

INFORMED CONSENT FOR ONLINE/PHONE COUNSELING

This document contains important information about our professional services and policies. Please read it carefully. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and the Counseling & Wellness Center (CWC). Because we serve students with a wide range of concerns, some of this information may not be relevant to your particular situation. However, it is important that you read this information before signing below. Your signature below indicates that you have read this information. ***Should you have any questions about these policies, please discuss them with your counselor.***

Sessions (held by appointment only):

Sessions are generally 45-50 minutes in duration on a weekly basis, although this may vary based on your counseling goals and needs. Appointment times are reserved for you; attending sessions on time and on a regular basis is essential for achieving counseling goals. If you are more than 15 minutes late for a session and have not left a message on your counselor's voicemail or sent an email, your session will be rescheduled for the following week. If you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment, call 708-235-7334.

Changing appointments:

If you are not able to attend your appointment, please call 708-235-7334. If you miss ***2 appointments without notifying your counselor, services may be terminated to accommodate new clients who are waiting for counseling services.***

Moreover, counselors will provide email or phone notification to clients if services are canceled due to missed appointments. In addition, to the best of our ability, we will notify you in advance if your counselor is ill or otherwise unable to meet with you.

Email Policy:

As email is not a secure form of communication, CWC counseling staff generally refrain from communicating with clients via email except for scheduling and referral purposes. Occasionally, clients will use email to communicate personal information, intense feelings, or details of a life event. While CWC staff generally do not discuss specific counseling issues by email, expressing empathy, support, and suggestions for follow-up is sometimes warranted.

I have the right to withhold or withdraw consent at any time without affecting my right to future care or treatment nor risking the loss or withdrawal of any program benefits to which I would otherwise be entitled.

Identify Verification

All new clients will have to verify their demographic information during appointment set up and during Triage appointment.

CWC online therapists will use HIPPA compliant video services (Doxy.com) and phone telecounseling from CWC office phone lines during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Confidentiality:

CWC staff follow Illinois state law with regard to confidentiality. Information shared by you in a counseling session or through an assessment will be kept in strict confidence. The counseling staff operate as a team in order to provide the best possible services to clients. As professionals, we confer with each other within the agency. These consultations are for professional and/or training purposes only. Information will not be disclosed outside of CWC without your written permission. As it related to tele-counseling services via phone or video the client is responsible for the following:

- The client is responsible for securing his or her own phone or computer hardware, internet access points, and password security.
- GSU Counseling and Wellness Center is not liable for confidentiality breaches when they are caused by client error.
- GSU Counseling and Wellness Center is not responsible for their client's equipment failure, e.g. camera, phone, and/or Internet service.
- GSU Counseling and Wellness Center is not responsible for lapses in confidentiality that are in direct response to the client's actions.

Disconnection Problems

If video services are not available due to an unplanned equipment or service malfunction, sessions will occur via telephone.

Recordings Are Prohibited

Clients are not allowed to make an audio or video recording of any portion of the session.

Risk of Harm

Online therapy is not a crisis based clinical service.

Online psychotherapy may not be appropriate for clients with active suicidal or homicidal thoughts, or clients who are experiencing acute mental health problems, such as manic or psychotic symptoms.

It is the responsibility of the client to inform their CWC counselor if they are at risk of harm to self or others.

At intake, if a client reports being at risk of harming self or others, the client will have to complete a risk assessment with CWC Counselor and will not be offered online psychotherapy services from CWC. However may be referred to the following crisis resources:

- **Emergency Services and GSU Public Safety: 911 or GSU public Safety 708.534.4900**
- **South Suburbia Crisis Center: 708.429.7255**
- **Emotional Distress Suicide hotline:708.429.7255 or 815.744.5280**

In the event that client is deemed high risk the counselor will make a call to emergency responders regarding a wellness check and need for further psych evaluation. This is done to insure client safety.

If through the intake evaluation or subsequent psychotherapy sessions, a client is deemed to be at risk of harming self or others, CWC will terminate the sessions, while providing alternative referral suggestions and following the above protocol.

If a client who was not formerly at risk, should become at risk to self or others, they must immediately report it to their CWC counselor. In such cases, a client may be referred to crisis resources, emergency services, or outside provider.

Confidentiality Restrictions

- The laws that protect the confidentiality of any medical information also apply to online psychotherapy.
- Information about the client will only be released with his or her express written permission, with the exceptions of the following cases
 - If the counselor determines risk of self-harm
 - If the counselor determines risk of harm to others
 - If the counselor is informed about or suspects abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a minor or of an incapacitated adult.
 - If the counselor believes that someone's mental condition leaves the person gravely disabled

Records

- The counselor will maintain records of online counseling and/or consultation services.
- All clinical records will be maintained as required by applicable legal and ethical standards according to the various counseling professions licensing boards, (i.e. American Counseling Association and American Psychology Association).

Payments

- Counseling Services are free of charge to GSU students.

Client Electronic Signature

I understand the risks and limitations to online psychotherapy. By signing this consent, I agree to abide by its content.

X
