

## COUNSELING CENTER

### Important Information for Clients

#### INITIAL CONSULTATION

During your first visit at the Counseling Center you and the clinician will decide how the Counseling Center can best meet your needs. Various services may be recommended (e.g. individual or group counseling, referral support, on-line, etc.) or you may be referred to a more appropriate campus and/or community resource.

#### WHAT TO EXPECT

- » The clinician you see at the initial consultation may not be the clinician to whom you are assigned for ongoing counseling.
- » Individual counseling services are based on a brief treatment model in which you and your clinician will develop clear, specific treatment goals. The estimated number of sessions will be discussed with your assigned clinician.
- » Appointments are typically scheduled every 2 to 3 weeks. While there are no “set” number of individual sessions for each client, the average is about 4 sessions.
- » Individual counseling sessions typically last 50 minutes; group sessions typically last 90 minutes.
- » In order to serve as many students as possible, our brief model is outlined in our Scope of Practice which is available for your review.
- » Texas State Counseling Center is a training facility; therefore, your clinician may be a doctoral or master’s graduate-level trainee. For quality assurance and supervision purposes, trainees must digitally record all counseling sessions. Recordings are confidential and are erased after supervision is completed.

#### HYBRID SERVICES

The Counseling Center provides enrolled students that reside in Texas the opportunity to participate in services via two modalities, in-person or by Telemental Health (TMH). TMH refers to counseling sessions that occur via

phone or confidential video platform. For students residing outside of Texas, the Counseling Center can provide only brief consultation and support planning due to state licensing requirements. The clinicians at the Counseling Center will provide modality options that best fit your needs. The modality may change during the course of your counseling. Each modality has different requirements that are outlined in the informed consent provided prior to establishing counseling services.

#### ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT

Due to the heavy demand for individual counseling and out of respect and fairness to other students who wish to receive services, you must call 512.245.2208 to cancel appointments at least 1 day (24 hours) in advance. Missing appointments negatively impacts access to services for all students. The following are criteria that constitute a “no show”: Missing your appointment, failing to cancel at least 2 hours prior, or arriving 20 minutes late.

If you no show 2 appointments, we are unable to keep any scheduled appointments or schedule another appointment for the remainder of the semester. You may request referral information. You may be eligible for counseling the next semester in which you are enrolled.

To protect the health and wellness of the Counseling Center staff and other students, we strongly encourage clients who are feeling ill to call 512-245-2208 to cancel their appointment or request to proceed using TMH. Cancellations due to medical symptoms will not be counted towards the attendance policy.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS

Federal and state regulations require that we explain your privacy rights and how we maintain the confidentiality of your information. All aspects of your participation in counseling at the Counseling Center, including the scheduling of appointments, content of counseling sessions,

all contents of counseling records, and outcomes of counseling, are confidential as required by federal and state law.

The Counseling Center maintains a confidential record of your counseling services and you have access to your own file only. This record is separate from your academic record and consists of an electronic file. All parts of your record are highly secured and are protected by the same confidentiality and privacy laws. The Counseling Center operates as an agency made up of many clinicians. You are a client of the agency, allowing for consultation about your services between staff. In addition, to provide the most effective and comprehensive services, Counseling Center clinical staff may consult with the providers in the Student Health Center when the student has been or will be referred from one center to the other.

Only professional counseling staff have access to clinical progress notes, test data, or other clinical information in your file. The Counseling Center retains ownership of all physical records and is responsible for establishing policies regarding the retention of counseling records. At this time, we retain counseling records for 7 years after service is terminated. We do not release your information to anyone without your written permission, except when required and allowed by law.

#### EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY

- » Texas law requires that clinicians who learn of or have strong suspicions of child abuse or neglect report this information to Child Protective Services or law enforcement personnel. This pertains specifically to knowledge of abuse or neglect of a client who is younger than 18 years of age; any child younger than 18 years of age suspected of being at risk of abuse or neglect; or abuse or neglect by a client toward a person who is younger than 18 years of age.
- » Texas law requires abuse or neglect of elderly or disabled persons to be reported to the

proper authorities.

- » If a clinician assesses that you pose an imminent danger to yourself or others, the clinician may do what is necessary to protect life within the limits of the law. Appropriate university officials and staff (e.g. University Police, vice president for Student Affairs, residence hall director, etc.) who bear responsibility or may incur liability for the welfare of Texas State students may be notified about the student's situation. Only university officials and staff who have a "need to know" to protect the safety of students will receive this information.
- » A subpoena or court order can require the release of records kept at the Counseling Center or require a clinician to give testimony at a court hearing.
- » Texas law requires a clinician to report client abuse or sexual exploitation by a previous therapist to the appropriate county district attorney and licensing board. Client anonymity will be preserved if requested.
- » Nonidentifiable demographics and statistical client data may be used for research studies.
- » Or other circumstances as required or allowed by law.

## STUDENT RIGHTS

In addition to confidentiality, as a Counseling Center client you have certain rights, which include the right to:

- » inquire about the professional credentials and experience of your clinician.
- » ask questions about any procedures used in counseling, including your clinician's usual techniques and philosophy of counseling.
- » refuse a particular treatment method or psychological testing. If your clinician feels that these are essential to your counseling, the issue must be resolved to your mutual satisfaction.
- » have any psychological test results interpreted and discussed with you.
- » ask your clinician to discuss your progress and future counseling plans with you during any session.
- » discuss with your clinician any concerns or

dissatisfactions you have about your counseling experience.

- » request referral to another clinician or an outside agency if you wish to obtain an additional opinion or believe you would work better with another person. You need to discuss this with your clinician if it is an issue for you.
- » terminate counseling at any time. Termination is an important part of counseling, and it will be helpful to you to discuss with your clinician your reasons for terminating.
- » be free of discrimination on the basis of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, socioeconomic status, or other protected categories while receiving psychological services.



- » be treated with respect and consideration and have your clinician convey this respect by keeping your appointments or letting you know ahead of time if a schedule change is necessary; by giving you his/her complete attention during sessions; and by providing you with the most effective counseling he/she can.
- » report a complaint to the director of training and/or the director of the Counseling Center if you believe your clinician has violated your rights or has behaved unethically.
- » be informed about how your health information may be used and legally disclosed outside the Counseling Center.
- » receive notice of authorized or legally required disclosure of your health information outside of the Counseling Center, unless prohibited by law.

- » request restrictions on the use and disclosure of your health information that is used for providing services to you.
- » inspect your counseling records in accordance with Texas law, and to request an amendment to your record when you believe a record to be in error.
- » file a complaint if you believe your privacy, according to federal and state laws, has been violated.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- » Take an active role in the counseling process. This involves openly and honestly sharing your thoughts, feelings and concerns, including your feelings about counseling and your clinician. It may also involve outside work such as completing therapeutic assignments or reflecting upon issues discussed during your last session.
- » Keep your appointment. Otherwise call 24 hours in advance, or at least 2 hours prior, to cancel or reschedule your appointment.
- » Maintain the confidentiality of other students who use Counseling Center services.

## CLINICIAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Your clinician may exercise certain rights in the course of the counseling process. These include the:

- » right to seek consultation with other professionals regarding your treatment.
- » right to terminate or refer to another clinician or agency if your clinician feels his/her services may not be appropriate for you.
- » right to expect your active involvement and cooperation in the counseling process.
- » right to provide services only if you agree to disclose health information for the purpose of providing effective treatment.
- » right to deny a request for a counseling record amendment if the clinician did not originate the information or if the information is accurate and complete.
- » responsibility to uphold all student rights.