

# MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT

FOR COUNSELING CENTERS OF PARTICIPATING OHIO UNIVERSITIES

## *Overview*

Periodically, universities face the challenge of responding to large-scale crises or disasters (e.g., fires, traffic accidents, etc.) that result in the deaths and/or injuries of a number of their students. When a university experiences a large-scale crisis or disaster, the institution's counseling center may need to augment its resources to meet the mental health needs of its students. The following document outlines a protocol for universities to provide aid to one-another at such times.

Specifically, this document describes a process for mobilizing and deploying the resources of counseling centers at Ohio's public universities. The purpose of this document is to establish a coordinated, timely and effective mental health response in the aftermath of disasters.

## *The Role of the University Counseling Center in Providing Emergency Mental Health Services*

Counseling centers in Ohio's public universities often serve as the focal point for attending to the psychological needs of university students. Whenever an emergency or a disaster should occur in which students are impacted, the counseling center staff may offer assistance that can include, but not be limited to, the following services:

- provision of immediate crisis services and/or debriefing to individuals who were most directly affected
- consultation with university faculty/staff and students' parents or guardians about how to assist students (while, of course, abiding by relevant privacy and confidentiality laws)
- participation in university discussions of overall crisis response efforts
- collaboration with the university's office of public relations in an effort to share information with representatives of the media
- follow-up consultations and/or psychoeducational programs for students who were impacted by the disaster
- follow-up individual or group counseling services

In providing such services, a university's counseling center staff may periodically need to augment its resources by soliciting the assistance of staff at other university counseling centers.

## ***Disaster Response Procedures***

Depending upon the nature and scope of the disaster and the number of students impacted, the counseling center director (or his/her designee) may elect to augment the center's resources. Specifically, the director may decide to pursue assistance from staff at other counseling centers affiliated with Ohio's public universities.

### *Soliciting assistance from other university counseling centers in Ohio.*

The following university counseling centers agree to receive requests for assistance should a large-scale crisis or disaster occur at another state university in Ohio. Directors of these counseling centers are listed below, along with their contact information. Additionally, contact information is provided for another staff member in the event that the director cannot be reached.

#### **BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY:**

Craig Vickio, Director

Work Phone: 419/372-2081

Home Phone: 419/353-3631      Cell Phone: 419/378-1097

Mark Krautheim, Associate Director

Work Phone: 419/372-2081

Home Phone: 419/874-0878      Cell Phone: 419/345-9125

Garrett Gilmer, Associate Director

Work Phone: 419/372-2081

Home /Cell Phone: 419/490-5560

#### **KENT STATE UNIVERSITY:**

Pamela O. Farer-Singleton, Director

330-869-8310 (home)

330-328-8003 (cell)

330-338-7035 (work cell)

#### **MIAMI UNIVERSITY:**

Kip Alishio, Director or Pam Wilkins, Associate Director: 513-529-4634. If not reachable at that number, they can be reached through the on-call phone 24/7: 513-330-2165.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY:

Louise Douce, Director

614-292-5766 (work) 740-965-5947(home) 614-565-7991(cell)

*Alternate:*

Michael Folmar 614-292-5766 (work) 614-268-4875(home) 614-537-7854(cell)

OHIO UNIVERSITY:

Jeanne Heaton, Director

cell: 740-707-1201

home: 740-593-7601

work: 740-593-1616

*Alternate:*

Fred Weiner

home: 740-593-7812

work: 740-593-1616

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON:

Juanita K. Martin, Director

Cell: 330-328-8181

Home: 330-869-9523

Work: 330-972-7082

*Alternate:*

Gregory Robinson, Associate Director

Cell: 330-328-6084

Home: 330-867-4261

Work: 330-972-7082

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY:

Robert A. Rando, Director

Office Main Number: 937-775-3407

Office Phone: 937-775-3409

Cell Phone: 937-232-8959

Home Phone: 937-885-1770

*Alternate:*

Daniela Linnebach Burnworth

Office Main Number: 937-775-3407

Office Phone: 937-775-4873

Cell Phone: 614-668-5715

Following a disaster or large-scale crisis, a university counseling center director may elect to pursue assistance from one or more of the above centers. At the institution where the disaster has occurred, the counseling center director shall make decisions about which types of mental health services need to be rendered, which other university counseling centers may be contacted, and whether it is appropriate or necessary to continue the services being provided by staff from other universities. As a general rule, the counseling center director will limit the number of universities he/she contacts in an effort to be respectful of other counseling centers' resources and to make the most efficient use of the volunteers available. Geographic proximity shall be a major consideration in determining which universities are contacted.

In turn, university counseling center directors who are contacted shall, if circumstances permit, confer with their immediate supervisors before making decisions about their staff availability and the level of assistance available, if any. Center directors that choose to lend assistance (as well as those requesting such assistance) are aware of the following:

- The director shall confer with his/her center staff to determine which staff might be available to provide assistance.
- Staff members from their centers shall continue their employment with their home institutions, inclusive of salary and benefits, for the duration of time that they provide disaster response services (and shall not be required to use personal or vacation time for providing such services). These visiting staff members shall be considered to be acting within the scope of their job responsibilities (thus, entitling them to retain liability coverage).
- Visiting staff shall not be accorded financial remuneration from the requesting center for services provided or for expenses incurred. However, the host institution may afford or arrange for meals and lodging to visiting staff provided that the nature and extent of the meals and lodging is reported to the sending institution.
- Visiting staff members who provide counseling, psychotherapy, or other services that entail access to confidential information (i.e., protected health information) will act with due diligence to protect the privacy of such information. (In such instances, it is agreed that the counseling center director who has requested assistance and the director who has responded shall cooperate to establish the types of authorization forms or business associate agreements that may need to be completed.)
- The counseling center directors listed above agree that any documentation of formal assessment or psychotherapy shall be forwarded to the host institution for inclusion in the student's confidential counseling center records and that all federal and state statutory and regulatory requirements as to patient and client privacy be maintained.
- In the event that a visiting staff member must depart the host institution while providing counseling assistance to a patient or client at the host

institution and the patient or client requires continued assistance, the host institution shall provide continued assistance to the patient or client after the visiting staff member's departure. In such instances, counseling staff will apprise the patient or client of the need to transfer services and, where feasible and appropriate, will explore various treatment options with the student.

- In no event shall the state university employees herein called upon and rendering such assistance, be liable in damages to any other party hereto, or to contractual obligees for failure to render assistance, for lack of speed in rendering assistance, for any inadequacy or negligence in providing assistance or for any cause whatsoever arising out of the rendering of assistance pursuant to this Agreement.
- The university issuing such call shall not be liable in damages for loss of equipment or personnel or personal injuries suffered by the visiting staff members providing emergency assistance.
- Counselors rendering services pursuant to this Agreement shall be deemed to be acting within the scope and course of their employment responsibilities and are entitled, to the greatest extent permitted by law, to the rights and immunities provided by Ohio law, including but not limited to Sections 9.85 through 9.87 of the Ohio Revised Code.

#### ***Reviewing and Updating the Protocol***

At their annual meeting, Ohio counseling center directors who have endorsed this mutual aid agreement will review the protocol, update contact information, and discuss relevant issues pertaining to disaster response (as necessary).

*\*Drafted by the Bowling Green State University Counseling Center and General Counsel's Office, with input from the General Counsel's Offices and Counseling Centers of the University of Toledo, Miami University of Ohio, and The Ohio State University.*