

North Carolina A&T State University

Rights and Responsibilities of Students Using Counseling Services

Welcome to the Counseling Services! You have asked to see a Counselor and we will try to help you as quickly as possible. First you will see the Intake Counselor who will talk with you for a short time to determine the best way to help you. The Intake Counselor will assist you, assign you to a Counselor, or refer you to the appropriate service. If you are assigned to a Counselor you will be given an appointment (day & time) before you leave.

I. Rights

As a client of Counseling Services, you have certain rights, among which are the rights to respect, prompt service, and confidentiality.

a. Appointment:

We are committed to providing quality services to all enrolled students.

b. Prompt Service:

Counseling and Testing Center will schedule an initial appointment with a counselor as soon as possible, usually the same day. Failure to attend scheduled appointments, or repeated cancellations, may result in the closure of your case.

c. Respect:

The counselors in Counseling Services are expected to treat all clients with respect regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle, creed, or religion. Counselors may convey this respect by keeping appointments, by giving you complete attention during sessions, by avoiding interruptions during sessions, and by providing effective counseling.

d. Treatment Participation:

Counseling is a participatory activity. In order for it to be effective, you must actively participate in establishing and working on treatment goals, completing assignments, and discussing difficult issues. If the counselor feels that you are not actively participating in treatment, (s)he can discontinue sessions until you are more ready to focus on your treatment issues. Similarly, if you feel that the time is not right for you to focus on your treatment issues, you can discontinue treatment until a later time. If you choose to discontinue treatment prematurely, we ask that you inform your counselor of your intentions.

e. Confidentiality:

Counseling Services has been granted access to your records which contains identifiably information that is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"). Our access is granted solely for counseling purposes. We will not copy, store, disclose, or otherwise use such information except in the fulfillment of these responsibilities. We adhere to legal and ethical standards of our perspective professional organizations, American Counseling Association and the American Psychological Association, in maintaining confidentiality.

All counseling involves the sharing of sensitive, personal, and private information by clients with their counselors. Recognizing this, several federal and state laws, as well as a code of professional ethics, protect the confidentiality of information shared in counseling. In addition, no information about whether or not you are being seen at Counseling Services; or about your actual counseling, will be released to an outside agency or person without written permission from you. There are, however, a few carefully agreed upon exceptions to confidentiality which we believe you should know about before you begin counseling. These exceptions are as follows:

➤ Staff Consultations and Supervision:

The staff of Counseling Services operates as a team. Therefore, from time to time, your counselor may consult with other staff members or receive supervision from another member. These consultations are for professional and training purposes only and are aimed at providing the best possible care for all clients.

➤ Abuse of Children:

If your counselor 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.

- Abuse of Elderly Individuals or Other Vulnerable Adults:
If your counselor has reason to believe that a vulnerable adult (i.e., elderly or a person over 18 years old who lacks the physical or mental capacity to provide for his/her daily needs) is being abused, (s)he is legally obligated to report this situation to the appropriate state agency.
- Imminent Harm to Self:
If your counselor 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 seek your involuntary admission to a hospital and/or contact a family member or another person who may be able to help protect you.
- Imminent Harm to Others:
If your counselor has reason to believe that you are actually threatening physical violence against another person, or if you are an actual threat to the safety of another person, (s)he may be required to take some action to insure that the other person is protected (e.g., contacting the police, notifying the other person, seeking involuntary hospitalization).
- Court Order to release Information:
We are legally required to release client information to the courts if a judge court orders your record. If such a situation arises, we will make every attempt to inform you of the court's request and the nature of the request.

The confidentiality exceptions described in "e" are extremely rare. If, however, they should arise, it is our policy that whenever possible, we will discuss with you any action contemplated as fully as possible. However, you should know that we are not legally obligated to inform you, or 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 minimal information necessary to protect you and/or another person.

f. Your Record:

According to State of North Carolina regulations for professional counselors, client records must be maintained for a period of seven (7) years. Consistent with these regulations, we at Counseling Services keep both our paper and electronic records within a locked structure for the designated time period. At the end of this period, the individual client's records are shredded and appropriately discarded.

II. Responsibilities

Your active participation in the counseling process is necessary for progress to be made. Therefore, along with your rights as a client, you have certain responsibilities include:

- a. Promptness:
Keeping to appointment times will allow you to take full advantage of your counseling sessions. Arriving promptly for your sessions will allow you to make the most of your time.
- b. Attendance:
Once you have been scheduled for an appointment, it is your responsibility to keep the appointment. If an emergency arises, please cancel your appointment by calling the office staff at the Center, giving as much advance notice as possible. Again, failure to attend sessions, or repeated cancellations, will result in the closure of your case.

PLEASE LET YOUR THERAPIST KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ABOVE INFORMATION

Signature: _____
Date: _____