The Art of Making a Referral to Counseling
University Counseling Services
California State University Northridge
18111 Nordhoff Street
Bayramian Hall, Room 520
(818) 677-2366 • TTY (818) 677-7838

Check Your Attitude and Understanding about Seeking Counseling
- Remember the majority of people do not want to go to counseling.
- Counseling is often perceived as a sign of weakness.
- The process to decide to seek counseling is a personal decision and often is developed over time...most people don’t go to counseling until they are ready. …unless they feel coerced or mandated.

Be Informative without Applying Any Pressure
- Let the student know about the services with as much detail as possible.
- If you are comfortable giving a few names that might be helpful.
- Suggest they can try it out, without making a commitment.
- Remind them of confidentiality.
- Let them know they need not tell you if they made an appointment.

Self-Disclose Appropriately
- If you are comfortable sharing a personal story of your going to counseling or knowing a close friend…… that may be useful.
- Remember you don’t need to share the details of why you went to counseling, only your process of deciding to go and how you felt about the helpfulness.

Let Go
- You have done your job. No need to applaud yourself if the person made an appointment and no need to be critical of yourself if the person did not make an appointment.
- Remember going to counseling is a very personal decision that often is a process that involves time and courage.