

**University of North Texas at Dallas  
Counseling & Wellness Services**

**CONSENT FOR SERVICES**

Welcome to the Counseling & Wellness Services at University of North Texas at Dallas. This handout summarizes important information you should know about our services. It also contains important information about your right to confidentiality. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, it is very important that you read them carefully. You can discuss any questions you have about the policies and procedures. When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between us. You may revoke this agreement in writing at any time. Should you have any questions or concerns, please discuss them with your counselor.

**I. Rights**

Eligibility:

Students currently enrolled at UNT Dallas are eligible for counseling services. The initial appointment is for a screening evaluation. Sometimes, the evaluation may occur over more than one session. By the end of the evaluation, your counselor will be able to offer you some feedback as well as suggestions for treatment, if you decide to continue with counseling. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with the counselor. Counseling involves a commitment of time and energy, so you should feel comfortable working with the counselor you have been assigned. During this time the student and counselor will also discuss counseling service options which may include individual, group, or couples counseling, or a referral to comparable or more appropriate service in the community. If your initial treatment needs are not appropriate for the level of care provided at UNT Dallas, your counselor will offer you referral information to a more appropriate treatment than can better meet your needs. If you have questions about any counseling policies, you should discuss them with your counselor whenever they arise.

Contacting Us:

Counseling & Wellness Services hours of operation are Monday - Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm. Your counselor will make every effort to return your call on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please leave some times when you will be available. In crisis/emergencies during business hours, you can let the administrative staff answering the phone know it is an emergency, and she will contact the on-call counselor of the day. If it is after hours, you can contact the Suicide and Crisis Center at (214) 824-7020, to discuss your concerns, or 911 who will arrange transport to the nearest emergency room. On campus, you may also contact campus police at 972-338-3000 for assistance in obtaining transportation to a local emergency room. It is important that you know that UNT Dallas does not currently provide 24-hour crisis coverage. Crisis coverage is limited to operating hours and when a licensed professional is present. At all other times, students in crisis are referred to local crisis centers and/or emergency rooms for assessment and treatment.

Respect:

The counselor will respect you as an individual and convey this respect in keeping appointments or contacting you if a change in time is needed.

Confidentiality of Records Related to Treatment:

In order to encourage open communications with counselors and to prevent unnecessary disclosure of highly personal information, your communications with your counselor are subject to protection from disclosure by the Texas Health & Safety Code (State Law) and the Counselor's Code of Professional Ethics. Records created for the purposes of your treatment are not considered part of your education

record and are not subject to the provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Therefore, any consent to allow disclosure of your education records in accordance with FERPA would not extend to the records of treatment maintained by your counselor.

The Counseling and Wellness Services staff practices with other mental health professionals and employs administrative staff to facilitate services. These individuals serve under the direction of your counselor and they are trained in practices to protect your privacy. These professionals have signed written statements acknowledging their obligation to be bound by the same obligation of confidentiality as your counselor. On occasion your counselor may find it helpful to consult with other health and mental health professionals. These consultations are for professional and/or training purposes. During a consultation, the counselor makes every effort to avoid revealing a client's identity. The other professionals are also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

Records maintained by your counselor for the purpose of your treatment, diagnosis or evaluation may not be disclosed except as specifically permitted by state law. Disclosure of your confidential records is only permitted under the following circumstances:

- To you, unless your counselor determines that release of the record would be harmful to your physical, mental or emotional health. If you are denied access to your record you will be provided with a signed statement in accordance with state law. Another professional will be permitted to examine and copy the record if you seek treatment from the other professional.
- To any person based on your signed written consent.
- When disclosure is required by a government agency or is otherwise authorized by law.
- To medical or law enforcement personnel after a determination by your counselor that there is a probability of imminent physical injury by you, or to you or others, or if there is a probability that you face immediate mental or emotional injury.
- To your personal representative if you are deceased.
- Pursuant to a court order or based on an exception to the physician-patient privilege in an administrative or civil proceeding.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that we discuss any questions or concerns that you may have now or in the future. The laws governing confidentiality can be quite complex, and we are not attorneys. In situations where specific advice is required, formal legal advice may be needed.

#### Minors & parents

Patients under 18 years of age who are not emancipated, and their parents, should be aware that the law may allow parents to examine their child's treatment records unless your counselor decides that such access is likely to injure the child, or we agree otherwise. Because privacy in psychotherapy is often crucial to successful progress, particularly with teenagers, it is sometimes our policy to request an agreement from parents that they consent to give up their access to their child's records. If they agree, during treatment, we will provide them only with general information about the progress of treatment, and attendance at scheduled sessions. We will also provide parents with a summary of treatment when it is complete. Any other communication will require the student's Authorization, unless we feel that the student is in danger or is a danger to someone else, in which case, we will notify the parents of our concerns. Before giving parents any information, we will discuss the matter with the student, if possible, and do our best to handle any objections he/she may have.

## **II. Responsibilities**

### Participation:

Active participation in the counseling experience is necessary from you. Counseling sessions typically last for 45 minutes, beginning at the scheduled time. Your promptness is important and will allow you to take full advantage of your appointments. If you are late, your session will still end at the scheduled time so that we may accommodate everyone's appointment in a timely fashion. If you are more than 15 minutes late for your scheduled appointment, the counselor may reschedule your appointment to maintain the ability to provide you with appropriate services. It is your responsibility to keep scheduled appointments. If you need to cancel your appointment, please contact us 24 hours in advance.

### No Show Policy:

If you miss a regular appointment and have not cancelled 24 hours in advance, you are responsible for calling to reschedule the appointment or for informing the counselor that you are no longer interested in receiving counseling services. If we do not hear from you within three business days of your missed appointment, we may not be able to keep an appointment time open for you. Chronic no-shows may result in termination of counseling services.

## **III. General Information**

Your counselor may be a professional staff member or a graduate counseling trainee under supervision. Very infrequently, we might seek your consent to audio/video tape your counseling sessions. This is done so that the counselor can review sessions in order to aid the counseling process. Any tapes are confidential and erased after use. If you have any questions regarding the above information, please discuss them with your intake counselor.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the rights and responsibilities of counseling services and agree to its terms.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_