

University of Pittsburgh Genetic Counseling Program Policy on Timely Access to Support Service

The University of Pittsburgh Genetic Counseling Program is committed to providing cutting edge training in the complex science of genetics/genomics while fostering a strong foundation in counseling. Accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC), the Program is designed to allow students to achieve the ACGC practice-based competencies, which define the knowledge and skills that an entry-level genetic counselor should demonstrate upon graduation. The practice-based competencies are comprised of the following domains: Genetics Expertise and Analysis; Interpersonal, Psychosocial and Counseling Skills; Education; and Professional Development and Practice (https://www.gceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ACGC-Core-Competencies-Brochure_15_Web_REV-6-2019.pdf). To achieve the knowledge and skills in these domains, the graduate training is a rigorous process that is meant to ensure that our graduates are competent practitioners. Students complete didactic coursework, clinical rotations, and a thesis project during their training. Students can experience stress and while self-care is addressed in the curriculum, some students may need additional assistance.

The University has a variety of resources that are intended to promote student well-being. The Genetic Counseling Program faculty are committed to ensuring the students who desire counseling support will get timely access to this service. During regular academic meetings with students, which occur on a quarterly basis, should the program leadership recognize that a student would benefit from counseling support, program leadership will promptly notify the student about counseling resources.

The University Counseling Center (<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cc/>) offers short-term counseling to students free of charge. Referral to the Counseling Center can occur in a variety of ways.

For additional assistance, a student can self-refer for services:

Students can contact the Counseling Center for a screening appointment. The following website outlines the process: <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cc/appointment/>. The purpose of the screening appointment is to determine the most appropriate counseling option to meet the student's needs.

The Program Leadership has a list of several therapists in the community and will share this list with interested students. These therapists accept different insurance plans and a student would need to confirm that his/her insurance would cover the counseling services provided by one of these therapists. Students can also use the "find a provider" tool that often is available with most insurance plans should they want to identify a therapist in the community.

In crisis situations, a student can seek services urgently and/or a faculty member who recognizes the need for an immediate referral will assist the student in getting appropriate services:

During business hours, the Counseling Center can be contacted at 412-648-7930 to schedule an appointment indicating that a student is experiencing a crisis situation.

After-hours counseling phone numbers

1. General mental health crisis response: 412-648-7930
2. Sexual assault response: 412-648-7856

Should a student experience an emergency situation, it is recommended that the student or a faculty member, should the faculty member be aware of the situation, call 911 or Pitt Police 412-624-2121.

Other resources include:

1. Re:Solve Crisis Network: 1-888-796-8226
2. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

Other resources

There are a number of University support services available to students. Should faculty or Program Leadership recognize that a student would benefit from other University resources, they will promptly notify the student about the relevant resource.

Title IX Office

The University of Pittsburgh prohibits any behavior that involves sexual assault or harassment, relationship violence, or stalking of another person. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sexual violence and sexual misconduct which may affect the educational environment. A student who feels that the Title IX statute has been violated has the right to file a complaint or to refuse to file a complaint. When an individual files a complaint, the school is required to report to the University's Title IX office (<http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/>). The University Office of Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Education (SHARE) provides counseling to victims of sexual assault, and offers support during the recovery process (<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/share/get-support/>).

Disability Resources and Services

The University fosters a culture of inclusiveness and is committed to providing an accessible environment for its faculty, staff and students. The Office of Disability Resources and Services (<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>) helps ensure that equal opportunities in education is available to academically qualified students with disabilities. Students who require accommodations should register with Disability Resources and Services.

Health Center

The Student Health Service (<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/shs/>) provides primary health care, prevention and specialty care. An outpatient clinic with a number of medical services and a full-service pharmacy is available to students.

Life Management Resources

The Graduate School of Public Health has a list of resources available to students. These resources are described at the following website: <http://publichealth.pitt.edu/home/life/student-life/life-management-resources>