

## INFORMED CONSENT FOR COUNSELING

You have the right to be informed of our policies and procedures before giving your consent for counseling. Please read this information carefully. **Do not sign this form until you have reviewed it with your counselor.**

### ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES

You are eligible to receive services if . . .

- You are enrolled at Cal State San Marcos or are being seen with an enrolled student. Under special circumstances, students who withdraw from the University while being seen at SHCS may continue services briefly with their counselor's approval.
- You have not misused or abused counseling services in the past (e.g., frequent no shows).
- Your concerns can be addressed by counseling (as determined by counseling staff).

### COUNSELING

- Counseling services are provided from a brief-therapeutic framework. Services will be based on clinical need and determined collaboratively with the client. Sessions are usually held weekly and are approximately 50 minutes in length.
- Groups may be longer-term and can be attended in addition to or independent of individual or couple counseling.
- Couples counseling will not be provided, or will be ended, if relationship violence (sexual, physical, or threatening) has recently occurred. You and your partner will have the option of being seen individually or referred to an outside service. If not enrolled at Cal State San Marcos, we must refer you to an outside agency for individual counseling. Couples counseling may be resumed when relationship violence has ceased and the individual counselors believe that the risk for violence is minimal.
- We do not provide family counseling.
- We do not provide court-related services.

### STAFF

- Services are provided by licensed psychologists, post-doctoral fellows, and clinical and counseling psychology interns. All post-doctoral fellows and psychology interns are supervised by a CA licensed staff member. You have the right to know the professional status of your counselor.
- If you are seeing a post-doctoral fellow or psychology intern, you have the right to contact her/his supervisor. If needing to do so, call SHCS at (760) 750-4915.
- Professional ethics strongly discourage "dual relationships" between counselors and clients (social, romantic, business relationships). Counselors are legally prohibited from having sexual contact with a current or former client. We realize that contact outside of counseling sessions, especially on a university campus, may be unavoidable. Intentional personal contact is discouraged.

### THE COUNSELING ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- The first meeting is an *Initial Consultation* session during which the counselor learns about your concerns, gathers additional background information, and identifies services that would best help meet your goals for counseling. The counselor who completes this initial consult may or may not be your assigned counselor for ongoing counseling (see below).
- Couple assessment: After an initial consultation for couple counseling, the counselor must meet at least once with each partner alone to assess for relationship violence or other concerns that individuals may not have discussed because their partner was present. These separate meetings are part of the assessment process and may be shorter in length than the initial consultation.
- If ongoing counseling is warranted, and the counselor completing the initial consult is not going to continue as your therapist, the counselor will consult with clinical staff at a weekly counselor assignment meeting. A counselor for ongoing counseling will be assigned based on schedules and other factors such as counselors' areas of expertise or your preferences for a particular type of counselor. In most cases, attempts will be made to accommodate your preferences. In most cases, your Initial Consultation counselor will be the "assigned" counselor. You will be contacted within seven working days to schedule an appointment with the assigned counselor.
- If it is determined that your needs might be better met elsewhere or that you are ineligible for services, the counselor completing the initial consultation will provide referrals and try to assist you in obtaining other services.

### CANCELLATIONS & NO-SHOWS

- If you need to cancel an appointment, we ask that you notify us at least 24 hours in advance.
- Services may be subject to termination after repeated no-shows.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

- If needing immediate assistance during our office hours, call us at (760) 750-4915. If unable to reach anyone, call University Police (760) 750-4567.

- If in need of immediate support after hours and on weekends, please call one of the community crisis services listed on the *Crisis Resource List* given to you during the initial consultation, call 911, or go to a local emergency room.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

- All information disclosed within sessions is confidential and must not be revealed to anyone other than appropriate SHCS staff without your written permission except in situations where disclosure is required by law. These situations include:
  1. The counselor believes that a client may be a danger to his/her self, another, or another’s property, and that disclosure is necessary to minimize risk. In the case of danger to another, the counselor is required to notify the police and take reasonable steps to warn the intended victim.
  2. There is reasonable suspicion of actual or potential child neglect or abuse (emotional, physical, sexual) involving the client or others known by the client.
  3. There is reasonable suspicion that a child has heard or witnessed relationship violence.
  4. There is reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse of a dependent adult or elderly person.
  5. A client is “gravely disabled” (i.e., unable to take care of basic needs such as feeding self, getting home safely).
  6. A client seeks counseling for aid in planning a crime or escaping apprehension after committing a crime.
  7. A client initiates legal proceedings to establish competency.
  8. A valid court order (e.g., legal subpoena) is issued for a client’s files.
  9. A client (or client’s heirs, executors) files a suit or complaint against a counselor or SHCS.
- **Clinical Files:** The law requires that records of services be maintained to help assure that clients are receiving a consistent quality of care. A confidential file will be maintained to provide a record of your services. Records are electronic. Security measures are in place to limit access to counseling staff only.
- **Taping Of Sessions:** Interns are required to audiotape and videotape a certain number of counseling sessions for review by their supervisors and, in some cases, other counseling staff. Taping can occur only with your written permission. All tapes will be erased after being reviewed unless needed for future reference (for which your written permission must also be obtained). You have the right to refuse taping. Whether or not you give permission to tape will not affect the availability or quality of service.
- **Security/Employment Screening:** We do not release client information for security/employment screening. It is our position that the use of psychological records for this purpose is a misuse of the records, and that meaningful consent cannot be assured when required as part of an employment screening.
- **E-mail:** Because electronic mail is not a safe means to transmit confidential information, Counseling staff are discouraged from communicating with you via e-mail. Thus, a counselor may not respond to your e-mail messages. If you consent, email reminders can be sent regarding your upcoming appointment within 48 hours of the scheduled date.
- **Interaction in Public:** To safeguard confidentiality, professional standards of conduct require that a counselor does not greet a client in public until the client has first greeted the counselor. Counselors must honor a client’s request that no interaction occur.

**CLIENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

- You have the right to request a different counselor or appeal your counselor’s actions. If you are uncomfortable with something your counselor is doing, or feel that your counselor is acting improperly, we ask that you attempt to resolve the matter with her/him directly.
- If unable to resolve the matter with your counselor, or you do not want to talk directly with your counselor, we ask that you provide a brief written description of the problem for review by the counselor’s supervisor (if the counselor is an intern) or the SHCS Director, who will discuss the issue with the counselor and take whatever steps are deemed appropriate to address the situation. If the problem is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you have the right to contact University administration.
  - You have the right to file a complaint with the California Board of Psychology if you think that your counselor has acted illegally, irresponsibly, or unprofessionally. For questions or complaints, call (916) 547-7720, Toll free (866) 503-7720 or write to: California Board of Psychology, 1625 North Market Street, Suite N-215, Sacramento, CA 95834. Complaints can also be filed online at <http://www.psychology.ca.gov/consumers/filecomplaint.shtml>. nt.

**Your signature below indicates:**

- You have read and fully understand all of the policies and procedures described above.
- You understand that violation of these policies and procedures may result in termination of services.
- You are voluntarily consenting to and authorizing Counseling Services to provide psychological services.

**STOP! PLEASE DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM UNTIL YOU HAVE REVIEWED IT WITH YOUR COUNSELOR.**

Client’s Name (print)	ID #	Client’s Signature	Date
Counselor’s Name (print)		Counselor’s Signature	Date

Copy of signed Consent for Counseling provided: \_\_\_\_\_ (Counselor’s initials)  
 Copies of Crisis Resource List and Clients' Rights handout provided: \_\_\_\_\_ (Counselor’s initials)