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Health

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students deal with.

"A combination of the fact that most students are living on their own for the first time, experiencing things as an adult away from their parents and are in the stage when people are looking for a relationship can lead very easily to times of trouble," Vavra said.

A&M's Student Counseling Service offers three types of counseling services to students. The Learning Skills services and the Career Counseling teach students study skills and counsel them about careers and choosing a major. The personal counseling services deal with mental health and personal crises issues.

Knipscheer said incoming students must adjust to new surroundings, people, classes and other stresses.

"The pressures of college life added to the individual's biological or psychosocial predisposition have made mental illnesses on college campuses an increasingly prevalent issue," he said.

The college years are the time when an individual is most likely to be diagnosed with a mental illness, Knipscheer said. More than 27 percent of young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 have a diagnosable form of mental illness.

Mental illness is an issue that deserves serious attention of administrators, faculty and students alike.

A&M's Student Counseling Service was established to help students ease into college life and relieve stress and anxiety that some may experience.

"Some students might prefer the helpline to counseling face to face because of the animosity," Vavra said. "It might be easier to talk to a person that they can't see, but this depends on the person and their preferences."

About 45 undergraduate and graduate students work at the helpline and have been trained to conduct calls properly. The Student Counseling Service consists of about 40 professionals with a wide variety of educational background, ranging from Ph.D. psychiatrists and M.D. psychologists to

counselors with their master's degrees.

"Psychiatrists are on staff if a student needs medication due to depression or other issues that need medical attention," Vavra said.

The Student Counseling Center is available to students between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The helpline is available to all students after 4 p.m. until 8 a.m. at 845-2700.

When the helpline is closed on weekends, the answering machine refers callers to Mental Health Mental Retardation of the Brazos Valley. Over the holidays, the helpline is down, but callers are referred to 1-800-SUICIDE, a national toll-free hotline offered by the American Association of Suicidology.

"We try to keep in mind that there are people still around that might need some help," Vavra said. "I know that all international students and others cannot go home for such things as Christmas break, and we try to offer as much help as possible."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bush defends Iraq war in UK state visit

LONDON — Welcomed to Britain with pageantry and a smattering of anti-war protesters, President George W. Bush on Wednesday defended the war in Iraq, saying military force must at times be used to confront the growing danger of terrorism.

"In some cases, the measured use of force is all that protects us from a chaotic world," Bush told academics gathered at the Banqueting House.

During a 3 1/2-day state visit here, Bush is seeking to puncture what he views as misconceptions on this side of the Atlantic about American-led Iraq invasion.

"There are principled objections to the use of force in every generation and I credit motives behind these views," Bush said, most of the bitter opposition among many in Europe and across Europe to the U.S.- and British-led war in Iraq. Demonstrators had lined his motorcade route and protesters chanted outside as he spoke.

The president added: "Those in authority, however, are not judged only by good intentions. The people have given us the duty to defend them and that duty sometimes requires the violent restraint of violent men."

Prime Minister Tony Blair, who has faced strong criticism from the British public for remaining America's staunchest ally in the war, also defended Britain's close relationship with the United States and the coalition's handling of the situation in Iraq.

Marijuana

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dangerous equipment while under the influence of marijuana, or any cannabinoid drug, can have comparable effects."

The report states that marijuana smoke is associated with an increased risk of cancer and lung damage, Martin said.

"If you're intelligent, the way to consume it today is to vaporize it, drink it as a tea or put it in brownies," Hager said.

Stutman said marijuana causes dependency and "interferes with one's ability to think at times."

"Although few marijuana users develop dependence, it can do," the report states. "A distinctive marijuana withdrawal syndrome has been identified, but it is mild and short-lived."

Elhindi Al-Barazi, a junior accounting major, said he enjoyed the seminar and would like to see a pro-legalization student organization at A&M.

"I think it was a very interesting thing to see here, because of a conservative campus," Al-Barazi said. "If marijuana remains illegal, I feel that alcohol and tobacco should be illegal as well."

Allied Health Adviser Lt. Karstadt of the Office of Professional School Advising helped facilitate the event.

"I like the idea of decriminalizing marijuana," she said. "It should be at least on par with alcohol."

After the broadcast, a debate was scheduled for the student center with moderators Lt. Dan Jones, the College Station Police Department and Director of Informatics for Medical Education Gale G. Hammig at the A&M Learning Resources and Medical Sciences Library.

None of the students present spoke in favor of keeping marijuana illegal.

"I thought we had a really interesting debate at a conservative school," Karstadt said. "I was surprised at the turnout at the liberal nature of opinions put forth."

She said the debate was advertised by medical students, but the people who attended weren't on the list. News of the debate had spread by word of mouth.

"They would have had a much higher turnout if more people knew about it," Al-Barazi said.

The program was the first installment of a five-part series "Dimensions and Directions in Health: Choices in the 21st Century" produced by Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, the Two-Year College and National Collegiate Honor Council.

It was broadcast to 385 colleges across the nation and facilitated on the A&M campus by the Office of Honors Programs and Academic Scholarships and Office of Professional School Advising.



STUDENT BONFIRE

Saturday, November 22, 2003

8 PM

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www.studentbonfire.com

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