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# Crisis center line helps students fight stress

The confidential phone line is available 24 hours a day Monday through Friday

**Aimee Rudin**  
Family/Health/Education Reporter

It could be the rain, or the pressures of higher education, or maybe it's just human nature that causes depression and anxiety in some University students.

Whatever the cause, more than 17 percent of 405 surveyed University students sought counseling for stress in 2001-02, according to an annual University Health Center survey.

The University offers two primary options for students seeking help with emotional, psychological and physical problems and concerns. Students most commonly use the University Health Center, with its staff of trained medical professionals and clinical setting.

Anne Mattson, interim director for the health center, said handling stress is a concern for University students, but coming up with solid numbers can be difficult.

"Because stress is not a diagnosis, we have no way of knowing how many students come in seeking treatment," she said.

The University Crisis Center offers an alternative to the health center for students hoping to talk to

someone about their problems.

The crisis center is a confidential telephone hot line available to students and community residents 24 hours a day Monday through Friday. Phones are staffed by trained University students and overseen by doctoral students in Counseling Psychology. Calls to the hot line range from questions about school and classes to relationship concerns and issues surrounding suicide.

"A lot of stigma is attached to seeking help, especially on a crisis line," crisis line Assistant Director George Hanawahine said. "We are trying to put a message out there that it doesn't have to be serious to call. We would like to play a role that is a little more preventive if possible."

A University study discussing the most stressful experiences for students in the 2002 rated academic concerns, such as midterms and finals, relationships, and balancing work and school as the top concerns students face.

"The most common calls are loneliness and depression," said Kasie, one crisis line worker who did not want her last name used because people who know her may not feel comfortable calling. "I have heard all sorts of calls, ranging from abusive relationships to confusion on sexual orientation."

A majority of workers at the crisis center take part in Counseling Psychology, a crisis-intervention class offered fall and spring term. Students enrolled in the class receive at least 30 hours of instruction in crisis intervention and participate in numerous role playing activities to gain experience before hitting the phone lines.

"The training you go through really focuses on apathy rather than empathy," Kasie said. "This in itself is difficult; it is very hard to hear someone's struggles and not want to feel bad for them."

Because of the pressure associated with working on the crisis line, workers are asked to participate in a weekly meeting where they share their experiences and recognize their strong points at work. Hanawahine believes the meetings give the staff an opportunity to debrief and wind down after the events of the week.

"Working on a crisis line can sometimes be stressful and difficult on the lives of our workers," he said. "It is important that our workers practice good self care throughout the year."

The University Crisis Center can be reached at 346-4488.

Contact the reporter at [aimeerudin@dailymerald.com](mailto:aimeerudin@dailymerald.com).

## Duck Call

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over the phone.

"It seems like a bad idea for people like me, who don't have a computer at home to use," Searles said. "And having two options is more convenient than just having the Internet option."

Chereck said that the Office of the Registrar believes Web-based registration provides better service than Duck Call. He also said the office will work with students in any way possible to provide quality registration services. Students without home computers have plenty of access to Web-based registration on campus computers, he added.

"We want to be sensitive to any is-

sues that come up," Chereck said. "We want to be available to hear student concerns."

For some though, the end of an era may go unnoticed.

"What's Duck Call?" freshman Annie Bachman asked.

Contact the reporter at [andrewblack@dailymerald.com](mailto:andrewblack@dailymerald.com).

## Assembly

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similar one led by Students for Peace with more than 1,500 signatures attached, should give assembly members something to discuss today.


"We think that these petitions make it clear that a large number of faculty feel very strongly about the issue," he said. "We believe this is a critical issue on which the University needs to speak out."

Overflow seating for today's meeting will be provided in 150

Columbia. Assembly members will have priority in speaking during the session, and a speaker's sign-up sheet will be available at 3 p.m. for community members if time allows.

Contact the news editor at [brookreinhard@dailymerald.com](mailto:brookreinhard@dailymerald.com).

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