Suggestions for Coping While You Wait for Your Counseling Appointment

*Compiled by Brigid Cahill, Ph.D. at the University of Rochester*

* Stick to a routine - get dressed, go to classes, go to meetings. Keeping structure in your day can help things feel less overwhelming.
* Be sure to eat regularly and in a healthy way. Skipping meals or overeating can wear down your coping resources.
* Get as much sleep as you need - and avoid sleeping too much. Six to eight hours are what most people need. To help with sleep, go to bed and get up at the same time every day, avoid napping, and do not study in bed.
* Do some physical activity that you enjoy - walking, running, swimming, working out, playing sports, etc. Moderate physical exercise can help you feel better emotionally. Start small with walks around campus.
* Talk to friends and family who are supportive and positive influences. Isolating yourself can make things feel even worse.
* Try to do at least one fun or enjoyable thing each day.
* Practice relaxation activities, such as progressive muscle relaxation and deep breathing, hot baths, massages, and yoga.
* Avoid using alcohol, other drugs, and caffeine for self-medication.
* Keep a journal - write down your thoughts and feelings. Remember, this is just for you - so it doesn't need to be perfectly written. It's an outlet for you to express some of the things going on inside you.
* Self-soothe using one or more of your five senses - watch the beauty of nature, listen to your favorite relaxing music, wear your favorite perfume, give someone a hug, eat strawberries, etc.
* Visualize a pleasant memory, a relaxing place, an image of yourself feeling better. These can be real memories or imagined events and places. Visualize with lots of detail, using each of your senses to create as vivid an image as possible.
* Give yourself permission to not worry about your problems for a while. Save your worries for one 20 minute period each day and only think about them then. Visualize blocking away your worries or sad thoughts - build a wall, bury them, lock them up.
* Use humor - spend time with people who make you laugh, watch a funny movie, read a funny book.
* Challenge negative self-talk - pay attention to negative messages you may give yourself and challenge their validity.
* Distract yourself temporarily from your difficulties - watch a movie, read a book, play a game. Give yourself permission to attend fully to something besides your worries and concerns.
* Attend to your spirituality - go to church/synagogue/mosque - pray, read religious works.

*The preceding is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to diagnose or treat any conditions. It cannot substitute for a consultation with a physician or a mental health professional.*