



# **GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT COOPER UNION**

Presented by the Student Care Team 2024-2025



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## Emergency Contacts:

**NYC Well**  
1.888.692.9355

**National Crisis Text Line**  
Text HOME to 741741

**National Suicide and Crisis  
Lifeline**  
Text 988

**The Trevor Project**  
1.866.488.7386

**Trans Lifeline's Hotline**  
1.877.565.8860

**Telus Health & First Stop Health**  
Via Telus Health App

## Dear Cooper Union Students,

We on the Student Care Team know life as a college student can be complex and made even more so when coping with mental health issues. Sometimes the confluence of personal, relational, and systemic issues can be too overwhelming to navigate on one's own. Plus, there's no one-size-fits-all prescription for wellness; what's helpful for one person can be very different from what's helpful for another.

With this guide we want to introduce ourselves and let you know we are here to support you! Included is some basic information about the mental health resources available to you during your time at Cooper Union, many of which are free. You will also find answers to some frequently asked questions about therapy and read insights from other Cooper Union students. We hope it makes reaching out a little bit easier and reminds you that whatever you are going through, you are not alone.

If you have any questions or just want to talk, please don't hesitate to contact us!

With warmth,

### **The Student Care Team**

Alex Fischer, Director of Student Care

Elizabeth London, LCAT, ATR-BC Student Care Coordinator

Cassandra Jolicoeur, LMSW, Student Care Coordinator



# Student Care Team

Who we are and what we do

The Student Care Team supports students with medical and mental health issues and plans student wellbeing programs throughout the year.

Our services also include:

- Cooper's free counseling program
- Help finding physical or mental healthcare
- Telus Health—Cooper Union's 24/7 telehealth app for physical or mental healthcare
- Support with medical leaves of absence, disability and medical accommodations.

Our offices are located on the 3rd floor of the Residence Hall building and are open from Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm. We can be reached at [studentcare@cooper.edu](mailto:studentcare@cooper.edu).



## Alex Fischer

*Director of Student Care and Support*  
[alex.fischer@cooper.edu](mailto:alex.fischer@cooper.edu)

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As the Director of Student Care, Alex focuses on overall student support and wellbeing. He works closely with the Student Care Coordinators, oversees student disability support, student illness and medical concerns including medical leaves of absence, and works closely with students, faculty, and staff to ensure that students are connected to the care and support they may need. Alex is originally from Missouri and has lived and worked in New York City for 10 years now, previously working at Fordham University as the Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Residential Life.



## Elizabeth London *LICAT, ATR-BC*

*Student Care Coordinator*  
[elizabeth.london@cooper.edu](mailto:elizabeth.london@cooper.edu)

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Elizabeth is a licensed psychotherapist who meets with students for individual counseling sessions and plans mental health and wellness programs throughout the academic year. Her approach is holistic, compassionate and direct. She aims to create an environment where students can feel comfortable to be themselves, share their struggles, gain understanding, and recover their innate gifts and sense of resilience. Elizabeth also works with students to connect with any additional resources that may be helpful.



## Cassandra Jolicoeur *LMSW*

*LMSW Student Care Coordinator*  
[cassandra.jolicoeur@cooper.edu](mailto:cassandra.jolicoeur@cooper.edu)

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Cassandra provides students with emotional support, helps get students connected to care, and manages Cooper's offsite counseling program. She helps students with a variety of concerns, such as anxiety, depression, grief, trauma, complex relationship dynamics, and unhelpful thoughts and behavior patterns. In her work, she uses a strengths-based, student-centered approach that focuses on each students' goals and unique journeys. Additionally, she believes in mindfulness practice, radical self-acceptance, and the healing power of rest to restore balance to the soul. With warmth, understanding, and compassion (and sometimes a bit of humor), she helps students discover themselves to gain understanding of their emotions and how they move through the world.



# Mental Health Resources

## Free Mental Health Resources Available through Cooper Union

### Student Care Coordinators:

Cassandra Jolicoeur and Elizabeth London are both licensed psychotherapists who meet with students to provide confidential, emotional support and help connect students with long-term care if needed. The best way to reach them is through email at [studentcare@cooper.edu](mailto:studentcare@cooper.edu) or by calling the office of Student Affairs at 212.353.4130, generally open M-F from 9am–5pm.

### Short Term Counseling Services:

Cooper Union provides FREE short-term therapy for enrolled students through a network of diverse New York-based partner counselors. The exact number of sessions will be determined by you and your provider, but a rough estimate is between 6–12 sessions. You can view our available counselors as well as their contact information, area of focus, and practice style at [cooper.edu/students/studentaffairs/health/counseling/services](http://cooper.edu/students/studentaffairs/health/counseling/services). Please note that they each have independent schedules, and their availability may vary. When searching for a provider, we recommend reaching out to several therapists directly to see who has availability. Just let them know that you are a Cooper Union student and the therapist will guide you from there.

### Telus Health & First Stop Health:

Talk Therapy, Medical Visits, Psychiatry, Health Coaching and so much more! Cooper Union students have access to FREE, confidential telehealth appointments through the Telus Health & First Stop Health apps. It offers 24/7 access to visits for physical health issues, both immediate and ongoing mental health support, psychiatry, and health coaching. To access care, just download the Telus Health & First Stop Health apps, search for Cooper Union, and claim your account. You do not need to use health insurance, and there is no cost to use this service for Cooper students.

Students can find instructions and more information about Telus Health & First Stop Health by visiting [www.cooper.edu/telushealth](http://www.cooper.edu/telushealth) or emailing our staff at [telus@cooper.edu](mailto:telus@cooper.edu).

For all healthcare services outside of Telus Health & First Stop Health, students are responsible for any charges. Students should use their health insurance and should check with their insurance company to verify coverage and costs prior to engaging in care.

Below is a comprehensive list and description of the free mental health services that Cooper Union offers to enrolled students, along with resources outside of Cooper Union through your insurance or private pay. If you have any questions about connecting with these resources don't hesitate to reach out to us: [studentcare@cooper.edu](mailto:studentcare@cooper.edu).

## Mental Health Resources Outside of Cooper Union

### Psychiatry Resources:

Though Cooper Union is not affiliated with any psychiatry providers, we recommend using either of the following platforms when looking for psychiatric support for diagnoses and ongoing medication management. They accept a wide variety of insurances and typically have little to no wait time for appointments.

- [Talkiatry.com](http://Talkiatry.com)
- [Mindful.care](http://Mindful.care)

You can also search on [psychologytoday.com](http://psychologytoday.com) for psychiatrists who take your insurance.

### Other Ways to Connect to a Therapist:

You can expand your search for a therapist using any of the directories below, which allow you to look for a provider based on your location and health insurance type. There are additional filters that allow you to search by provider specialization, therapeutic style, gender, race, ethnicity, and more

- [Zocdoc.com](http://Zocdoc.com)
- [Psychologytoday.com](http://Psychologytoday.com)
- [Zencare.co](http://Zencare.co)

# Low-Cost Counseling Services in New York

If you are unable to connect with a therapist using your insurance and would like to work with someone beyond the short-term therapy provided by Cooper Union, there are still many low-cost options available. Below is a list of providers who either offer sliding scale rates and/or accept a wide range of health insurance plans, including Medicaid. Whenever connecting with a new provider, make sure to confirm with them what your financial responsibility will be before beginning treatment.

## Accepts Insurance and Sliding Scale

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**Callen-Lorde**  
[callen-lorde.org/behavioral-health](http://callen-lorde.org/behavioral-health)

**The Door**  
[door.org/programs-services/counseling](http://door.org/programs-services/counseling)

**The Institute for Family Health**  
[institute.org/health-care/locations/manhattan](http://institute.org/health-care/locations/manhattan)

**William Alanson White Institute**  
[wawhite.org/clinical-services](http://wawhite.org/clinical-services)

**National Institute for the Psychotherapies**  
[niptherapy.org](http://niptherapy.org)

## Offers Sliding Scale

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**Greene Clinic (Brooklyn)**  
[greeneclinic.com/services](http://greeneclinic.com/services)

**The Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies**  
[cmps.edu/Therapy](http://cmps.edu/Therapy)

**IHI Therapy Center (Institute for Human Identity)**  
[www.ihitherapy.org](http://www.ihitherapy.org)  
Specializations: LGBTQ+-affirming mental health care

**Manhattan Psychoanalysis**  
[manhattanpsychoanalysis.com/clinicalservices](http://manhattanpsychoanalysis.com/clinicalservices)

## Accepts Insurance

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**Karen Horney Clinic**  
[karenhorneyclinic.org](http://karenhorneyclinic.org)

**Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Study Center**  
[ppsc.org/treatment-services-1](http://ppsc.org/treatment-services-1)

**Rose Hill Psychological Services**  
[rosehillpsychological.com/therapy/#individual](http://rosehillpsychological.com/therapy/#individual)

## Free Services

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**NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health)**  
[naminycmetro.org](http://naminycmetro.org)



# Specialized Mental Health Resources

## BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) Resources

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**Translatinx Network**  
[translatinxnetwork.org](http://translatinxnetwork.org)

**Therapy for Black Girls**  
[therapyforblackgirls.com](http://therapyforblackgirls.com)

**The Loveland Foundation**  
[thelovelandfoundation.org](http://thelovelandfoundation.org)

**Our Kitchen Table**  
[kitchentablehealing.com](http://kitchentablehealing.com)

**National Queer & Trans Therapists of Color Network**  
[nqttcn.com/en](http://nqttcn.com/en)

**Black Men Heal**  
[blackmenheal.org](http://blackmenheal.org)

**Asian Clinic Treatment Services (ACTS) at CCM**  
[ccmny.com/mental-health-services/asian-clinic-services/](http://ccmny.com/mental-health-services/asian-clinic-services/)

## LGBTQ Resources

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**The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center**  
[gaycenter.org](http://gaycenter.org)

**Identity House**  
[identityhouse.org](http://identityhouse.org)

**Callen Lorde**  
[callen-lorde.org/transhealth](http://callen-lorde.org/transhealth)  
(medical care and counseling)

**The Gender & Sexuality Therapy Center**  
[gstherapycenter.com](http://gstherapycenter.com)

**Realization Center Inc**  
[realizationcenternyc.com/lgbt-program](http://realizationcenternyc.com/lgbt-program)

The resources listed below all accept different forms of payment. Please contact them individually to find out if they accept your insurance or offer sliding scale rates. Also, if they do not have open availability when you reach out, we suggest asking them for a list of referrals.

## Eating Disorder Resources

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**The Renfrew Center of New York City**  
[renfrewcenter.com/locations/new-york-ny/](http://renfrewcenter.com/locations/new-york-ny/)

**Balance Eating Disorder Treatment Center**  
[balancedtx.com](http://balancedtx.com)

**Monte Nido Eating Disorder Center of Manhattan**  
[montenido.com](http://montenido.com)

**Center of Excellence in Eating and Weight Disorders**  
[mountsinai.org/locations/eating-weight-disorders](http://mountsinai.org/locations/eating-weight-disorders)

## Substance Abuse Resources

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**New York Center For Living**  
[centerforliving.org](http://centerforliving.org)

**Realization Center Inc**  
[realizationcenternyc.com](http://realizationcenternyc.com)

**The Second Wind**  
[thesecondwind.com](http://thesecondwind.com)

**Parallax Center, Inc.**  
[parallaxcenter.com](http://parallaxcenter.com)



# FAQ about Therapy and Counseling

## "How do I know if I should go see a therapist?"

There are as many varied reasons for seeing a therapist as there are people in the world. Some begin therapy when they're struggling and in emotional pain of one form or another, or working through specific issues, like addiction or conflicted relationships. But others may not have such clear goals and are more focused on deepening their understanding of themselves. There's no wrong reason to go to therapy; it's a confidential space that just for you.

That being said, not everyone feels comfortable or is interested in talking to a therapist, and there are other ways to find emotional support that may work better for you. *However, if you're struggling, especially if you notice an impact on your health, sleep, relationships, ability to do the things you want to do, and your outlook about yourself and the future, it's really important to reach out for help.* Our student care coordinators are here to help you explore whether therapy might be the right thing for you at this time.

## "I want to see a therapist, but I don't know how to get started or what to say when I reach out to them."

Reaching out to a new therapist can be intimidating because it's such a personal process, but it's a lot like making an appointment anywhere else.

The first step is to collect a list of 2-5 different therapists who seem like they could be a good fit for you. Something about them or their profile sparks your interest. It's good to cast a wide net in the beginning because therapists may not have availability, and it can be difficult to align schedules. After you've made your list, you can either call or email and give some information about yourself. Often people feel they need to give a lot of personal information in the initial outreach, but you can keep it short. The most important pieces are logistical, like your availability and your insurance. Other than that, feel free to share what you would like about your identity, background, and what you are hoping to work on in therapy. You can also ask if the therapist is available for a brief phone call or video chat (think 10 minutes or so) to

see if it feels like a good fit. Here's a sample email you might send to one of the therapists in the Cooper Union network:

*Hi, my name is (your name) and I am a freshman engineering student at Cooper Union. I've been dealing with a lot of anxiety and I'm hoping to see a therapist on a weekly basis. I'm available on Mondays any time but 2-5pm, Wednesdays after 3pm, and before 1pm on Thursdays. I prefer to see someone in person but I'm open to virtual sessions. Do you have any availability at those times? If so, can we set up a brief phone consultation to see if it's a good fit? Also, I'm not sure if I'll want to continue therapy beyond the free sessions offered by Cooper Union, but just in case I do, I was wondering if you take my insurance (name insurance). Thanks!*

## "What kinds of questions should I ask a potential therapist to know if they're a good fit for me?"

While it might feel awkward, therapists are prepared (and expect) to answer questions about how they work, their background and training, their levels of experience working with different issues and populations, and any logistical questions you may have about scheduling and payment. Here are some questions you may want to ask in an initial consultation with a therapist:

**Logistics:** Do you accept insurance? If not, what are your fees? / Do you offer sliding scale rates? / When do you have availability? / What is your cancellation policy? / Are you available for in-person sessions or zoom sessions?

**Approach and Practice Style:** What's your approach to therapy? / I would like to work on (fill in the blank). Is this something you can help me with? Do you have experience working with people from xyz background/identity? / What is your outlook on xyz issue?

**"I have spoken to Elizabeth, Cassandra, or an offsite therapist that works with Cooper Union. Does that mean the school, my teachers or my parents are aware of my personal situation?"**

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Whenever you connect with ANY licensed therapist, including Cassandra and Elizabeth, who work with the school, and including all Cooper affiliated therapists, the information you share with them is totally confidential. This means that anything you do or say stays between you and the therapist unless you've given explicit permission otherwise. The only exception to this is if the therapist determines that someone's safety is at risk. In that case a therapist might have to break confidentiality to make sure that you or someone else receives immediate support.

A few other things to note: When you work with a Cooper Union affiliated therapist for free short-term therapy, the provider will let the school know the dates of service they saw you for billing purposes. Separately, if you are using insurance to pay for therapy, depending on your plan, there is a chance that your parents or guardians will see that you have been to a certain provider. Your parents or guardians will NOT see if you use the free short-term sessions provided by Cooper Union or if you speak to someone using the Telus app.

**"I'm worried about a friend. I want to share this with someone, but I am afraid of getting them in trouble. What should I do?"**

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If you are ever worried about a member of our community for any reason, please let someone know and remember that conversations with our Student Care Coordinators, Cassandra and Elizabeth, are confidential. That means if you are worried about someone due to alcohol or drug use, you can share this information with them, without fear of it leading to punitive consequences for the person of concern. Simply send an email to [studentcare@cooper.edu](mailto:studentcare@cooper.edu). This email should include the person of concern's first and last name and a brief summary of why you are concerned about them. One of our coordinators will reach out and say, "Someone in our community let me know that you might need some support." They will also provide resources and offer the individual a chance to connect and talk.

**"Does the student health insurance cover therapy sessions?"**

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Yes. The student insurance is Cigna and does provide coverage for therapy sessions. If you have a question about whether a therapist accepts your insurance, you can ask them if they accept Cigna or are in-network with Cigna (it means the same thing). It's always a good idea to double check your coverage before scheduling an appointment.

**"I have questions about the student health insurance. Who can I contact?"**

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Though the Student Care team is available to help you connect to a provider, they do not have access to the student health insurance accounts. For any questions regarding the student health insurance (including enrolling or waiving, cost, coverage, or copays, etc.) please contact the health insurance company directly. Usually, the number is on the back of your insurance card.



**"I've seen my therapist once or twice but I'm not sure if I want to keep working with them. How do I know if I should stay with it or look for a new therapist?"**

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Feeling fully at ease with a new therapist can take some time, and it's normal to feel a little uncomfortable at first, especially if you've never been in therapy before. Some initial indicators that it's worth giving it more time with a new therapist are:

- you notice you're curious or eager to speak with them again
- there's something the therapist "gets" about you
- you are beginning to understand yourself or your situation in new ways
- you feel you can be honest
- you feel accepted and that you can be yourself

**"There are so many kinds of therapists. How do I know which is best for me? What do all those letters after their names mean?"**

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There are many different mental health licenses and therapeutic approaches. However, research has repeatedly shown that beyond any specific theory or technique, it's the relationship between therapist and client that ultimately makes therapy effective. Meaning, more important than anything else, look for someone you connect to. If you are curious to learn more about the different schools of therapeutic thought, [psychologytoday.com](http://psychologytoday.com) is a great resource to explore the basics of different approaches.

Below is a list of the most common therapeutic licenses you'll find in New York state. The large majority of these will be well versed in talk therapy but may incorporate different approaches or specialize in different areas.

LMSW: Licensed Master Social Worker  
LCSW: Licensed Clinical Social Worker  
LMHC: Licensed Mental Health Counselor  
LCAT: Licensed Creative Arts Therapist  
LMFT: Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist  
LP: Licensed Psychoanalyst  
PSYD: Doctor of Psychology  
PHD: Psychologist (PHD may also refer to a doctorate of other professions)

**"What is the difference between a psychologist and psychiatrist?"**

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In very simple terms, a psychiatrist can prescribe medication, provide medication management and less frequently, may also provide psychotherapy. A psychologist only provides psychotherapy and cannot prescribe medication or provide medication management.

**"I don't really like my current therapist. What should I do? Should I ghost them?"**

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If you are having difficulty with your therapist or feel like it's not helping, there are a few things to consider. First of all, it's always a good idea to talk to your therapist and tell them how you feel. Having an open and honest conversation, and asking for what you need may help the therapist better understand you and could be a powerful growth opportunity for you both. Often, dynamics that are difficult for people in their personal lives show up in the therapeutic relationship itself. Working through those challenges in therapy can be a powerful catalyst for change.

However, if you've given it some time and your feelings haven't changed, of course it's OK to look for someone else. But it's important to let your therapist know. Amongst other reasons, if your therapist is expecting you and you no-show, they may be concerned for your safety and/or may charge you for a missed session. If you don't know what to say, just say "I think it's best to stop working together. I don't want to schedule any sessions moving forward." If you need help finding a new therapist, feel free to reach out to Cassandra or Elizabeth for assistance in connecting to someone new.

# Insights about Therapy from Cooper Union Students

"I've found that therapy is best with someone you are not afraid to express yourself with. Find a therapist who you trust.."

– Senior Art Student

"Talking through your struggles with an outside perspective helps you to rationalize and legitimize your feelings. I have had moments where I thought I was "crazy" or the situation was not important enough to stress over. However, after talking to a therapist, I better understood where these problems were rooting from and how to overcome them. And most importantly, how to heal and avoid future triggers."

– Freshman Architecture Student

"Therapy has helped me to be patient with the journey of healing and learning more about myself. Also to be open to change and trust myself".

– Junior Art Student

"I have been in therapy consistently for a variety of reasons, ranging from anxiety and depression to interpersonal issues. It's helped me tremendously to both have someone to talk to who won't judge me or make me feel like I'm oversharing. I've learned a lot through the process about my mental health diagnoses and why I feel the ways that I do.

The most important things that I can recommend for someone beginning therapy is to 1. find a therapist that you get along with (not all therapists have a style of therapy or a personality that you mesh well with); 2. find someone you're willing to disagree with and who will challenge you; and 3. it helps if they have a similar sense of humor to you."

– Sophomore Engineering Student



**"I have been having sessions with a therapist covered by the health insurance and I am very happy with him. He specializes in queer clients and has helped me find ways to deal with my issues now while also talking about some past traumas. It's also helped me slow down and enjoy my time here as an exchange student without stressing too much. I think for anyone starting you just need to be honest and open and ready to actively work on whatever might be bothering you."**

*– Art Exchange Student*

**"Therapy has helped me learn to process my emotions and thoughts, and to stay present and with various real-world problem-solving skills. If I could say anything about therapy, it's that it takes a little bit of time to find the right therapist. It's sort of like shopping - you have to keep looking until you find the right fit."**

*– Junior Engineering Student*

**"What really helped me was having someone outside of my life to talk to about anything on my mind with no repercussions."**

*– Freshman Art Student*

**"Therapy has made a world of a difference in both my academic and personal life. I learned that I am the hardest on myself and how that affects my academics. It also made me realize that rest is deserved, not earned - something that I think a lot of Cooper students could struggle with. I think something to know before seeing a therapist is there's never a "wrong" time. There is always something to learn about yourself from who you are now all the way back to your childhood. Therapy is the most beneficial and rewarding when you are the most open and comfortable with your therapist."**

*– Masters Engineering Student*

# Crisis Management

## **NYC Well** 1.888.692.9355

Students seeking nonemergency support may contact NYC Well. NYC Well is a connection to free, confidential mental health support. Through this service, you can speak to a counselor via phone, text or chat and get access to mental health and substance misuse services, in more than 200 languages, 24/7/365. To connect with NYC Well, you can call 1.888.692.9355 (1.888.NYC.WELL), text "Well" to 65173, or chat with someone online.

## **National Crisis Text Line** Text HOME to 741741

Another resource is the National Crisis Text Line. To use this free service, text HOME to741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime, about any type of crisis. Crisis Text Line serves anyone, in any type of crisis, providing access to free, 24/7 support and information via a medium people already use and trust: text.

## **National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** Text 988

The National and Crisis Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Lifeline provides 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Their Lifeline Crisis Chat can be reached at 988

If you or someone you know is experiencing a serious illness or a mental health crisis, please call 911 or visit the emergency room nearest to you. There are resources available throughout New York City.

## **The Trevor Project** 1.866.488.7386

The Trevor Project operates the Trevor Lifeline 24/7 which provides support for LGBTQ+ young people in crisis, feeling suicidal, or in need of a safe and judgement-free place to talk. You can connect with the Trevor Lifeline by calling 1.866.488.7386.

## **Trans Lifeline's Hotline** 1.877.565.8860

Trans Lifeline's Hotline is a peer support service run by trans people, for trans and questioning callers. Operators are located all over the U.S. and Canada, and all are trans-identified. If you are in crisis or just need someone to talk to, even if it's just about whether or not you're trans, please call. The Lifeline is available 10 am–4 am EST. Volunteers may be available during off hours. You can connect with the Trans Lifeline by calling 1.877.565.8860

## **Telus Health & First Stop Health** Via Telus Health App

Cooper Union students have access to FREE, confidential telehealth appointments through the Telus Health & First Stop Health apps. It offers 24/7 access to visits for physical health issues, both immediate and ongoing mental health support, psychiatry, and health coaching. To access care, just download the Telus Health & First Stop Health apps, search for Cooper Union, and claim your account. You do not need to use health insurance, and there is no cost to use this service for Cooper students. Students can find instructions and more information about Telus Health & First Stop Health by visiting [www.cooper.edu/telushealth](http://www.cooper.edu/telushealth) or emailing our





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