

Penn State Offers Free Psych Counseling as Trump Inauguration Nears

Safe spaces, trigger warnings, participation awards and now pre-presidential inauguration coddling. [The Daily Collegian](#) reports that [Pennsylvania State University](#) is offering students free psychological and counseling services “in this time of transition.”

Yes, you heard it right, folks: Penn State is launching a special campaign to help millennial students cope with the stress, anxiety and general distress they feel while standing on the precipice of Donald Trump’s first term as president.

Penn State [Student Affairs’ Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) released the statement to the student newspaper. In the statement, [Mary Anne Knapp](#), a clinical social worker and CAPS outreach/consolation coordinator, urges Penn State students to avail themselves of these vital services.

I don’t recall Penn State launching a similar campaign in advance of Barack Obama’s inauguration. Nevertheless, the university denies that the occasion for publicizing these services is in any way motivated by partisanship.

“Regardless of political position, taking care of yourself is essential to your academic success,” Knapps continues. “CAPS encourages all students to remain committed to their causes, empowered to share their opinions in a healthy and productive manner, and speak their voices in the democratic spirit.”

According to [Dr. Peter Crabb](#), Professor of Psychology at [Penn State Hazleton](#), such services are unlikely to benefit students.

“Offering students psychological counseling as a fix for one of the most dangerous political situations the U. S. has ever faced is frankly Orwellian. Students who are concerned about the president-elect should get out in the streets and let their universities and their communities know that they are afraid and that they want a different future. They do not need soothing psychobabble.”

In the past, Penn State’s sensitivity to student distress has been selective. The institution was recently [smacked with a record \\$2.4 million Clery Act fine](#) for failing to report a series of crimes on campus, including child rapes committed by former assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky and sexual assaults against female students by the school’s football players.

[Jake New at InsideHigerEd reports](#) a case in which Penn State’s [disgraced former head football coach Joe Paterno](#) protected a bunch of bellicose football players from being disciplined.

When it comes to child-sex-abuse cases and student-on-student violence (as opposed to the inauguration of a populist Republican president), Penn State has more of a look-the-other-way attitude.

As I’ve [previously noted](#), this general trend toward coddling young adults is disturbing. It makes them over-dependent on parents, teachers and school administrators. Instead of giving young people the room to experience and cope with challenging circumstances on their own, colleges and universities place them in virtual cocoons (e.g. so-called ‘safe spaces’), protecting them from life’s ugly realities, such as sexism, racism, homophobia and, yes, conservative politics.

Penn State students have access to counseling and psychological services throughout their time at university. However, using Trump’s upcoming inauguration as an excuse to launch a special coddling campaign is disappointing. It

shields millennials from having to make their own choices about how to handle this period of political transition. If they want to get out in the streets and protest, then give them the space. If they want to cheer for our new president, then let them.

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