

MU COUNSELING CENTER COUNSELING INFORMATION AND CONSENT FOR TREATMENT

Welcome to the MU Counseling Center. In order to better serve you, we would like to provide you with some information about our services. If you have any questions, please let your counselor know.

Eligibility: All current MU students are eligible to seek assistance at the MU Counseling Center. Your student fee covers a portion of the costs and as such, you are guaranteed the right to an initial assessment, use of urgent/crisis services (available both during the day and after hours) and assistance with referrals if we are not best suited for your needs.

First Appointment: During your first visit, called the **initial assessment session**, you will discuss your concerns and goals for treatment. This session will help both you and the assessment counselor decide how we can best help you. These services may consist of group or individual counseling or possibly a referral to an on or off-campus service that may be more appropriate to meet your needs.

What is Counseling? The MU Counseling Center utilizes a **brief, goal-focused model of therapy**. Counseling, whether group or individual, focuses on resources, solutions, and strategies to deal with your presenting problem. While your assessment counselor will ask about many areas of your life, the focus of therapy will be on working toward your specific goals.

- While most people find counseling very helpful, the process sometimes involves learning new things about yourself or your relationships that you may not like. Often growth cannot occur until you examine issues that may be painful or uncomfortable. Your therapist will be there to support you as you make the choices and changes that are required to achieve your goals. There is also the risk that you may not resolve your problem in therapy or that therapy alone is not sufficient. Should this be the case, the therapist will explore alternative plans with you.
- In order for counseling to be effective, it is necessary for you to take an active role. Participation involves discussing your concerns openly, completing assignments, and providing feedback to your counselor about the progress of counseling.

Sessions: Treatment is tailored to fit your individual needs and goals within a brief therapy model. Group counseling may range from a 6-session format, a full semester, or potentially across an academic year. Individual counseling may consist of one or several sessions, averaging 6-8 sessions.

Treatment: Based on your concerns and treatment goals, if **group therapy** at the Counseling Center is the best treatment option, you will be referred to one of the current groups. If **individual therapy** at the Counseling Center is recommended, you will be referred to a staff counselor. This counselor may or may not be the same person you saw for your assessment as we tailor services to best meet students' needs.

The MU Counseling Center may refer you to alternative sources of treatment if staff determine that the Counseling Center cannot provide the necessary services to address your needs. We can also assist you with a referral if you decide that the Counseling Center does not provide the service you desire.

Appointments: The Counseling Center's ability to provide services to the greatest number of students is dependent upon you keeping scheduled appointments.

- **Cancellations:** We expect that you will notify us at least **24 hours in advance** if you are unable to keep an appointment. Excessive cancellations may result in discontinuation of services.
- **No Shows:** If you have **two consecutive no shows or three no shows in one semester, you will not be eligible for therapy for the remainder of that semester**. Our crisis services will still be available to you.

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Your Rights:

Respect:

You can expect that your therapist will treat you with respect, listen to your concerns, and exhibit ethical behavior. All Counseling Center therapists abide by a code of professional ethics that protects the welfare of you as a client.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality is an extremely important aspect of the counseling relationship. In *most* cases, your written and signed authorization is required before any information concerning your care can be disclosed to individuals outside of the MU Counseling Center, including family, friends, partners, faculty and staff. There are times when your counselor may talk with you about signing a release of information form to discuss your care with someone outside of our office. Please note that students *younger than 18 years of age* will need written permission from their parents/guardians to receive treatment.

Below are the cases in which your signed authorization is *not* needed, in accordance with Missouri law:

- When there is a clear risk of serious, imminent harm to yourself (i.e., suicide) or harm from you to others (e.g., homicide).
- Reports of current abuse or neglect to children or vulnerable adults.
 - This reporting requirement does not apply if you are older than 18 and have been abused in the past. It would apply, even if you are 18 or older, if you told your therapist that you knew for a fact that the abuser was abusing or had abused someone who is currently under the age of 18.
 - A vulnerable adult is defined as someone due to their age or disability cannot protect their own interests or meet their own needs.
- A court order is received which orders the release of information.
- We may be required to disclose your health information to authorized federal officials who are conducting national security and intelligence activities. By law, we cannot reveal when we have disclosed such information to the government.

Group therapy: Because group therapy involves the presence of more than one individual, the therapist is limited in their ability to protect confidentiality. We ask that in these situations all those present in the therapy session ***respect the privacy of each other and refrain from discussing what went on in the group session*** with anyone not involved in the group.

Email correspondence: Emails to the Counseling Center or the individual counselors are discouraged, beyond use for scheduling purposes. As the retrieval of email is limited to business hours, it is not an effective form of communication in during a crisis. In addition, staff is unable to guarantee the confidentiality of your email as it is not transmitted through a HIPAA compliant system.

Record retention: The Counseling Center maintains a clinical record of any contact we have with our students. This information is ***only connected to the Counseling Center*** and is not part of any other medical system or academic record keeping. Records are retained for seven years from the date of the last session in accordance with state laws.

Questions?

If you have any concerns or questions about the quality or delivery of services or concerns related to the ethical conduct of a person that haven't been addressed to your satisfaction, please ask to speak to:

Anne Meyer, Ph.D. – Associate Director/Clinical Services (573) 882-6601

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