



RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PERSONS USING THE SERVICES OF THE STUDENT COUNSELING CENTER

Please take a few minutes to read this important information about Student Counseling Center (SCC) services. Should you have any questions about this information, feel free to discuss them with your triage counselor. After reading, please scroll to bottom of screen to indicate agreement.

I. RIGHTS

Understanding the Purpose and Nature of Services: Psychotherapy is intended to help the individual reach a better understanding of specific problems and, at times, work toward resolution of this problem, symptom relief, or improvement in day-to-day functioning. Progress depends on many factors such as the complexity and duration of the problem, the motivation of the client, and other life circumstances. While results cannot be guaranteed, most clients find that they benefit from psychotherapy.

Eligibility: Full or part-time students who are currently enrolled at Texas Tech University are eligible for a voluntary and confidential triage appointment.

Limitations of Services: The SCC offers short-term services for students; we will refer students who do not meet SCC Scope of Care criteria (e.g., in need of extended or specialized services). Students are limited to no more than 50 individual and couples sessions within a 4-year period; referral may be made prior to meeting this limit.

Prompt Service: During your brief triage session, you and your counselor will discuss treatment options. At busy times during the year, the SCC may have a waiting list for certain services. If you experience extreme distress before you receive services, please contact us so that crisis intervention services can be arranged.

Understanding the Risks Involved with Psychotherapy: As with any treatment, there are some risks that may come along with potential benefits. There is a risk that clients will, for a time, have uncomfortable levels of negative feelings or recall unpleasant memories. You should be aware of the possibility for strain in significant relationships that may occur during therapy. Couples counseling can, on occasion, result in the dissolution of the relationship. It is possible for a client's problem to worsen immediately after beginning therapy. However, most of these risks are to be expected when people are making important changes in their lives.

Confidentiality: Information shared by you in triage, counseling, consultation, or testing session will be kept in strict confidence. As professionals, we confer with each other within the agency to provide the best possible service to clients; these consultations are for professional and/or

training purposes only. While we strongly encourage group therapy members to respect each other's confidentiality, SCC personnel cannot ensure this. No client information is released to anyone outside of the SCC without written authorization from the client. We may be legally obligated to release information without your authorization in the following situations:

1.) Current Abuse of Children, Elderly, or Disabled Persons.

If a staff member has reason to believe that a child under the age of 18, an elderly person, or a disabled person is currently being abused or neglected, s/he is legally obligated to report this situation to the appropriate state agency.

2.) Imminent Risk of Suicide.

If a staff member has reason to believe that you are in immediate danger of suicide, and if you are unwilling or unable to follow treatment recommendations, s/he may have to recommend involuntary hospitalization by law enforcement personnel.

3.) Imminent Risk of Homicide.

If a staff member believes that you pose an immediate threat to the physical safety of another person, s/he may take action (such as contacting law enforcement or seeking involuntary hospitalization) to ensure that the other person is protected.

4.) Reports of Sexual Exploitation by a Former Therapist.

If a staff member has reason to believe that you have been the victim of sexual exploitation by a former therapist, s/he is obligated to contact the licensing board which oversees the professional activities of the therapist in question.

5.) Court Orders for Records Release, Depositions, and Testimony.

In the State of Texas, when a judge issues a subpoena for records or testimony, SCC personnel must comply with the court order.

Please Note: The 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 you and/or another person's physical safety.

Information Shared with Student Health Services (SHS): The SCC may share client information in the form of in-person or telephone consultation with health providers at the SHS or the TTU Health Sciences Center for the sole purposes of treatment planning and coordination of care. Permission for this communication between providers may be revoked via a written request by the client. Additionally, if you are participating in TAO (Therapy Assistance Online) under the guidance of a therapist, TAO administrators from both the SCC and SHS will have access to your information in TAO. The company that provides TAO for our campus will have access to your name and contact information while you are in treatment in order to provide technical

support and facilitate interaction with your counselor. This identifying information will be deleted upon completion of treatment; however, TAO will retain other non-identified information you have provided for the purposes of evaluating and improving TAO.

Access/Retention of Records: Your SCC records are stored in a computer database on a TTU server, accessible only to SCC personnel and TTU tech support professionals who maintain confidentiality. You have the right to access your records at any time. All records are destroyed 7 years after your last visit.

Contacting your therapist: All voicemails left for your therapist are delivered via email and may include identifying information. Therapists may not have immediate access to voicemail and/or email; accordingly, these message systems are not an appropriate mechanism for crisis management. If in immediate danger, call 911 for assistance. All email communication between therapists and clients will be documented in your file. SCC therapists will not accept friend/contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site. Please do not use private or public online messaging services to contact therapists whom you may interact with in the SCC.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

No-Show Policy: Your active participation in the counseling process is necessary for progress to be made. It is your responsibility to keep scheduled appointments and arrive on time. If you miss a scheduled appointment with your counselor and have not canceled in advance, you are responsible for calling to reschedule an appointment or for informing the counselor that you are no longer interested in receiving counseling services. If we do not hear from you within 24 hours of a missed appointment, we may not be able to keep an appointment time open for you. Please make every effort to contact SCC in advance if you cannot make your appointment time. Missed appointments without prior contact are considered no-shows and will result in a **\$25 charge to your TTU Student Business Services bill** (appearing as “Student Wellness Center Appointment Fee.”) You may appeal this fee within 4 weeks of a missed appointment due to an emergency during which you were unable to contact the SCC. If you quit attending sessions at the SCC, we will assume that you have terminated services with us.

Requests for Letters Verifying SCC Services: Appointment attendance notes can be provided to students at any time. A minimum of three SCC visits are required before any letter citing a diagnosis will be considered. It is at the discretion of the treating therapist whether a letter will be written on a student’s behalf. The SCC does not provide letters regarding academic or living accommodations (e.g, pet/ESA accommodations, special allowances for classes, etc.). Requests for accommodations should be directed to Student Disability Services. Letters to the Dean of Students Office supporting a medical withdrawal may be provided in extreme circumstances.

Mandated Services: While the SCC may provide services mandated by another entity (e.g., probation officer), students must actively participate in services and the requested service must fit within the SCC scope of care. The SCC does not provide mandated services for intensive outpatient or other substance dependence treatment, as our services do not constitute sufficient treatment for these conditions.

Feedback: If for any reason you are not satisfied with the counseling process, we encourage you to discuss this first with your counselor. If your concerns are not resolved to your satisfaction, you may request an appointment with the Clinical Services Director to discuss possible reassignment or other counseling options.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONSENT

Scheduling Communications: The Student Counseling Center communicates the day and time of your FIRST individual or couples counseling appointment through either email, voicemail, or direct telephone contact. You may also opt to have appointment text reminders sent to your cell phone. Be aware that email, voicemail and text messaging are not secure forms of communication and confidentiality of any information cannot be ensured. On the previous contact form, selecting “Yes” next to your phone number/email and selecting an SMS phone for text messages indicates that you are giving your informed consent for us to communicate with you by email, voicemail, and text. If you prefer to change your contact permissions, please inform your triage therapist or the front desk.

Video Recording: To ensure that you receive the highest quality service possible, sessions with your counselor may be video recorded for supervision purposes only. In these cases, the Student Counseling Center will protect your privacy and maintain strict confidentiality. You have the right to withdraw your consent to recording at any time, but doing so may result in a delay of services.

Psychological Assessment: Assessment may be suggested as part of your treatment. While the assessment may ask questions regarding suicidality, your counselor may not see your responses immediately. When completing assessments, please inform SCC staff if you are in extreme distress. Assessment will not be offered as part of an ongoing or pending court proceeding. We do not offer testing for ADHD or Learning Disabilities but can provide community referrals for these assessments.

Research, Public Health, and Public Safety: The SCC participates in national and institutional research projects designed to improve our services and expand knowledge about college student safety and mental health. We contribute anonymous, numeric aggregate client data to national and institutional databases; this data does not include personally identifying information. Neither the data nor the results can be linked to specific individuals or events.

By signing my name below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand this form and its provisions. I give permission and consent to receive psychotherapeutic treatment at the Texas Tech University Student Counseling Center.