**North Carolina A&T State University**

**Rights and Responsibilities of Students Using Counseling Services**

# Rights

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

* 1. ***Appointment:***

We are committed to providing quality services to all enrolled students. All enrolled students are entitled to one session, at which point we will determine whether or not their needs can be met in our system. We are dedicated to helping our students by providing brief counseling from a wide spectrum of services. Those include individual and group counseling, outreach and consultation, training and supervision, teaching, psychological testing, and research. If more intensive or specialized care is needed, we will assist with making referrals to healthcare providers in the community.

Some of the issues that are commonly addressed through referral to services outside of the Counseling Center include:

* A desire to be seen more than once a week or for long-term therapy, or a need for such as indicated by:
* History of multiple hospitalizations
* Chronic suicidality and/or self-injury behaviors; history of repeated suicide attempts
* Indication that short-term therapy may be detrimental or non-beneficial
* Evidence or risk of progressive deterioration in mental or emotional functioning, requiring intensive intervention
* Manifestations of psychotic symptoms without willingness to remain on medication for stabilization of symptoms
* Inability or unwillingness to provide the necessary information to thoroughly assess symptoms
* Students who need specialized services not available through the Counseling Center as indicated by:
* Presence of significant drug and/or alcohol problems such substance dependence, primary substance abuse, and/or past failed treatments
* Presence of significant or long-standing eating disorder with no period of remission, no previous treatment, or that may pose a medical danger
* Request for psychological evaluation for the purpose employment clearance or other nonacademic purpose
* Services to fulfill students' court-mandated assessment or treatment requirements
  1. ***Prompt Service:***

Counseling Services 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.

* 1. ***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.

* 1. ***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.

* 1. ***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.

* 1. 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, Counseling Services keep both our paper and electronic records within a locked structure for the designated time period. The bulk of your record is stored electronically with access restricted to the appropriate staff members. Both paper and electronic files are destroyed after seven years of inactivity. Your counseling records are not part of your academic record.

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 that include:

1. **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.

1. **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.

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

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

**Feedback Survey**

While CS does not correspond with students about counseling issues via email, the Center does request feedback about our office, services, and staff with a periodic online survey. Our student survey is one of the key ways that students seen at the Center can let us know how we are doing. At some point in the coming semester, the Center would like to send a request to you via your email account to complete our student survey. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you would be willing to receive this survey from the Center, please indicate this by signing below. If you change your mind in the future and would rather not receive our student survey, please call the Center and let our staff know your decision.

Client Signature

Client Name (please print) Date

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