

East Central University

Student Counseling Center

Informed Consent

Client's Name: _____ Counselor's Name: _____

Counseling services offered by East Central University's Student Counseling Center are provided to students free of charge. **The number of counseling sessions is limited to 8 to 12 sessions per each Fall and Spring semester and 4 to 6 sessions during the Summer term.** Services include individual, couples, and group counseling. The Student Counseling Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. In emergency situations that occur outside of the Counseling Center's hours of operation, clients are encouraged to contact the ECU Police at 580-559-5555.

ECU Counseling Center's View of Counseling

The ECU Counseling Center views counseling as a collaborative partnership between the counselor and the client and strives to assist students in achieving their personal, academic, and career goals. Active participation in all aspects of counseling is both encouraged and expected of students. Clients who refuse to participate in the counseling process (i.e., Does not do homework assignments as required by the counselor or refuses a referral when the counselor feels referral would be in the best interest of the client) will be released as a client of the Counseling Center. Clients who are released for either of the above reasons will not be eligible for services.

What you can expect from counseling:

- **COUNSELING IS INDIVIDUALIZED and PERSONAL** - There are no simple prescriptions or cure-alls for personal difficulties. Help comes through a thoughtful look at your individual situation and through a growing understanding of your own ways of addressing problems. It is a common misconception that we give advice or impose a solution.
- **COUNSELING DOES NOT TAKE SIDES** - Our purpose is to impartially view situations and relationships and encourage growing understanding of the feelings of yourself and others and the reasons for your behavior. Our concern is not to determine who is right or wrong.
- **COUNSELING CAN BE EMOTIONALLY PAINFUL AND GROWTH PRODUCING** - At times, changes brought about by your efforts in counseling can cause you discomfort or anxiety. These feelings often accompany behavioral change, and are often a sign of progress. Discuss these reactions with your counselor.
- **YOU MAY NOT ALWAYS AGREE WITH YOUR COUNSELOR** - Sometimes you may not like what you hear from your counselor. To address unproductive behaviors, your counselor may give you feedback which is hard to hear but important in helping you look at your situation differently.
- **REFERRAL TO OUTSIDE AGENCY** - If your situation is beyond the scope of the services of the Counseling Center, or your individualized needs require a referral, you may be referred to see another mental health care professional. We will help you get the assistance you need by referring you to outside counseling services for additional evaluation, consultation or ongoing care.

What your Responsibilities are in Counseling

In the counseling partnership, it is expected you will keep your appointments. Please call to cancel or reschedule as soon as you know you will need to miss a session (**24 hrs. notice is appreciated**). If you are more than 15 minutes late, we recommend that you reschedule. Clients who frequently miss scheduled appointments will be given a referral to an outside counseling agency for services.

The length of sessions will be 50 minutes. How long you are in counseling to help you reach your goals will depend primarily upon the nature of your issues and the efforts you put into their solution. You are welcome to discontinue counseling at any time. We recommend you participate in a closure session if you decide to terminate counseling. A review of progress will be conducted periodically with your counselor. Referrals to other services and agencies are made as needed or requested.

Dual Relationships

Becoming a client of the counseling center might exclude you from certain functions or relationships with the Center in the future (e.g., graduate training, student worker, post-graduate employment). The appropriateness for such relationships in the future is determined on an individual basis, and several factors are considered. Be sure to clarify this with your counselor prior to entering counseling if you anticipate this being a concern.

Confidentiality and Its Limits

The nature of a counseling relationship requires a foundation built on trust. Therefore, information shared during sessions with a counselor is confidential. However, as professional counselors and counselors-in-training, we are bound by both ethical and legal limitations to confidentiality. The Student Counseling Center adheres to strict confidentiality guidelines set by national and state ethical codes/guidelines. You are guaranteed confidentiality except in the following situations:

- **Harm to yourself or others:** If a counselor believes that you are threatening serious bodily harm to another person, or threatening to harm yourself (e.g., suicide), your counselor is required to take necessary protective actions. This may include notifying the victim, the police, family members, or any other appropriate authorities.
- **Mandatory reporting:** Counselors are considered mandatory reporters in situations of stated or suspected abuse of a child, elderly person, or disabled person, and will need to file a report with the appropriate state agency.
- **Clerical considerations:** ECU Student Counseling Center's student secretary will be able to see your identifying information (name, ID number, cell phone number, email address) for the purposes of scheduling appointments. However, student workers do not have the access to your electronic medical records (no access is granted to be able to see forms you complete, progress notes, etc.).
Work-study students have signed a statement of confidentiality.
- **Counseling Interns:** ECU Student Counseling Center does not currently accept interns at our center. If we decided to start accepting interns, you would be asked if you would like to participate and you have the right to refuse.
- **If a court orders the release of information regarding your treatment:** When documents are court ordered to be released to the property of the court.
- **Client Consent for records to be released:** When the client has given consent to share specified information with identified persons.
- **If you are under 18 years of age:** Confidentiality is not guaranteed and consent from a parent or guardian is required to receive counseling.

Clients may also be asked to complete a release of information form to allow your counselor to consult with other specified individuals or organizations about your situation. This is only done with your signed consent and consent can be withdrawn at any time. We encourage you to ask questions of your counselor at any time for clarification.

By signing below, I agree that I have read and understand the above information, and agree to the terms as stated above. My counselor has adequately answered any questions I have at this point in time. I understand I have the right to terminate counseling at any time, and may ask for a list of referral sources. I understand that it is usually best for counselors and clients to make joint decisions about termination of treatment.

Client Signature

Date

Counselor Signature/Credentials

Date

Revised: 06/12/2024