Welcome to the UNC Charlotte Counseling Center. This sheet contains information about the Counseling Center that will help you prepare for your first appointment and services that may follow.

Benefits and risks of counseling

_Counseling is a confidential process_ designed to have a positive impact on your life goals, academic achievement, personal well-being, and interpersonal relationships. Benefits may include a greater understanding of yourself, your values, and your life’s direction; decreased anxiety or depression; more effective strategies for handling stress; healthier behavior patterns; and improved relationships. Counseling involves sharing sensitive, private information that at times may be distressing or uncomfortable. However, most students tell us they feel better in the long run after engaging in counseling. Your counselor is available to offer appropriate support and challenge to you throughout the process.

Eligibility for services

All enrolled students are entitled to an initial consultation with a counselor. During this session, you will have an opportunity to discuss your concerns with a counselor, who can help you find ways to solve your problem and decide if ongoing Counseling Center services might meet your needs. These services may consist of either: problem-solving consultations (generally one to two sessions in length), continued individual or group counseling at the Counseling Center, and/or a referral to an appropriate on-campus or off-campus resource. If it is mutually decided that additional sessions at the Counseling Center would be helpful, you will be assigned to a counselor for individual counseling or offered an appointment with a group counseling leader.

In order to serve all students, our Center provides _time-limited counseling_, which allows a maximum of 12 individual sessions per academic year. Many students do not require more than one or two sessions, and most students resolve their concerns in fewer than 12 sessions. There is no limit on the number of group counseling sessions a student may receive.

Missed appointments

There is a high demand for counseling services and limited counseling resources. Students are therefore expected to keep all scheduled appointments. **In the case of an illness or emergency, the student should call to cancel the appointment as far in advance as possible so that appointment can be used by another student.**

Students who fail to show and do not call within 24 hours to reschedule the appointment are assumed to no longer be interested in counseling. Any future appointments may then be offered to someone who is waiting for services. Students who miss two appointments without calling in advance or who cancel repeatedly will lose eligibility for continued services for the semester and be referred to off-campus resources. Missed and canceled appointments are also counted as part of the maximum number of sessions allowed per academic year.

Late arrivals

If a student arrives more than 10 minutes late for an appointment, the appointment may be rescheduled. Admission for late arrivals for group counseling is at the discretion of the group leader.

Confidentiality

The ethical codes of the American Psychological Association and the National Association of Social Workers, the standards of the International Association of Counseling Services, and federal and North Carolina state law guide the policies of the UNC Charlotte Counseling Center. Under these provisions, no one outside of the Counseling Center can access any of your records without your written permission. The only exceptions to this rule of confidentiality are the following:

1. If it is your counselor’s judgment that you are at imminent risk to do physical harm to yourself or another person, it is your counselor's duty to take steps to protect your safety and the safety of others.
2. If you share information that indicates that any person under 18 years of age or any disabled adult is currently being abused, your counselor may be required by state law to report that information to the Department of Social Services.

3. If ordered to do so by a judge as part of judicial proceedings, the Counseling Center may release information contained in your counseling record.

Records containing information about your visits are stored electronically, in encrypted form, on a file server environment in a physically secure facility and are accessible only by authorized Counseling Center personnel. If you have any question concerning your records, please feel free to talk to your counselor or call 704.687.0311.

Consultation with other mental health professionals

Because the Counseling Center staff works as a team, consultations between clinical staff members often occur in order to help us provide the most effective service to you.

Some full-time counselors and all graduate student counselors at the Counseling Center receive supervision from licensed psychologists on the staff. Information you share with your counselor will be reviewed by her or his supervisor to ensure that you are receiving the highest quality of service.

Video recordings of sessions are invaluable to supervisors as they help quality service. Graduate students are required to record their sessions. All video recordings are handled with the highest level of security and deleted after they have been reviewed. Video recordings are not part of a student’s clinical record.

I give my permission to record sessions. ☐ Yes ☐ No

If your counselor is a graduate student, he or she will identify himself or herself as such. Graduate students in training are required to receive supervision on their clients from a licensed clinician at the Counseling Center. It is your right to know the name of your counselor and his or her supervisor. You also have a right to meet your counselor’s supervisor and may request to do so at any time.

The name of the counselor I will speak to is: _________________________________. My counselor is ☐ licensed to practice independently or ☐ under the supervision of a senior staff psychologist or social worker. If my counselor is under supervision, the psychologist or social worker responsible for supervision is: _____________________________________________.

Communications to and from the Counseling Center

With your permission, the Counseling Center can schedule, reschedule, and send reminders about appointments, offer referral information, and invite your participation in surveys (no more than once a semester) to help evaluate our services. The Counseling Center and its staff do not use email to communicate clinical information. Students are encouraged to call or see a counselor in person to discuss personal matters.

I give permission to receive information by email. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have read the preceding confidentiality policy of the UNC Charlotte Counseling Center and understand it. I voluntarily consent to counseling within the agreements of this policy.

___________________________________________________           ____________________
Signature                            Date

Legal Name: _____________________________________________
(please print)

Name you would like to be called (if different than above): _______________________________________
(please print)

ID #_______________________________________

Client Consent for Counseling - 07-15.doc