Expanded Informed Consent

Eligibility
Counseling services are available to all currently enrolled part-time and full-time undergraduate and graduate students at the University. Consultation services are also available for faculty and staff.

Intake Interview
All students are scheduled for an initial intake interview with a Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) clinician. The purpose of the intake interview is to gather information about a student’s concerns, background information, pressures that may impact current problems, and goals for counseling. Frequently, the intake counselor is the person assigned to work with the student in weekly sessions.

Counseling Sessions
The CAPS uses a brief counseling model. Brief counseling has several important features: (a) the focus is on identifying specific and attainable goals, (b) attention is given primarily to the present rather than the past, and (c) both counselor and client are active in the process. For those who may require more intensive work, the CAPS can provide referral options that are available locally. A counseling session is typically 45-60 minutes in length and sessions are commonly scheduled once weekly. Clients who arrive late for their appointment will have a reduced amount of time in their session or may be required to reschedule.

Session Limits
The CAPS provides short-term counseling to discuss any personal concerns students may be facing and works with students to develop new ways of resolving problems. Most problems are resolved within eight sessions or less. There is no limit on the number of sessions a student can meet with their counselor, though a student may require more intensive or specialized treatment than the CAPS can provide. In that case, the counselor will assist the student in finding a local treatment provider who can better meet the particular needs.

Confidentiality
CAPS will release information from counseling sessions to outside parties only at the request of the client. Records are confidential and will not leave the CAPS unless there is an emergency situation. CAPS records are not kept as part of the educational record. We will not answer questions about any client from parents, family, friends, significant other, professors, employer or anyone else outside of the CAPS staff.

Parents and guardians are not contacted unless we have permission from the client or if there is a risk to the client’s safety (ie: suicide risk/attempt, emergency room evaluation and/or a threat to themselves or others.) If there is a risk, information may only be shared that aids in obtaining ongoing care and ensuring safety. In rare cases where there is a risk to the student or the community, the CAPS reserves the right to notify the Vice President of Student Affairs and/or Campus Police, especially if the student is an active danger to themselves and/or to others.

Record Storage
Counseling records and individual documents are maintained electronically on Titanium©, are password protected and accessible by CAPS staff only. Client records will be kept for at least seven (7) years after the date of the last contact with our department.

Testing Data
Raw data, such as answer sheets and test booklets, are protected by copyright and may only be released to trained clinicians. Assessment and testing data are provided in summary form and explained during the follow-up session.
Graduate Assistants and Interns
Graduate assistants and interns are actively receiving intensive training and often work with a smaller number of clients, allowing them to review and focus on treatment. Occasionally they may ask for a client’s permission to record a counseling session through audio and/or video. This is optional and clients would be asked to sign a release prior to the recorded session. Both audio and videotapes are erased after they are used in training the graduate student who recorded them.

Email
Email communication with members of the CAPS staff should be used in scheduling appointments only. We recognize the importance of email but, because it is not a secure medium of communication and our staff does not maintain 24-hour access to their email, it will not be used to discuss on-going treatment issues.

Groups
Some clients may also benefit from group counseling and we strive to offer a variety of support groups every semester. For most groups there is no limit to the number of sessions a student may attend at the CAPS.

Initial Session Guidelines
CAPS is committed to providing the best possible care to our clients. We are also a training facility for psychologists, counselors, and social workers in training. As a result you may meet with more than one staff member during your initial session. The staff members are bound by confidentiality, which means that what is said in session remains in session. There are a few exceptions to this rule:

1. Plans to harm self
2. Plans to harm specific others
3. Permission provided by the client
4. Abuse of a child, adult, or elderly person

At the end of the initial session you will be assigned to one therapist who will meet with you on an on-going basis. If you have any questions you are encouraged to ask them during the initial session.

Client Rights
- Review credentials of all CAPS staff members including but not limited to: education, experience and professional counseling certification and licensure(s).
- Request a particular counselor; male or female
- Terminate the counseling relationship at any time
- Have your conversations treated confidentially and be informed of any limitations on confidentiality in the counseling relationship.
- Ask questions about the counseling techniques and strategies used by a counselor
- Participate in setting goals and evaluating progress toward them

Client Responsibilities
- Please arrive on time for your counseling session appointment
- If unable to keep an appointment call our office to cancel at least 24 hours in advance.
- Actively participate in counseling by asking questions and staying involved
I, _____________________, a student at the University, agree to make every effort to keep ALL of my scheduled counseling appointments. If, due to illness or emergency, I am unable to attend my session, I will call CAPS to cancel the appointment, making every effort to give at least 24 hours’ notice. If I have multiple missed appointments, I am aware that limits may be imposed on counseling services available to me.

I have read and understand the above information and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it. I know agree to begin counseling treatment.

_________________________________  _________________________
Student Signature                          Date

_________________________________  _________________________
Witness Signature                          Date

**College Mental Health Research Project**

**Informed Consent**

CAPS participates in a national research project designed to improve our services and expand the knowledge about college student mental health. We participate by contributing anonymous, numeric data provided by those who use our services (and are 18 years old or older) to a database managed by researchers at Penn State University. Data is stripped of all personally identifying information and then combined with anonymous, numeric data from other colleges nationwide for statistical analysis. Because data cannot be linked to specific individuals, there are virtually no risks contributing data. With your permission, we would like to contribute anonymous, numeric data from the questionnaires you have just completed. Your decision is voluntary and will not affect the services you receive. If you have questions or concerns, you may contact (staff member in charge) at staff@university.edu or 555-555-5555.

Will you allow your anonymous, numeric responses to be contributed?

________ YES

________ NO

Please PRINT Your Name: