Ask the problem-solvers

By DEB KILGORE
Depression is the most common sychological problem of students at ooth Texas A&M University and the irch, director of Texas A&M's Peronal Counseling Service, and Mariyn Hatfield, executive director of UT's Counseling-Psychological

Hatfield said, "Most (UT) students come in because they are depressed for a variety of reasons. heir second most important conem is improving their self-esteem. Their third concern is developing elationships with friends, and the ourth worry is making good

Similarly, Texas A&M students re concerned with solving depression, loneliness, relationships with friends and self-esteem problems, Birch said.

"In counseling students, certain problems or themes tend to reoc-cur," Birch said. "The most com-mon theme is what I call 'resolving he parent-child relationship.' It is joing from relating to one's parents as a child to relating to the parents

"Another problem is called forming a personal value system.' The student must decide what is best for him in terms of alcohol, drug use and boyfriend or girlfriend relation-

The selection of a future job is an apportant and often troublesome ecision, Birch said. Some parents emand that their kids make a cerin grade point ratio and graduate in four years. Texas A&M students themselves are very grade-conscious and competitive, Birch

Aggies and UT students also have milar counseling services to solve lese problems. Both Texas A&M's and UT's counseling centers offer individual, group and emergency ounseling. Counseling is free and vailable to all students at both uniersities. Faculty members are not unseled at Texas A&M, but UT aculty members are counseled on a ne-time basis

At Texas A&M, most counseling is on an individual basis and comes nder the personal-social category, irch said.

when you percent of our cases in-when problems ranging from boyf-riends to suicidal thoughts to in-compatible roommates," Birch re-ported.

The counselors do a lot of listeng and forming alternatives for stuents. However, students don't we to have serious problems to e the services, Birch said.

cerns. In fact, 95 percent of Texas to identify themselves, she said.

A&M's student population is quite UT also has a walk-in team of psy-A&M's student population is quite normal," he said.

seling, group and career counseling.

predominant at UT. However, Hatfield said, "We (psychologists at UT) are geared to short-term counseling to help students solve their immediate problems and stay in school. We don't have the staff or time to do long-term therapy for so many students, so we refer them to UT's health center or an Austin psy-

UT's group counseling is also divided into two areas: personal growth groups with group therapy and focused groups.

Personal growth groups help students become more aware of their own feelings and learn how to deal with others," Hatfield said.
"Group therapy helps students clarify and solve important issues,"

Focused groups assist in develop-ing specific skills, like assertion skills and relaxation methods, she

"More women ask for counseling because it's OK for women to talk about thier problems. It's not accepted for men to let out their emotions,

However, Texas A&M and UT differ in some services offered. Career counseling is offered at Texas A&M but is not included in UT's counseling service. But UT's their emotions Counseling-Psychological Services Center does offer 5-10 minute selfhelp tapes and 24-hour telephone

The tapes give information and suggestions on how to handle everyday problems from dealing with depression to how to choose a major, Hatfield said. They are available 24 hours a day and she said they are very popular with students.

Telephone counseling provides a continuous counseling service for immediate personal crises, Hatfield

Telephone counselors do nothing but answer the phone. They are trained to know when it is a real emergency and have a direct line to need another psychiatrist. the health center and the police de-"We are primarily here to assist partment. Many students prefer to call in for help since they don't have call in for help since they don't have

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chologists on duty that take care of

The counseling service also offers emergencies and new clients that marriage and human sexuality councille without appointments.

have general development groups and topical groups, like assertiveness training. The group counseling is successful because the staff gets student feedback, Birch said. student feedback, Birch said.

stident feedback, Birch said.

said. At night, from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m., one psychologist takes care of all emergencies that occur that counseling on an individual basis is

'If an emergency occurs after of-

"Over 50 percent of our cases involve problems ranging from boy-friends to suicidal thoughts to incompatible roommates," Birch reported.

fice hours, call the police department or health service and they will decide if the student needs to see a psychologist then or the next morning," Birch added.

Birch and Hatfield agreed the following signs indicate an emergency

 Discussion of suicide, including how, when and where.
 Unusual behavior changes, like unexplained crying, inability to sleep or acutely increased activity. Physical illness, like severe

headaches or chronic digestive problems. ÷ Drug or alcohol abuse. (Drug and alcohol problems are confidential except when another person is

The majority of Texas A&M students requesting counseling are women who are either sophomores or juniors, Birch said.

"More women ask for counseling because it's okay for women to talk about their problems," Birch added. "It's not accepted for men to let out

At UT, juniors, seniors and graduate students compose the majority of those seeking counseling, with equal number of men and women, Hatfield said.

Texas A&M's center counseled 1,185 Aggies in 1976-77 with six psychologists, four interns and one psychologists, four interns and one psychiatrist. UT's center counseled over 10,000 students with 11 psychologists, six interns and five psychiatrists.

Birch said, "We are inadequate in psychiatric help. The American Psychiatric Association says one psychiatrist is needed for every 20,000 people. Since we have 29,000 students at Texas A&M, we

The staff cannot administer drugs without a psychiatrist or a doctor.

The present psychiatrist, Dr. Robert Potts, only visits here three hours twice a week, Birch said.

Texas A&M also needs more psychologists. "We always have a heavy schedule and a waiting list of about 30 students, so we have little time left for preventing crisis through programs," Birch said.

Hatfield said UT's center is adequately large for the number of students enrolled. However, she added that during exams there are not enought psychologists to coun-

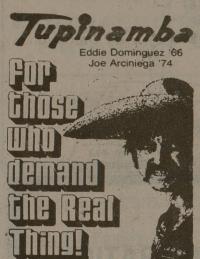
'UT's center got going after the Whitman shooting incident. (Whitman shot 13 and wounded 44 persons from the bell tower on the UT campus in August of 1966.) It put a focus on the availablity of counseling and caused our counseling service to grow," Hatfield said.

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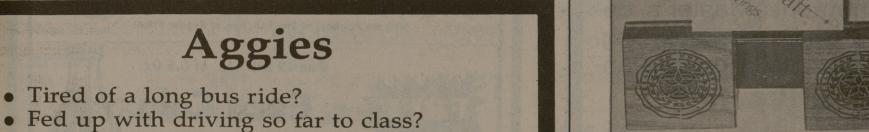
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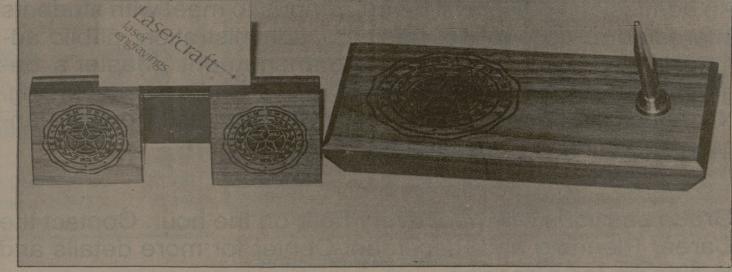
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