to familiarize yourself with the UCC through orientations, the UCC website, and contact with UCC providers, we encourage you to return to the glossary as needed to seek out specific terms, understand possible connections between them, and how they are used within the UCC.

We wish you the very best as you transition to life at Vanderbilt. While such a transition can be overwhelming at times, we hope you enjoy learning about the resources that are available to help you maximize your VU experience and maintain and improve your own wellbeing.

Welcome to Vanderbilt from the English Language Center!



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
English Language Center



To Get Help

RIGHT NOW

[Urgent Care Counseling](#)

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988

Crisis text line: Text *Vandy* to 741741

WHEN I'M READY

[Student Care Network](#)

acculturative stress

feelings of worry and sadness while
adapting to a new cultural setting

Related terms:

[anxiety](#)

[depression](#)

[stressors](#)

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action plan

activities needed to reach
a goal or objective

Related terms:

[coordination of care](#)

[flexible care model](#)

[referral](#)

[treatment plan](#)

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anxiety

a continuous feeling that something bad or disappointing may happen; A person with anxiety might have constant worry and restlessness or trouble focusing and might also have physical signs, such as body aches, trouble sleeping, or a fast heart rate.

Related terms:

[acculturative stress](#)

[distress](#)

[depression](#)

[preoccupation](#)

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confidential

private information; In healthcare, a person's information (identity, situation, or treatments) is not shared by medical professionals unless there are safety concerns.

Related terms:

[consent form](#)

[mandated/mandatory reporting](#)



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consent form

an agreement that a person signs to show that they understand and accept the medical care that they will receive

Related terms:

[confidential](#)

[\(fully\) informed consent](#)

[mandated/mandatory reporting](#)

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coordination of care

the arrangement of different types of healthcare activities for a person needing support

Related terms:

[action plan](#)

[flexible care model](#)

[referral](#)

[treatment plan](#)



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coping strategy

the way a person deals with a problem or challenging situation; Coping strategies can be positive (spending time with friends) and negative (drinking too much alcohol).

Related terms:

[mindfulness](#)

[risky behaviors](#)

[self care](#)

[social support](#)

[work-life balance](#)

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counseling

working on personal problems, such as emotional, behavioral, school, work, and relationship problems, with the help of a professional who listens and sometimes makes suggestions

Related terms:

[group \(psycho\) therapy](#)

[psychiatric services](#)

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crisis

an extreme event, such as a death of a loved one or loss of a job, that causes an unusually high level of stress

Related terms:

[emergent situation](#)

[self harm](#)

[suicidal ideation](#)

[suicidal thoughts](#)

[vulnerable](#)

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depression

continuous feelings of sadness, grief, and negativity about one's life that can cause a loss of interest in daily activities, unhealthy living changes, low energy, and even thoughts of ending one's life

Related terms:

[acculturative stress](#)

[distress](#)

[stressors](#)

[suicidal ideation](#)

[suicidal thoughts](#)

[vulnerable](#)

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distress

extreme worry or sadness
when personal responsibilities,
problems, or possible dangers
feel like too much

Related terms:

[anxiety](#)

[depression](#)

[preoccupation](#)

[stressors](#)

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drop in (consultation)

no appointment is needed to receive help

Related terms:

[referral](#)

[urgent care](#)



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emergent (situation)

a time when help is needed right away

Related terms:

[crisis](#)

[suicidal ideation](#)

[suicidal thoughts](#)

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flexible care model

a common approach for university mental health services that provides different care options to fit each person's needs

Related terms:

[coordination of care](#)

[drop in](#)

[group therapy](#)

[provider](#)

[referral](#)

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(fully) informed consent

a healthcare worker's duty to educate a person about a medical procedure or treatment including potential dangers, benefits, and other options for care

Related term:

[consent form](#)



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functioning

when a person has the ability to do everyday activities including mental, physical, and social tasks

Related terms:

[self care](#)

[wellbeing](#)

[wellness](#)

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group (psycho) therapy

when a mental health professional meets with a group of people who share a similar personal problem to work through their problems together

Related terms:

[counseling](#)

[psychiatric services](#)



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holistic

a healthcare approach that looks at all of the things that may affect a person's health, not just the things that may look like signs of a disease

Related terms:

[wellbeing](#)

[wellness](#)

[work-life balance](#)



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identities (salient, gender, social, race/ethnicity)

different social categories to describe how people view themselves and how others view them; These categories sometimes change based on the situation or over time. Common social categories include gender, sex, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, class, and ability. Some social categories are more obvious (visible), like race and age, while others may be less obvious (invisible), such as sexual orientation and class.

Related terms:

[Title IX](#)

[vulnerable](#)



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mandated/mandatory (reporting)

a U.S. law requiring a person to tell law enforcement if a vulnerable person (a child, a senior, or other less powerful person) may be being physically or mentally hurt by another person

Related terms:

[confidential](#)

[Title IX](#)

[vulnerable](#)



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medication management

professional support for a person with prescribed medicine to make sure that they have the right medicine and amount

Related terms:

[coordination of care](#)

[primary care](#)

[psychiatric services](#)

[treatment plan](#)

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mindfulness

a way to reduce stress where a person focuses on the present, paying attention to what they are thinking, feeling, and doing, so they can relax

Related terms:

[coping strategy](#)

[self care](#)

[wellbeing](#)

[wellness](#)

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preoccupation

thoughts or worries about something while ignoring everything else

Related terms:

[anxiety](#)

[distress](#)

[stressors](#)

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primary care

healthcare for basic services
or to get help connecting to a
specialist if necessary

Related terms:

[provider](#)

[referral](#)

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provider

a person or organization
that gives medical care

Related terms:

[coordination of care](#)

[counseling](#)

[primary care](#)

[psychiatric services](#)

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psychiatric services

medical care that names, treats,
and prevents mental illness or
behavioral problems

Related terms:

[counseling](#)

[group \(psycho\) therapy](#)

[medication management](#)

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referral

sending somebody who needs a specific kind of medical help to a person or place that can provide it

Related terms:

[coordination of care](#)

[flexible care model](#)

[primary care](#)

[provider](#)



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risky behaviors

willingly doing things that could cause loss or harm such as speeding, drinking and driving, abusing drugs, or having unprotected sex

Related terms:

[crisis](#)

[distress](#)

[self harm](#)

[suicidal ideation](#)

[trauma](#)

[vulnerable](#)



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self care

taking care of one's own
physical and mental health

Related terms:

[coping strategy](#)

[mindfulness](#)

[wellbeing](#)

[wellness](#)

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self harm

when mental health problems cause a person to hurt themselves

Related terms:

[crisis](#)

[distress](#)

[emergent situation](#)

[risky behaviors](#)

[suicidal ideation](#)

[trauma](#)

[vulnerable](#)



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sexual misconduct

acting inappropriately in a sexual way;
this happens most commonly when
one person has more power than
another person

Related terms:

[Title IX](#)

[vulnerable](#)



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social support

people in a person's life that they spend time with regularly, especially during difficult times

Related terms:

[coping strategy](#)

[self care](#)

[wellbeing](#)

[wellness](#)



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stressors

anything that mentally
or physically increases
pressure on a person

Related terms:

[acculturative stress](#)

[anxiety](#)

[distress](#)

[preoccupation](#)

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suicidal ideation

thoughts about killing oneself

Related terms:

[crisis](#)

[depression](#)

[emergent situation](#)

[risky behaviors](#)

[self harm](#)

[suicidal thoughts](#)

[trauma](#)

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suicidal thoughts (passive)

thoughts of killing oneself but no plan to do it

Related terms:

[crisis](#)

[depression](#)

[suicidal ideation](#)

[trauma](#)

[vulnerable](#)

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tele-health

also called telemedicine:
health care services given
over the phone or computer

Related terms:

[counseling](#)

[primary care](#)

[provider](#)

[psychiatric services](#)

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Title IX

(Title Nine) a law that says any educational program that receives money from the U.S. government has to treat all people equally

Related terms:

[identities](#)

[mandated/mandatory reporting](#)

[vulnerable](#)

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trauma

a painful, emotional experience or shock that often has a long-term effect

Related terms:

[crisis](#)

[depression](#)

[risky behaviors](#)

[self harm](#)

[vulnerable](#)

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treatment plan

the suggested steps for therapy that are made after a person's medical condition has been named

Related terms:

[action plan](#)

[coordination of care](#)

[medication management](#)

[flexible care model](#)

[referral](#)

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urgent care

medical care for a condition that needs immediate attention but is not life-threatening; An appointment is usually not necessary.

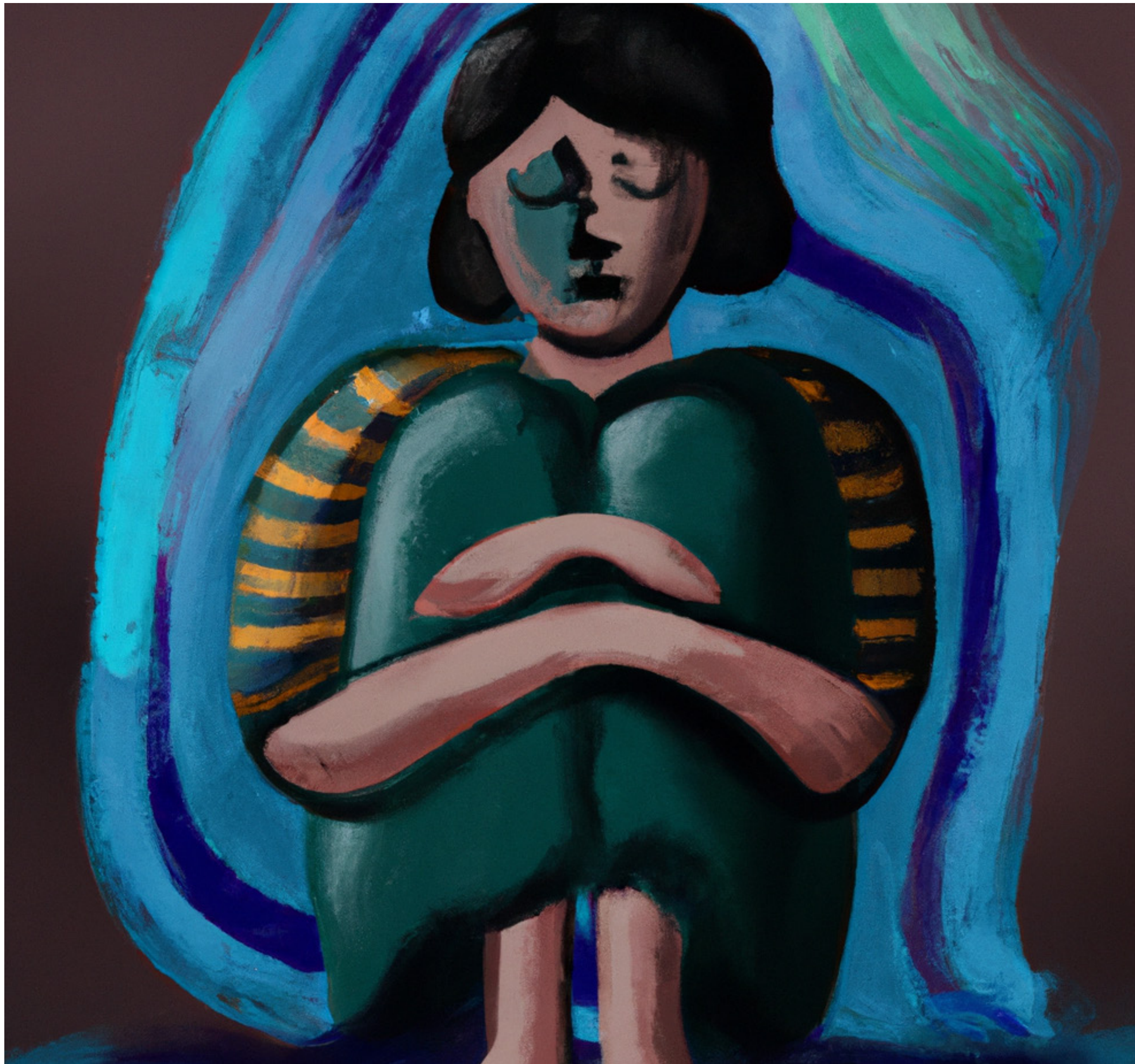
Related terms:

[drop in \(consultation\)](#)

[primary care](#)

[provider](#)

[referral](#)



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vulnerable

can be easily hurt

Related terms:

[crisis](#)

[distress](#)

[depression](#)

[risky behaviors](#)

[self harm](#)

[trauma](#)

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wellbeing

general health and happiness

Related terms:

[holistic](#)

[wellness](#)

[work-life balance](#)

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wellness (physical, mental, holistic)

being healthy, especially when a person actively tries to achieve this

Related terms:

[holistic](#)

[self care](#)

[wellbeing](#)

[work-life balance](#)



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work-life balance

how a person divides their time and energy between work and personal life; Having a healthy balance is thought to increase happiness.

Related terms:

[holistic](#)

[self care](#)

[wellbeing](#)

[wellness](#)

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References

Definitions were compiled by synthesizing those found in the following dictionaries:

APA Dictionary of Psychology (American Psychological Association).
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Collins English Dictionary.
Found at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/>

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The American Heritage Stedman's Medical Dictionary, 2nd ed.
Found at <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/>

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.
Found at <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/>

Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary: Oxford University Press, 10th ed.
(2020). Edited by J. Law & E. Martin.
DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780198836612.001.0001

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<https://openai.com/dall-e-2/>.

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Appendix: Terms and Definitions



acculturative stress

feelings of worry and sadness while adapting to a new cultural setting



action plan

activities needed to reach a goal or objective



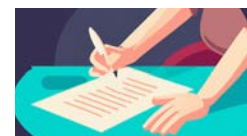
anxiety

a continuous feeling that something bad or disappointing may happen; A person with anxiety might have constant worry and restlessness or trouble focusing and might also have physical signs, such as body aches, trouble sleeping, or a fast heart rate



confidential

private information; In healthcare, a person's information (identity, situation, or treatments) is not shared by medical professionals unless there are safety concerns.



consent form

an agreement that a person signs to show that they understand and accept the medical care that they will receive



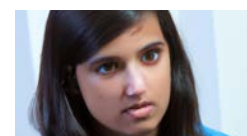
coordination of care

the arrangement of different types of healthcare activities for a person needing support



coping strategy

the way a person deals with a problem or challenging situation; Coping strategies can be positive (spending time with friends) and negative (drinking too much alcohol).



counseling

working on personal problems, such as emotional, behavioral, school, work, and relationship problems, with the help of a professional who listens and sometimes makes suggestions



crisis

an extreme event, such as a death of a loved one or loss of a job, that causes an unusually high level of stress



depression

continuous feelings of sadness, grief, and negativity about one's life that can cause a loss of interest in daily activities, unhealthy living changes, low energy, and even thoughts of ending one's life



distress

extreme worry or sadness when personal responsibilities, problems, or possible dangers feel like too much



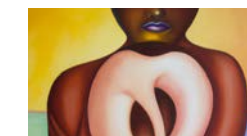
drop in (consultation)

no appointment is needed to receive help



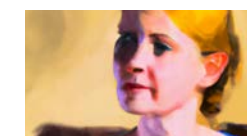
emergent (situation)

a time when help is needed right away



flexible care model

a common approach for university mental health services that provides different care options to fit each person's needs



(fully) informed consent

a healthcare worker's duty to educate a person about a medical procedure or treatment including potential dangers, benefits, and other options for care



functioning

when a person has the ability to do everyday activities including mental, physical, and social tasks



group (psycho) therapy

when a mental health professional meets with a group of people who share a similar personal problem to work through their problems together



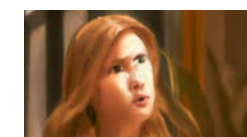
holistic

a healthcare approach that looks at all of the things that may affect a person's health, not just the things that may look like signs of a disease



identities (salient, gender, social, race/ethnicity)

different social categories to describe how people view themselves and how others view them; These categories sometimes change based on the situation or over time. Common social categories include gender, sex, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, class, and ability. Some social categories are more obvious (visible), like race and age, while others may be less obvious (invisible), such as sexual orientation and class.



mandated/mandatory (reporting)

a U.S. law requiring a person to tell law enforcement if a vulnerable person (a child, a senior, or other less powerful person) may be being physically or mentally hurt by another person



medication management

professional support for a person with prescribed medicine to make sure that they have the right medicine and amount



mindfulness

a way to reduce stress where a person focuses on the present, paying attention to what they are thinking, feeling, and doing, so they can relax



preoccupation

thoughts or worries about something while ignoring everything else



primary care

healthcare for basic services or to get help connecting to a specialist if necessary

Appendix: Terms and Definitions



provider

a person or organization that gives medical care



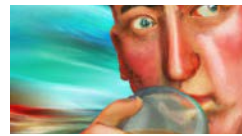
psychiatric services

medical care that names, treats, and prevents mental illness or behavioral problems



referral

sending somebody who needs a specific kind of medical help to a person or place that can provide it



risky behaviors

willingly doing things that could cause loss or harm such as speeding, drinking and driving, abusing drugs, or having unprotected sex



self care

taking care of one's own physical and mental health



self harm

when mental health problems cause a person to hurt themselves



sexual misconduct

acting inappropriately in a sexual way; this happens most commonly when one person has more power than another person



social support

people in a person's life that they spend time with regularly, especially during difficult times



stressors

anything that mentally or physically increases pressure on a person



suicidal ideation

thoughts about killing oneself



suicidal thoughts (passive)

thoughts of killing oneself but no plan to do it



tele-health

also called telemedicine: health care services given over the phone or computer



Title IX

a law that says any educational program that receives money from the U.S. government has to treat all people equally



trauma

a painful, emotional experience or shock that often has a long-term effect



treatment plan

the suggested steps for therapy that are made after a person's medical condition has been named



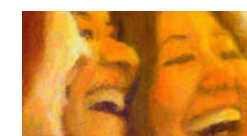
urgent care

medical care for a condition that needs immediate attention but is not life-threatening; An appointment is usually not necessary.



vulnerable

can be easily hurt



wellbeing

general health and happiness



wellness (physical, mental, holistic)

being healthy, especially when a person actively tries to achieve this



work-life balance

how a person divides their time and energy between work and personal life; Having a healthy balance is thought to increase happiness.