



THE JOHN MARSHALL LAW SCHOOL

JMLS Counseling Center Urgent and Emergent Issues Policy

1. **Emergent vs. Urgent Issues:** Over the course of educational and social interactions, students, faculty, or staff members may become aware of acute psychological needs of JMLS students. The JMLS Counseling Center is available to support the JMLS community with these issues. It is important to distinguish true emergencies from urgent issues, to provide the appropriate level of care.
2. **Emergency Definition:** A psychological emergency is defined as a situation in which a person demonstrates or reports imminent risk of behaving in a way that could result in serious harm or death to self or others. Examples of such situations include (but are not limited to) risk or threat of suicide, statements of intent to harm others, behaviors that indicate potential violence toward another person, a situation in which a vulnerable person such as a child or disabled adult is at risk of being victimized, or an individual's judgment is impaired by mental illness or substance use such that he or she is unable to prevent harm to self or others.

Emergencies require immediate assistance by 911 emergency responders, campus security, and other supports. Confidentiality regarding health information and educational privacy rules can be broken in order to protect the safety of people involved.

3. **Urgent Issues Definition:** In contrast to an emergency, an urgent issue involves acute psychological distress or concerning behaviors that do not rise to the level of an emergency. Urgent issues may include thoughts of suicide without plan or intent, intense anger towards others without the risk of harm, substance abuse or dependence, intense anxiety, panic symptoms, depression, illogical and impulsive behavior, deterioration in hygiene, and bizarre thinking or psychosis without emergency risk factors present.

Urgent issues require psychological attention, but do not require 911 emergency responders, campus security, or other emergency care. Urgent issues can be addressed through regular outpatient services at the JMLS Counseling Center.

When in doubt, JMLS faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to contact 911 emergency responders first, and then seek consultation from the JMLS Counseling Center.

- 4. Responding to an Emergency:** Students experiencing an emergency should NOT be seen at the JMLS Counseling Center. Instead, any student, faculty, or staff member may contact 911 emergency responders to manage imminent risk.

Examples of situations in which 911 emergency responders should be called include:

- a. Person demonstrates or reports imminent risk of harm to self. You are worried that the person might harm himself/herself that day, or before you see the person again.
- b. Person demonstrates or reports imminent risk of harm towards another. This can include statements, behaviors, planning/musing about how the person might harm someone else, or intent to obtain the means to harm someone
- c. Person's judgment is impaired by a substance, anger, or other psychological state and you don't think he or she can keep from harming self or others.
- d. Person demonstrates bizarre behavior, does not respond to normal cause-and-effect, seems indifferent to consequences, and demonstrates risk of harm to self or others

If any faculty, staff, or student observes these types of emergency risk factors, the following steps should be taken:

- a. Call 911 and describe the situation. (From a campus phone, call 9-911.)
 - i. The dispatcher can help determine if police, emergency medical personnel, or both are required
 - ii. If the dispatcher determined that no emergency response is required, continue to call campus security
- b. Call JMLS Safety and Security at 312.427.2737 ext. 501 (from a campus phone, call 501.)
 - i. Describe the situation
 - ii. Inform security that you have called 911, and share any other information the dispatcher gave you
 - iii. Follow instructions from JMLS Safety & Security

- c. If JMLS Safety & Security says that it is safe to do so, stay with the person experiencing a psychological emergency until help arrives.

More information on JMLS Safety & Security policies, including protocols for safety in various types of emergencies, see <http://www.jmls.edu/security/safety.php>

The JMLS Counseling Center is NOT equipped to handle emergencies. Always seek out professional emergency responders to protect the safety of all persons involved.

5. **Responding to an Urgent Issue:** If students have an urgent need to be seen, they can always stop by the counseling center to see if a counselor is available for a same day appointment*. An urgent need is something that is considered not life threatening, but is distressing enough that it requires urgent attention. Some examples include:
 - a. A person is experiencing intense distress, upsetting feelings, panic symptoms, a traumatic reaction, or intense anger without emergency risk factors
 - b. A person expresses thoughts of harm to self but has clearly stated he or she is not at immediate risk
 - c. A person demonstrates or reports a significant decline in functioning, such as not sleeping, not needing to sleep, poor hygiene, missing classes, withdrawing from others, or noticeable change in attitude
 - d. A person demonstrates inappropriate emotional reactions, such as discussing quitting school without seeming to care about the consequences of this decision, or laughing during serious conversations.
 - e. A person demonstrates or reports substance abuse or dependence
 - f. A person has experienced a traumatic event

If no counselors are available, please call or email the counseling center as soon as possible to request an urgent appointment, which will be scheduled within 1 business day. Please keep in mind that the center has very limited hours on the weekends. We encourage students in need during these times to reach out to one of the various resources provided below.

Prior to meeting with a counselor, new students will be asked to complete documents which provides voluntary consent to receive services.

Please Note: For students experiencing a life-threatening situation, we advise them to please go to the nearest emergency room or dial 911. Below is also a

list of crisis hotlines and nearby hospitals. To locate the closest emergency room, students can visit: <http://www.ushospitalfinder.com>.

**National Suicide Prevention
Lifeline**

1.800.273.TALK (8255)

**The Trevor Project (LGBTQ
Suicide Prevention Hotline)**

1.866.488.7386

**National Domestic Violence
Hotline**

1.800.799.SAFE (7233)

**National Sexual Assault
Hotline**

1.800.656.HOPE (4673)

Illinois Child Abuse Hotline

1.800.25.ABUSE (2.2873)

Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline

1.888.293.2080

**Northwestern Memorial
Hospital**

1.312.926.6900

Revised 7/24/2017