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Stress

Continued from Page 5

own expectations of what they are and who they think they should be," Heger said.

Heger said he prefers to offer students short-term therapy, or "crisis management," leaving the continuing services to professional counselors such as those at the Counseling Center.

In other words, he is willing to be a shoulder to cry on, to

help the student make an attempt to discern the next logical step, whether or not it involves seeing a professional, Heger said.

Again, it's often what the student doesn't say that tells Heger what's wrong. "I listen for unexplained apathy. A big shrug of the shoulders usually gives me the answer," he said.

Students who are afflicted by stress and burnout typically can't sleep or have short attention spans, Heger said.

Others have "exaggerated responses to seemingly little problems, like, 'I can't believe my roommate left her socks on the floor!'" he said.

Symptoms of stress and burnout are also prevalent in depressed students. Warning signs of depression, according to Thompson and the National Institute of Mental Health, include lack of motivation and involvement in previous daily routines and activities, lack of interest in energy-producing activities, inability to handle stress and a prevailing dependency on the approval of others.

"When something goes wrong, we feel guilty or sorry for ourselves," Heger said, adding that perfection "is an insidious trap," and students tend to take it personally if something in their life goes awry. He said too often he hears

the words, "it's my fault."

But Heger is quick to point out that students can make conscious choices of how they will react. "Self talk reinforces the picture," Heger said.

Thompson agrees. "They've created their own problems so they have to find their own way out," he asserted. "(Therapy) frequently involves broadening their perspectives."

The best counseling approach, according to Thompson, is helping students help themselves by finding other ways of looking at their problems and their lifestyles. He and others at the Counseling Center try to help the student change their perspective rather than let the problem seem all-consuming.

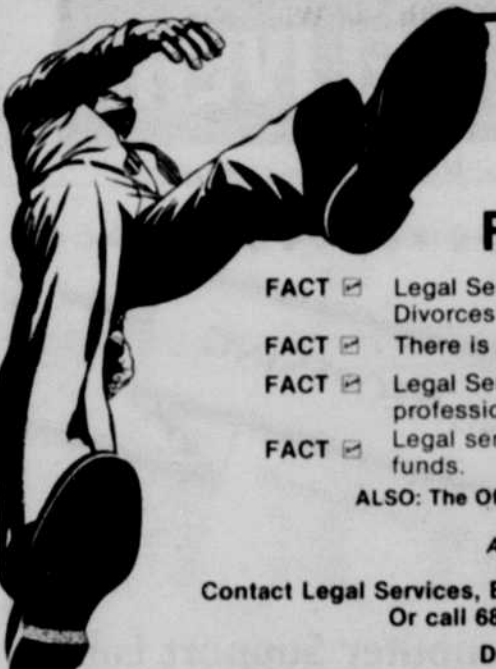
The National Institute of Mental Health reports that more young people are depressed today than ever before. However, the incidence of drug and alcohol abuse is even more prevalent on today's college campuses, and addiction is rising, according to Thompson.

The Counseling Center added two full-time drug counselors to its staff last year to answer a growing number of requests by students who need help overcoming their chemical dependencies. "Substance abuse is an easy way to go," Thompson said.

Other common ways to go include overeating and dropping or flunking out of school.

Overcoming stress, whether through treatment or therapy, must proceed slowly, step by step, Heger said. The first step is admitting the problem and asking for help, he said.

Recovery involves getting back into the swing of things, according to Thompson. "We try to get them to be interested in their daily routines and activities again."



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