

WELCOME

Welcome to SHCC Psychiatry at the Student Health Care Center. After your initial evaluation, you and the provider will decide if you will begin treatment at our clinic. Treatment could include a variety of modalities like medication management, referral for therapy, and recommendations for lifestyle changes. Our goal is to work collaboratively with you to promote wellness and recovery. The following information pertains to our most frequently asked questions.

LOCATION & HOURS

Address:

2140 Stadium Road
Gainesville, FL 32611

Office Hours:

Fall/Spring: Monday - Friday, 8am to 5pm
Summer: Monday - Friday, 8am to 4:30pm

CONTACT

(352) 273-3390

shcc.ufl.edu



UF | Student Health Care Center
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SHCC PSYCHIATRY
Frequently Asked Questions

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MEDICATION

Q: Can I expect to be prescribed medication at SHCC Psychiatry?

A: Whether or not your provider recommends medication will depend on what they find when they meet with you for your first psychiatry consultation, as well as follow-up appointments. If they determine you could benefit from medication, they will begin the process of informed consent. In this process, the provider will inform you of your diagnosis as well as the potential benefits, risks, and side effects of using medication to treat this condition. They will also identify the risks and benefits of alternative treatments, including the risks and benefits of not taking medications.

Q: What if a provider recommends medication but I am not sure I want to take it?

A: We encourage you to talk with your provider to express your concerns, and to explore why the provider believes this medication will be beneficial. The provider may recommend a website such as [PDR.net](https://www.pdr.net), which can provide you additional information. If you are uncertain what to do, it can be helpful to bring family or friends into the discussion. You can talk with these supportive people in your life or ask them to call into a session where you and your provider can talk with them regarding the decision. If you want someone to have ongoing collaboration and discussion with your provider, you need to provide permission in writing. We will provide HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) release of information forms you can sign for this purpose.

Q: Will I need to get a physical exam and laboratory tests before starting medication?

A: Sometimes. In some situations your provider may require a physical exam before starting medication. That way your provider can rule out medical causes of your symptoms and see if you have any physical symptoms that would contraindicate certain medications. Laboratory tests can also help your provider rule out medical causes of mental health problems and may be necessary prior to prescribing certain medications.

Q: How long will I need to take medication?

A: Your provider will review with you the length of time you will take medication using evidence-based guidelines. **Informed consent** as described earlier is an ongoing process in which potential benefits, risks, and side effects are continuously reviewed. If you and your provider decide it is time to discontinue medication, the provider may taper the medication slowly to reduce discontinuation effects. Stopping medication suddenly could contribute to uncomfortable side effects as well as a recurrence of mental health symptoms.

Q: What are the risks of taking medication?

A: The risks of medication vary based on the particular medication, the dosage, the patient, and other factors. Your provider will explain the most common side effects of a recommended medication. The pharmacist might also provide you with a medication guide that includes risk information specific to the particular medication. Some medications' prescription drug label also include a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warning formatted with a box around the text, known as a "black box warning," which is designed to call attention to serious or life-threatening risks. Your provider will address whether a recommended medication has such a boxed warning and how to monitor for risk. Below is one example of a black box warning:

Suicidality and Antidepressant Drugs Black Box Warning:

Antidepressants increased the risk compared to placebo of suicidal thinking and behavior (suicidality) in children, adolescents, and young adults in short-term studies of major depressive disorder (MDD) and other psychiatric disorders. Anyone considering the use of antidepressants in a child, adolescent, or young adult must balance this risk with the clinical need. Short-term studies did not show an increase in the risk of suicidality with antidepressants compared to placebo in adults beyond age 24; there was a reduction in risk with antidepressants compared to placebo in adults age 65 and older. Depression and certain other psychiatric disorders are themselves associated with increases in the risk of suicide.

Occurrence of possible side effects is monitored during follow-up visits, and for any urgent concerns, including new onset or worsening suicidal thinking, call the UF SHCC Psychiatry Clinic at [352-273-3390](tel:352-273-3390) for a 24/7 consultation, or go to the emergency room.

Q: Are there steps I can take to reduce the risk of side effects from medication?

A: It is always best to take your medication at the dose and frequency prescribed by your provider. Skipping doses or increasing the dose too quickly can contribute to side effects. If you have concerns about side effects, you can call our clinic and a nurse or provider will talk with you about the best course of action. It is also important that you keep scheduled appointments so you can inform your provider of any side effects and together you can both monitor proactively.

THERAPY

Q: How do I know if I should seek psychotherapy, take medication, or do both?

A: Most people with mental health issues benefit from psychotherapy with or without medication. Some people prefer one treatment modality over the other. There are evidence-based guidelines as to which modality alone or in combination is best for treatment of your mental health issue. When symptoms are more severe, most people benefit from combining therapy and medication.

Q: Would my psychiatry provider deliver therapy or would they refer me for therapy?

A: Some providers will do therapy along with medication management, but most of the time SHCC psychiatric providers will refer you for therapy, unless you are already receiving these services at the Counseling and Wellness Center or elsewhere. Our SHCC Psychiatry case manager can meet with you to facilitate a referral for therapy.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Q: What kind of lifestyle changes might my psychiatry provider recommend?

A: Your provider might recommend certain lifestyle changes that studies have shown to benefit people with a variety of mental health issues. Depending on the individual mental health issue, these could include:

- Adequate sleep
- Healthful eating
- Exercise
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Social activities and volunteer work
- Receiving social support from family and friends
- Avoidance of drugs and alcohol

We hope this has answered your questions regarding treatment at SHCC Psychiatry at the Student Health Care Center. If you have further questions, do not hesitate to call our clinic at (352) 273-3390. We are here to promote your wellness and work collaboratively with you toward your emotional wellness and academic success.