

Referral procedure to KEPSYPA

I. Introduction

The Center of Applied Psychology and Personal Development (KEPSYPA) is offering psychological and counselling services to the members (staff and students) of European University Cyprus (EUC). The Center was established to promote Prevention, Assessment and Therapy and provide these services to the members of EUC free of charge.

The Center operates only with scheduled appointments. A first appointment is scheduled when the interested student/staff directly contacts the call center or after they have been referred by a third person.

II. Description of the process for requesting support from KEPSYPA

A. Services for academic and administrative staff

Ms Fani Ponirou is the center's special counselling psychologist who offers services to EUC academic and administrative staff as well as to EUC students. All services are provided with discretion and with the **strictest confidence**, as defined by the psychologists' code of ethics and the relevant laws in Cyprus.

Interested staff, can contact Ms Ponirou on 22559509 or via email on **f.ponirou@euc.ac.cy** or **kepsypa@euc.ac.cy**

B. Services for students

Ms Ponirou as well as the team of psychologists specializing in clinical and/or counselling psychology, provide support services to EUC students.

Students who decide to ask for help can directly contact the center and book an appointment.

Students can also be referred to KEPSYPA by an EUC member (e.g., an instructor, an administration staff or a classmate). Instructors and administration staff's role in referring a student is very important and therefore we provide below a number of suggestions to help EUC members recognize when and how to refer a student to KEPSYPA.

III. Referral of students to KEPSYPA by an EUC staff

The most common reasons of referring students to KEPSYPA are the following: academic difficulties, psychological symptoms or distress, personal difficulties, behaviours indicating tension or a crisis and finally hidden struggles/behaviours indicating distress and other difficulties.

1. Indicative Academic Difficulties:

- **Difficulty** in grasping lectures, in written expression in assignments and exams and in attention. Absentmindedness, continuous sleepiness during lectures, sudden drop of performance, low grades, etc.
- **Absences:** patterns of continuing absences, delayed arrival or not returning back in class.
- **Class participation:** withdrawal, excessive anxiety, harassment, misunderstanding with others, manipulation and imposing opinions or beliefs, etc.

2. Indicative Symptoms of Personal Difficulties:

- Excessive concerns, anger, tension, fear.
- Hygiene problems.
- Melancholia – depressive symptoms (frequent crying, insomnia, hypersomnia, sudden gain/loss of weight, bad mood, anhedonia, bad temper, excessive anxiety).
- Use of substances or medications (swollen eyes, intense bad-breath, rapid or very slow speech, sleepiness or hypertension, disjointed speech patterns).
- Aggressive or odd behaviour.
- Difficulties in personal relationships and communication.

3. Indicative behaviours for emotional tension or a crisis:

- Excessive behaviours (usually stress or anxiety/panic attack).
- Threatening others.
- Suicidal ideation (obvious or hidden).
- Unusual ideas and disjointed speech patterns or speech lacking association.

4. Indicative hidden behaviours which underly distress and other difficulties:

A group of behaviours which may seem “normal” or “insignificant” and remain unnoticed. In the long-term, these behaviours’ cause problems to the person and to others. When someone identifies these behaviours and communicates them to the student, s/he cannot recognize them or denies them. These behaviours follow a pattern. Some of them may be the following:

- Attachment or dependence on a person (e.g., requesting attention or special treatment, etc.).
- Continuous testing of others’ boundaries.
- Unusual or extreme emotional reactions towards others.
- Attempts to undermine classmates, instructors or administration staff (e.g., spread of fake news/messages to third parties on and off campus, use of third parties to pass messages or threats etc.).
- Sexual behaviours:
 - ✓ Messages or jokes in a sexually suggestive manner, for which the other person did not consent to
 - ✓ Continuous or inappropriate compliments which are considered intrusive for the other person
 - ✓ Pursuit of closeness and ongoing questions for very personal issues
 - ✓ Wish to exchange personal contact numbers

- ✓ Desire to connect via social media
- ✓ Obvious sexual harassment

A number of the aforementioned behaviours may initially be interpreted as “normal or insignificant”, especially if they present according to the social norm or culture of each person. Nevertheless, a distinct differentiation between harmful or potentially harmful behaviours is vital. Such underlying behaviours, may conceal serious psychopathological difficulties (e.g., Antisocial Personality Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, etc.).

Even though an academic or admin staff has important life experiences and knowledge in academic, medical or psychological level, is important to refer the student to KEPSYPA so that they receive specialized professional help and support. It is necessary that all of us operate in a humanistic level, but is more ethical to refer a distressed student to KEPSYPA so that they receive support from a trained and experienced professional in applied psychological and psychotherapeutic interventions.

If you are unsure that a student needs professional help or uncertain if and how you can refer them to KEPSYPA you can contact Ms Fani Ponirou on 22559509 or/and on **f.ponirou@euc.ac.cy** or **kepsypa@euc.ac.cy**

If you decide to refer a student to KEPSYPA, then you must follow the next **three** steps.

Referral Protocol

Step 1

- When you observe a difficulty or when a student reaches you concerning this, suggest to meet in person at a quiet place in the University (i.e., in your office).
- Remain calm and avoid any critical stance, lecturing or counselling.
- Show empathy and respect to the student’s story as well as in its significance to them.
- Bear in mind that their story may be unknown or unreasonable to you. Respect their perspective.
- Their presenting issue may be similar to your experience. If this is the case, then you **must focus** only to the student’s issue and not yours. Some believe that if they reveal their own personal experience, then the other person will trust them and be more able receive help. This is only partly true for some individuals, but not for everyone. The risk of such personal revelation might be higher than its benefits. Therefore, you must be very cautious in revealing a personal experience to distressed individuals. KEPSYPA can support you in how you can approach students in distress.
- If you invited the student to discuss their concern, you must be polite, direct and genuine: e.g., “I’ve observed that you have missed some classes and this worries me.”
- Avoid assumptions and criticism and stay on the facts you observed. Examples: -“I would like to discuss your concern as I observe that your performance has dropped”

-“I see that you ...(your observation) in our classes and I wanted to discuss it with you”

-“I would like to express my interest for ... and I want to hear your thoughts too”

- **Avoid** expressions:

“Have you taken something?”

“Why are you reacting like that?”

“I know what is bothering you”

“The reason you feel like that is because ...”

“You have a psychological disorder and you must see a specialist”

“What is wrong with you?”, etc.

Step 2

- After you evaluate that the student can benefit from KEPSYPA, suggest them to visit the center.

- Say to the student that by asking for help they are not crazy or weak. Also mention that each of us, has their own difficulties and with the help of an expert we may become more able to find solutions.

A number of interventions during this step are the following:

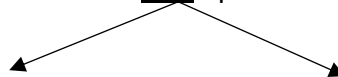
-“I hear you saying that your difficulty is insignificant, but it may be worth asking help from KEPSYPA, since professionals there deal with such issues”

-“I wanted to inform you that you can contact KEPSYPA. The center’s therapists may be able to help with your concerns.”

-“KEPSYPA’s therapists are well trained, they can hear you without any judgement and will try to help you find the most suitable solution based on your needs”

Step 3

You have **two** options



Option 1. Provide the necessary information so that the student directly contacts KEPSYPA	Option 2. Refer the student to KEPSYPA by using the referral from
--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say to the student that all appointments at KEPSYPA are free of charge and that during the first appointment they will discuss their difficulty. Afterwards, the psychologist will suggest the support plan.• Emphasize that their contact with KEPSYPA is strictly confidential and that you cannot contact their psychologist after they arrived at the center, nor the psychologists will contact you without the student’s written consent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When you assess that the student is unable, but positive, to contact KEPSYPA, ask them if they would like to be referred by you to the center. If they accept you must emphasize that although you will make the referral, you will not keep any further contact with the center, unless the student asks for it.• To proceed with the referral, you must complete the Referral Form, make sure that <u>the student signs it</u> and then you
--	---

<p>• Provide in written the following contact information so that the <u>student directly contacts</u> the center: Call center: 22559509 (For appointments call every Monday to Friday 9am until 5pm) Email: kepsypa@euc.ac.cy</p>	<p>can send it via <u>email</u> to kepsypa@euc.ac.cy or to f.ponirou@euc.ac.cy. Alternatively, you can submit it in person to Ms Fani Ponirou.</p>
---	--

IV. Skeptical Students

Some students may resist the idea to receive support and this may be due to fear and or anxiety or any other personal reason (even a serious disorder). In such cases you can act as follows:

- Make sure that you mention confidentiality.
- Tell them that KEPSYPA does not provide any medication and that the student’s decision to visit the center has no academic or financial cost.
- Emphasize that asking for help is not a sign of weakness but is a strength. Looking after ourselves is cornerstone of self-care which will help us overcome our difficulties.
- If the student minimizes their difficulty, let them know that at KEPSYPA they can discuss any matter, either that is “minor” or “major” for them.
- Tell them that a meeting with a psychologist is not a binding process if they do not wish to continue.

Finally, you must accept the fact that although you may genuinely want to help, the student has the right to refuse any help. You cannot force them to accept help. If this is uncomfortable to you, or you may have any doubts on how and if you must make a referral to KEPSYPA, you can always discuss it with Ms Ponirou.

V. Summary of referral procedures

- Academic and administrative staff can request support from KEPSYPA, by contacting Ms Ponirou on 22559509 or/and via email: **f.ponirou@euc.ac.cy** or **kepsypa@euc.ac.cy**
- Academic and administrative staff can suggest KEPSYPA to a student by providing the center’s number **22559509** and email **kepsypa@euc.ac.cy**
- Academic and administrative staff can refer a student to KEPSYPA, by completing the referral form, with the student signing the form and finally the EUC staff submitting the form via email to **kepsypa@euc.ac.cy** or to **f.ponirou@euc.ac.cy** or submit it in person to Ms Ponirou.