

Manual of Policies and Procedures for Student Affairs

Subchapter 3.1. Student Counseling Center

Subchapter 3.1-100. General Provisions

Sec. 3.1-101. Purpose

a. The purpose of The Student Counseling Center is to help students resolve personal concerns and acquire the skills, attitudes, abilities, and insight that will enable them to meet the challenges of student life. The transitions and stresses of life affect all students to a greater or lesser degree and may require the help of a qualified professional. All services are made available through the use of student service fees. There is no additional charge for services.

b. Licensed professional counselors are available to provide a variety of services to a wide range of concerns in a trusting and confidential setting. The Student Counseling Center is open from 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday through Friday

Sec. 3.1-102. Definitions

- a. In this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning,
1. "vice president" means the vice president for Student Affairs or the vice president's delegate or representative;
 2. "hearing officer" means a person appointed by the president to conduct hearings of alleged violations of a regents' rule, university regulation, or administrative rule;
 3. "organization" means a student group holding a valid registration;
 4. "president" means the president of The University of Texas at Tyler;
 5. "student" means a person currently enrolled in residence at the university, or who is accepted for admission or readmission to the university, or who has been enrolled at the university in a prior semester or summer session and is eligible to continue enrollment in the semester or summer session that immediately follows, or who is attending an educational program sponsored by the university while that person is on campus;
 6. "university" means The University of Texas at Tyler;
 7. "university facility" means a classroom, auditorium, student housing, other building, or outdoor area owned or controlled by the university;
 8. "weekday" means Monday through Friday except for official university holidays; "day" means calendar day;
 9. "faculty or staff" means a current employee of The University of Texas at Tyler.

Sec. 3.1-103. Introduction

a. The Student Counseling Center offers services to all currently enrolled students at the University of Texas at Tyler. Individual Counseling is offered in a confidential setting to assist students in achieving personal and educational goals.

b. Students have various ways of learning about the Student Counseling Center throughout the year. Presentations are available during orientation and throughout the year for a wide variety of topics related to the Student Counseling Center.

c. These presentations include basic information concerning services, location, and qualifications of staff.

- d. Resource tables are also set up with counseling brochures during registration, resource fairs, and outreach days. Many clients are self-referred on the basis of information learned from these presentations and resource tables.
- e. Faculty and staff are reminded throughout the year of services provided by The Student Counseling Center. Students are often referred by a member of the faculty or staff for counseling when academic difficulties appear to be related to personal issues.
- f. Students are also referred by others who have had positive experiences in utilizing the Student Counseling Center.
- g. Session Limit: The Student Counseling Center does not have a predetermined limit for the number of sessions a client may be seen for counseling. This is determined by the individual counselor and in accordance with ethical standards provided by licensing boards. However, clients requiring long-term intensive therapy will be referred to services available in the community.
- h. All services are made available through the use of student service fees. There is no additional charge for services.
- i. The Student Counseling Center is open from 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday through Friday.
- j. Since the University of Texas at Tyler reserves the right to monitor e-mail usage, client privacy of e-mails cannot be guaranteed. Additionally, the staff of the Student Counseling Center is not able to respond to concerns in a timely fashion via e-mail. Staff does not maintain 24 hour access to their e-mail accounts, and may only check their e-mail once per day or less and not on weekends. For these reasons, the Student Counseling Center maintains the policy not to use e-mail for communication of any kind with clients or potential clients. This includes the use of e-mail to make appointments.

Sec. 3.1-104. Application Confidentiality

- a. In order to maintain feelings of trust and safety, visits to the Student Counseling Center are considered confidential.
- b. Each client is asked to sign a copy of the Client Information and Consent form that includes the confidentiality policy.
- c. No one outside the center is given any information regarding what is revealed in counseling or even that a student has made an appointment to see a counselor unless there is written permission to do so, or unless required by law. This includes, but is not limited to:
- spouse
 - romantic partners
 - friends
 - co-workers
 - employers
 - professors
 - university officials outside the Student Counseling Center, even if the student was referred by this person.
- d. No information becomes part of a student's academic record.

e. Files are never left out in view of any visitor to the office. Files and appointment books are kept in locked files when the office is closed.

f. Client names are not used in any area where other individuals may be. Public discussion of client problems is prohibited by clerical and counseling staff.

g. When it is necessary to leave a telephone message, the name and phone number of the person making the call should be the only information provided. The Student Counseling Center name should not be used.

h. In order to provide the best possible service to meet a student's needs, professional counselors in the Student Counseling Center may consult with each other. These consultations are for professional purposes only and are aimed at providing the best possible care for all clients. The consultant is, of course, also legally bound to keep the information confidential.

i. There are some situations in which counselors are legally required to take action to protect others from harm, even though that requires revealing some information about a client's treatment. Limits to confidentiality include:

j. When there is the risk of imminent harm to the client or another person, therapists have a legal and ethical duty to do whatever is necessary to protect life.

k. When a court of law orders a therapist to release information, the therapist is bound by law to comply with such an order.

l. When any individual has reason to believe that a child or mentally disabled person or an elderly person is in danger of or is being physically, emotionally, or sexually abused, that individual is obligated by law to report such abuse to the proper authorities.

m. Because confidentiality does not extend to criminal proceedings in Texas, if a client becomes involved in criminal prosecution, that client's file may be open for court inspection.

n. Therapists are required by law to report incidences of sexual misconduct on the part of other therapists. These situations rarely arise. Should such a situation occur, counselors should take measures to fully discuss it with their client before taking any action.

Appointment and Office Procedures

a. Currently enrolled students at the University of Texas at Tyler may call or come by The Student Counseling Center during office hours to schedule an appointment. Efforts will be made to schedule an appointment at the earliest time available and at the student's convenience. Students may visit the office with or without an appointment, but an appointment is recommended.

b. Scheduling Initial Appointments:

1. When a student requests an initial appointment, their name is placed in the software appointment scheduler known as Titanium with the information requested in the initial scheduling screen of the software program. The minimum information needed is the client name and telephone number in which he/she can be contacted. If for any reason the counselor is unable to keep the appointment time, measures will be taken to contact the individual

for rescheduling. If another counselor is available for that time, the student will be given the option of an appointment with that counselor.

2. For appointments made in person, an appointment card is provided with the name of the counselor and the date and time of the appointment. Clients are asked to call 24 hours prior to the scheduled appointment time if they are unable to keep their appointment.

c. All appointments are scheduled as 50-minute sessions unless otherwise noted by the counselor.

d. First Session: It is recommended that first-time visitors to the counseling center arrive approximately 15 minutes in advance of their appointment time to complete paperwork. Students who prefer to pick up initial paperwork to complete at home and bring to their first session may do so.

e. Return Appointments

1. Return appointments (if needed) will be made by the counselor at the end of each session, and the client's name placed in the appointment scheduler. Clients who do not schedule an appointment at that time, or need to reschedule their next appointment may call or come by The Student Counseling Center during office hours to schedule an appointment.
2. Clerical staff must be sensitive to client confidentiality when scheduling appointments by refraining from verbalizing client information in front of individuals who are not that client's counselor.
3. Appointment cancellations should be made as soon as possible to provide an opportunity to schedule counseling appointments for other students.
4. Students that do not notify the counseling center within 24 hours of a scheduled appointment and do not show up for their scheduled appointment may experience a delay of up to two weeks for the next available appointment.

f. Emergency Procedures

1. For clients in crisis during office hours

A. Clerical staff should consult with a staff counselor anytime they believe a client might be in crisis and require immediate assistance.

B. The following are considered to be emergency situations:

- expression of suicidal thoughts
- expression of homicidal thoughts
- severe loss of emotional control
- gross impairment in thinking ability
- impaired speech or disjointed thoughts
- bizarre behavior

C. If a counselor is not reachable, and danger appears imminent, clerical staff should call 911 for emergency assistance.

2. For Clients in Crisis After Office Hours

A. If a faculty or staff member comes in contact with a student who is in an emergency situation (see emergency situations above), and the danger appears imminent, they should call 911.

B. If there is doubt about the severity of the situation, the person should call The Andrew's Center hotline at 597-1351.

g. Software and Appointment Scheduler (Titanium)

1. Individual appointments are kept for each counselor within the Titanium software scheduler. Appointment screens are confidential and should only be viewed by student services staff.
2. Only the administrative assistants for Student Services or the counselors themselves may make appointments for counseling. Appointment names are not to be viewed by anyone except student services professional and clerical staff. They are not to be viewed by student workers.
3. Cancellations less than 24 hours in advance and no-shows should be noted in the scheduling software program, so that this information may be used for statistical purposes.

h. Counselor Schedules

1. Counselors should check the appointment software schedule regularly to be aware of any appointments that have been made.
2. Counselors will maintain their daily schedules in the appointment software scheduler (Titanium) as instructed by the Director of Student Services.
3. Clerical staff should be notified as soon as possible in an event that the counselor is unable to make a scheduled appointment so that measures can be taken to reschedule.

i. Information to Referring Persons

1. If a student is referred to The Student Counseling Center and the counselor is told of the referral, the counselor will ask the student if they wish to have the referral source informed that contact with the Counseling Center has been made.
2. Particulars of a student's situation or even the fact that counseling is being received are not discussed without the student's written consent.
3. Any referring person who contacts the Student Counseling Center about a student that they have referred should be told that the Counseling Center cannot release any information about who is or is not in counseling without the client's permission. They should be encouraged to speak directly with the referred student.
When a client does agree to let the referring person know about his/her contact with the Student Counseling Center, a Release of Information form should be signed and made part of the client's file.

j. Information regarding Prior Counseling

1. Clients who have received counseling in the past may wish to make these records available to their counselor in The Student Counseling Center.
2. A Release of Information form must be signed by the client before these records may be obtained from a prior counselor.

k. Referrals

1. Referral for services will depend on individual client needs.
2. For situations where one counselor in The Student Counseling Center is unable to see a client for ethical reasons (ex: dual relationship) that client may be referred to another counselor in the center.
3. Referrals to various other offices on and/or off campus may be made according to client need.
4. Students who request services for substance abuse or serious chronic psychiatric disorders; students requesting psychological, psychiatric, or disability evaluations; or individuals needing evaluations, assessments for legal purposes, or expert testimony in court will be referred to professionals in the community who provide those services.

I. Evaluation of Client Services

1. Students will receive, from the administrative assistant, a Satisfaction Survey after their second or third session. After the session, the Satisfaction Survey may be completed and dropped off in the Student Counseling Center or mailed (no postage required). Satisfaction Surveys are also given to on-going clients by the administrative assistant at a time specified by the counselor and are made available in the counseling reception area for anyone utilizing services offered by the Student Counseling Center.
2. Student Counseling Center counselors meet for client consultation and feedback at least every two weeks and consult as needed on a case-by-case basis in order to provide the best services possible to students.
3. Counselors elicit verbal feedback from student clients in the process of counseling.
4. Information from the surveys, consultations, and evaluations will be used to update, expand, and or improve the services offered through the Student Counseling Center.

Sec. 3.1-105. Student Counseling Center Programs

a. Individual Counseling is offered in a confidential setting to assist students in achieving personal and educational goals. Some common issues that students may deal with in counseling are:

1. Decision Making
2. Procrastination
3. Communication difficulties
4. Self-Esteem
5. Interpersonal Conflicts
6. Stress Management
7. Personal Relationships
8. Physical/ Emotional/Sexual Abuse
9. Sexual Assault
10. Anxiety
11. Depression
12. Other areas of personal concern may also be explored in counseling.

b. Career Counseling can help a student plan and organize their major and career decisions. A counselor can listen, respond to ideas, give feedback, teach strategies for making decisions, and help students formulate their majors and career goals. Personality and interest inventories (such as the Myers Briggs and the Strong Interest Inventory) are often used as a part of the career counseling process.

c. Learning Strategies Program is available to students who wish to improve their academic performance. The Learning Strategies Program offers the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), which helps students identify potential areas of improvement. These areas can range from study strategies, test-taking skills, anxiety, time management, and/or several others. Once these areas are identified, a counselor will aid the student in creating an individual program that the student may use to help improve his or her academic performance. The individualized program may consist of specific study and learning strategies, additional assessment, individual counseling or referrals to other campus services.

d. Relaxation Training, as a part of stress management, is available to students who want instruction and supervision in the use of these techniques.

e. Couples Counseling is available to currently enrolled students. Issues that may be involved in couples counseling are communication, problem solving, parenting, or conflict resolution.

f. Referrals for alcohol/drug abuse, psychiatric evaluations, and other community services are available through the Student Counseling Center when a student needs additional assistance.

g. Consulting/ Guidance is provided to assist students, faculty, and staff who may be concerned about a student with a personal problem or situation, but are unsure how to help. Client confidentiality prohibits counselors from providing information about a student, even one whom has been referred, without the student's written consent.

h. Classroom and Community Support is available when unexpected crises occur (such as the death of a student or faculty member). Faculty may wish to invite counselors into their classroom or organization to provide community support. Counselors can assist in discussing the tragedy and its impact.

i. Educational Workshops and Presentations are available on such topics as stress management, listening and communication skills, study and test taking skills, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, violence, or other subjects relevant to students.

j. A resource library that includes self-help resources in the form of books, video/audio tapes, and software are available for check-out through a student services staff member. Resources are checked out for a two week period. If there is no one else waiting for the resource, a person may re-check materials by calling or coming by the Student Services office.

k. What the Student Counseling Center Does Not Provide:

1. The Student Counseling Center does not provide treatment for substance abuse or serious chronic psychiatric disorders. Individuals requesting such treatment will be referred to services available in the community. Costs of these services will be the responsibility of the client.
2. The Student Counseling Center does not provide psychological, psychiatric, or disability evaluations. Individuals needing evaluations, assessments for legal purposes, or expert testimony in court should employ the services of professionals in the community.

Sec. 3.1-106. Record Maintenance

- a. A file is maintained in the Student Counseling Center for each client that is seen for counseling.
- b. All current client files are maintained in locked file cabinets in the counselor's office. Retired files are maintained in locked file cabinets in a separate storage area. Files should not be left unattended in places where anyone other than the counselor may have access to them; this includes desk tops and unlocked drawers. All files should be returned to the locked file cabinets at the end of the day.
- c. Only the staff of the Student Counseling Center has access to client files unless a client makes a written request for the release of information. A Release of Information form that is specific to the individual situation must be obtained each time client information is requested.
- d. Records of clients are to be kept for seven years for an adult and seven years beyond the age of 18 for a child in accordance with the ethical standards of the Texas State Board of Professional Counselors. Records dated prior to this time are destroyed.
- e. Prior to the first session with a counselor, a client must complete a Client Information Sheet, Presenting Problems Checklist and read and sign the Client Information and Consent form. These documents are maintained in all client files.
- f. Files will also contain a Counselor's Intake Summary after the first session, as well as progress notes after each successive session.
- g. Counselors may write about counselor's impressions rather than psychiatric diagnosis in counseling progress notes and summaries.
- h. A counselor who is concerned about the presence of a major psychiatric disorder should refer the client to professional resources available in the community.

Sec. 3.1-107. Staff Responsibilities

a. Counseling Staff

1. Check scheduling software regularly to be aware of any appointments that have been made.
2. Keep clerical staff up to date on times that are not available for counseling.
3. Update notes and files after each client session.
4. Attend consultation meetings with Director of Student Services and other Student Counseling Center counselors at least every two weeks and consult as needed on a case by case basis.
5. Participate with all staff regarding client confidentiality.
6. Stay informed about referral possibilities.
7. Inform clients of community referrals for needs that are after hours and/or beyond the scope of the Student Counseling Center
8. Maintain knowledge/ skill base and license(s) by completing appropriate continuing education annually.
9. Balance counseling with duties related to other assigned programs and responsibilities (ex: disability, seminars, drug/alcohol education, study skills presentations, etc).
10. Supervise student workers in the areas of Counseling, and Wellness and Prevention Education Services.
11. Maintain annual and semester (spring and fall) statistics regarding counseling center services.
12. Complete projects as assigned by the Director of Student Services.

a. Clerical Staff

13. Manage telephone calls, set appointments, input new client demographic information, provide reception, and maintain budget duties.
14. Be aware of issues concerning the confidentiality of clients, including protecting the identity of clients, present or not, when others are in the waiting room or counselor's office.
15. Maintain a balance of friendliness and professionalism in the office, making clients feel welcome, while limiting their public self-disclosures.
16. Consult with the staff counselors if any client attempts to have extended personal conversations either in or out of the office, or any time a situation arises that causes clerical staff to feel uncomfortable in dealing with a client.
17. Complete projects as assigned by the Director of Student Services.

Revised: 07/18/08

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