

Southern Connecticut State University



Counseling Services EN B 219

COUNSELING SERVICES AGREEMENT

Welcome to the SCSU Counseling Center. This handout summarizes important rights and responsibilities that you should know about our services; please take a few minutes to read it. Because the Counseling Center serves individuals with a wide range of concerns, some of this information may not be relevant to your particular situation; however, it is important that you read through this material. Should you have any questions about this handout, please feel free to discuss them with your intake counselor.

I. RIGHTS

Eligibility:

Matriculated students who are currently enrolled at the SCSU are eligible for a free and confidential counseling appointment. During this appointment, the student and counselor will discuss counseling options which may include individual or group counseling at this Center or a referral to comparable or more appropriate services in the community. Please note that the Counseling Center does not provide services that require court testimony/reports or involve legal proceedings. If we determine that your treatment needs required resources or competencies beyond what we can provide, we will assist with a referral to an appropriate mental health provider.

Counseling Services:

Your initial appointment with an intake counselor is for screening/assessment. This counselor may not be your permanent clinician. During this appointment, counseling options will be discussed and decided upon between the student and the counselor. At busy times during the semester, the Counseling Center may have a waiting list for ongoing services. Intake counselors will make every effort to estimate the amount of time before you are assigned a counselor. Our waiting list is generally managed on a first come, first served basis. If, however, you are placed on our waiting list and experience a crisis before you are assigned to a counselor, please contact our office immediately so that crisis intervention services can be arranged.

Respect:

The counselor will respect you as an individual and convey this respect by keeping appointments or contacting you if a change in time is necessary, giving you complete attention during sessions, avoiding interruptions during sessions, and providing you with the most effective counseling possible.

Confidentiality:

Information shared by you in a counseling session, or through testing, will be kept in strict confidence. The Counseling Center staff operates as a team in order to provide the best possible services to clients. As professionals we confer with each other within the agency. These consultations are for professional and/or training purposes only. Information will not be disclosed outside of the Counseling Center without your written permission, with the exception of the following:

1) Abuse of Children, the Elderly, or a Disabled/Incompetent Adult. If a staff member has reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 is being abused or neglected, s/he is legally obligated to report this situation to the appropriate state agency. The same conditions apply to the other aforementioned groups.

2) Imminent Harm to Self. If a staff member has reason to believe that you are in danger of physically harming yourself, and if you are unwilling or unable to follow treatment recommendations, s/he may have to make an your involuntary referral to a hospital and/or contact a family member or another person who may be able to help protect you.

3) Imminent Harm to Others. If a staff member has reason to believe that you are seriously threatening physical violence against another person (*Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California* 1976) and if s/he believes that you are an actual threat to the safety of another person, s/he may be required to take some action (such as contacting the police, notifying the other person, seeking involuntary hospitalization, or some combination of these actions) to insure that the other person is protected.

Please Note: Exceptions to confidentiality are extremely rare. However, if they should occur it is the Center's policy that, whenever possible, we will discuss with you any action that is being considered. Legally we are not obligated to seek your permission, especially if such a discussion would prevent us from securing your safety or the safety of others. If disclosure of confidential information does become necessary, we will release only the information necessary to protect your and/or another person's physical safety.

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II. RESPONSIBILITIES

Participation:

Your active participation in the counseling process is necessary for progress to be made. Counseling sessions typically last for 45-50 minutes. Your promptness for these sessions will allow you to take full advantage of your appointments. Once you have been assigned to a counselor, it is your responsibility to keep scheduled appointments. If an emergency arises, please cancel your appointment by calling the receptionist at the Center, preferably one day in advance. Please turn off cell phones and pagers while meeting with counselors.

No-Show Policy:

If you miss an appointment with your counselor and have not canceled it in advance, you are responsible for calling to reschedule an appointment or for informing the counselor that you are no longer interested in receiving services. Students who repeatedly miss or cancel will be at risk of losing services. You will be informed in writing prior to any termination of services and offered alternative resources.

E-mail Policy:

Some students choose to communicate with staff members via e-mail. Generally, our policy is to discourage the use of e-mail correspondence. Staff may not check e-mail on a regular basis and cannot guarantee the confidentiality of e-mail.

Concerns About Service:

Occasionally, some students may be dissatisfied with services they receive at the counseling center. If you would like to speak with someone about your dissatisfaction, we suggest you first express your concerns with your counselor. Otherwise, you may contact the Director of the center to address your concerns. If your concern is with the Director, please contact the Dean of Student Affairs.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

Your counselor may be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), or a senior graduate trainee under the supervision of the professional staff. We might seek your written consent to video or audiotape your counseling sessions to assist with graduate training. The tapes are confidential and erased after use. As an agency we conduct research regarding the effectiveness and quality of our services. As part of this effort, after counseling has ended we may ask clients to complete a brief evaluation questionnaire on a voluntary, anonymous basis.

If you have any questions regarding the above information, please discuss them with your intake counselor.

I have read the above material regarding rights and responsibilities of Counseling Center clients and understand its provisions. I understand that the results of counseling can be variable, and that the attainment of a positive outcome is dependent upon the effort expended by both myself and my counselor.

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____