Myths and Realities about Counseling

• **Myth:** Counseling is only for people with serious mental illnesses.
  **Reality:** Students attend counseling for many different reasons, including adjusting to college life, making important life and career decisions, developing ways to deal with stress, and improving relationships with peers, family, or partners. They may also seek assistance with a variety of psychological issues from mild to severe.

• **Myth:** Counselors are only for people with no friends or family to confide in.
  **Reality:** Friends and family serve as a wonderful role in our support system. However, these relationships are mutual – they require give and take. In contrast, the main focus of counseling is on you – overcoming obstacles, addressing problems and concerns, and reaching your goals. Your counselor can provide you with unbiased feedback, and use his or her training to provide you with tools, skills, and new insights.

• **Myth:** Counseling always takes a long time to work.
  **Reality:** CAPS provides brief therapy services, with most students coming in for just a handful of sessions. Our goal is to help you work towards the changes you would like to see in your life as quickly as possible. Many of our students begin to make changes and see improvements soon after beginning. Of course, if you need longer-term services, we can also help you find a therapist in the community who will meet your needs.

• **Myth:** The counselor will “analyze” me.
  **Reality:** Counseling is not about getting into your head or manipulating you. It is a collaborative process where you are in control of choosing your goals and working towards them, with the guidance and assistance of the therapist.

• **Myth:** If I go to counseling, my parents/professors/school administrators will find out about my problems.
  **Reality:** Counselors are required to protect your confidentiality, and are trained to treat your private information with extreme care. No one will even be told that you are in counseling at all without your explicit, written permission. Likewise, this information would not be provided to potential employers or graduate programs. There are some rare circumstances where confidentiality is limited, and your counselor will make sure that you understand what these are at your first meeting.

• **Myth:** Going to counseling means that I’m weak or I’ve failed.
  **Reality:** Meeting with a counselor is a positive, proactive way to tackle one’s problems and issues. It takes strength to recognize areas of yourself that you would like to improve, or to recognize when an aspect of your life isn’t working for you. It also takes strength to risk talking with a new person about these personal aspects of your life.