



The Student Counseling and Psychological Services adheres to strict confidentiality guidelines set by each professional's national and state ethical codes/guidelines. All conversations, both by telephone and in person, are confidential. Communications will be made by phone and/or email (unless otherwise requested by the client). Any and all records kept by The Student Counseling and Psychological Services staff relating to clients 18 years of age or older are kept confidential, except in these cases:

- a. When the client is determined to be a threat to the health and safety of self or another, including abuse of a child, elder or disabled adult. If a counselor determines a client's personal safety or the safety of another person is at risk, counselors are required by law to take protective actions. This may include notifying family members or other emergency contacts, contacting the police, seeking hospitalization for the client, notifying potential victims of harm or contacting others who can help provide protection. In the case of abuse, counselors are required by law to notify the appropriate state agency. If any of these situations occur, every effort will be made by your counselor to fully discuss the situation with you before taking any action.
- b. When documents are court ordered to be released to the property of the court.
- c. When the Student Counseling and Psychological Services professional staff/interns discuss case material for the purpose of consultation, supervision, or treatment team planning.
- d. When the Student Counseling and Psychological Services staff makes a referral on your behalf to Student Health in order to coordinate treatment. Only relevant and pertinent information relating to treatment planning shall be shared.
- e. When a CARE Report about a client involves threat of harm to self or other(s).
- f. When the client has given consent to share specified information with identified person(s).
- g. Clients under age 18 must have a parent/guardian sign this form before treatment begins. The client, counselor and parent(s) will together identify confidentiality parameters for future treatment.
- h. Client names and appointment information are shared with front office staff in both the Summerville and Health Science Campus Student Counseling and Psychological Services offices for check-in purposes. (Please refer to the Additional Information section below for records management policies.)

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES

The Student Counseling and Psychological Services provides individual counseling services to students using a brief counseling model. Brief counseling is often effective for common issues faced by college students and using this model allows us to serve a greater number of clients with our available resources. Most clients attend about 4 to 5 sessions with an 8 session per year limit. The Center will work with students to refer them to an off-campus referral for more long-term, intensive counseling or specialized care, when needed. Clients identified as needing a referral will be assisted with locating an appropriate off-campus mental health provider. Off-campus referrals for family or couples counseling are also available. Current/former clients seeking a graduate internship or graduate assistantship may be excluded from the training program if it appears a harmful/inappropriate dual relationship exists. Counselors who teach academic classes may not counsel students who are enrolled in their course(s). Clients who enroll in their current counselor's class will be required to transfer to a different counselor or discontinue counseling services on campus during that semester.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- a. Initial Appointment: During the first appointment, clients will meet with a counselor to discuss the problem that led to seeking counseling and to provide personal history and background information. At the conclusion of the initial meeting, treatment options will be discussed, including whether or not counseling needs may be better met by an off campus counselor or physician. If counseling with the Augusta University Student Counseling and Psychological Services is appropriate, future appointments may or may not be with the same counselor depending on scheduling and the nature of the treatment issues.
- b. Individual sessions are usually 50 minutes in length. Active participation in the counseling process is necessary for progress. Noncompliance with treatment recommendations may necessitate early termination of services. Your counselor will work with you to help determine what treatment is in your best interest.
- c. Hard copy client records are shredded after 7 years. Computerized client records will be deleted after 7 years.
- d. Computerized & hard copy client records are accessible only to The Student Counseling and Psychological Services staff. The main Student Counseling and Psychological Services on the Summerville Campus will be responsible for storing general client records and managing client information related to scheduling appointments. Counseling session records will be maintained separately in the counselor of record's office. Computerized records are password protected. Student Counseling and Psychological Services records are *not* part of Augusta University student records.
- e. E-mail, mobile phone text messaging/calls and facsimile are not secure media; therefore, confidentiality of e-mail, mobile phone use, and facsimiles cannot be guaranteed. Urgent or emergency communications should not be sent via email or fax since timeliness of response to a facsimile or email message cannot be guaranteed. Social media

such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, etc. are not appropriate means of communication with your counselor as those media may compromise your confidentiality and privacy and blur the boundaries of the professional counseling relationship. Friend or contact requests sent to counselors by current clients and some former clients will not be accepted. If you and your counselor do choose to communicate via email, those messages should be limited to only administrative purposes, such as cancelling an appointment. Discussion about counseling session content should be limited to face to face or phone communication. If you prefer not to be contacted by email regarding administrative concerns, please indicate that preference on the following form.

- f. By signing this document, you are indicating your agreement that your participation in counseling services will not include calling a counselor as a witness in a court proceeding. Be aware that once counseling services are initiated, it is unethical for your counselor to give any opinion/recommendation about issues in a legal/court setting such as custody/visitation arrangements or other legal issues, even if your counselor is compelled by a judge to be a witness. Augusta University counselors are not considered forensic experts in legal matters. If a counselor is required by a judge to testify, counselors are ethically bound not to provide an opinion about a legal matter. Be advised that Augusta University & the Student Counseling and Psychological Services will attempt to prevent testimony from occurring.
- g. You may be assigned a graduate intern as your counselor; interns receive weekly supervision from a licensed mental health professional.

CLIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. You have a right to confidentiality within the limitations described above.
- b. You have the right to be involved in your goal setting/treatment planning process and to be informed of the professional members of your treatment team. It is the client's responsibility to make a good faith effort to fulfill the treatment recommendations suggested by your therapist. These recommendations include efforts such as attending appointments as suggested by your counselor, being actively involved during sessions, completing homework assignments, following up with a medication evaluation referral and taking medications as prescribed by your physician, experimenting with new ways of doing things, openly and honestly voicing your opinions, thoughts and feelings, whether negative or positive and implementing any crisis response plan recommended by your counselor. If you have concerns about treatment suggestions, you are encouraged to express them to your counselor to avoid any misunderstandings.
- c. If during the counseling process your counselor determines he/she is not effective in helping you reach your counseling goals, or if long-term or more specialized treatment is warranted, your counselor is obligated to discuss this with you and if necessary, provide appropriate referrals & terminate treatment. (You have the right to be informed of reason for referral.)
- d. You have the right to be informed of any potential benefits or risks associated with your treatment. It is not uncommon for symptoms to worsen before they improve. Participation in counseling can result in a number of benefits to you depending on your counseling goals. Working toward these benefits requires effort on your part.
- e. You have the right to refuse treatment and to be involved in determining length and frequency of your treatment.
- f. You have the right to receive treatment from competent mental health care professionals who respect your individualized needs.
- g. You have the right to request another mental health care professional within the department or a referral to an outside professional. Before requesting a transfer to another in-house therapist, we encourage you to discuss your concerns with your therapist or the Student Counseling and Psychological Services Director.
- h. For clients 18 years of age or older, access to records/treatment information is available only with a written release of information form, signed by the client.
- i. Cancellations must be made at least 24 hours in advance. It is the client's responsibility to reschedule any missed or cancelled appointments. Clients who miss more than 3 appointments per semester may lose eligibility for services. If you are more than 15 minutes late for an appointment, the Center reserves the right to reschedule your appointment.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

In the event of an emergency in which you are unable to reach the Student Counseling and Psychological Services, call 9-1-1, the Georgia Crisis and Access Line at 1-800-715-4225, or immediately obtain safe transportation to the nearest hospital emergency room.

I have read and understand the above statements. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the statements above and have been provided with a copy of the Student Counseling and Psychological Services's Explanation of Services and Client Rights and Responsibilities brochure.

Print Name	Client Signature	Date	Therapist Signature	Date
Parent/Guardian Signature (if client under 18)		1	Date	