

WELCOME to COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

EDINBORO UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Services are available to currently enrolled Edinboro University of Pennsylvania students without cost.

You are probably here because you have some questions or concerns related to yourself or to important relationships in your life. This may be your first experience with counseling or psychotherapy (these terms are often used interchangeably). If this is the case, you may well have feelings of anxiety and/or confusion about the process of counseling or the services we provide. A few explanatory comments and guidelines may be helpful.

Our services are available while classes are in session to all currently enrolled Edinboro University of Pennsylvania students without cost. We provide assistance to resolve personal, social, family, or academic concerns that may be interfering with your ability to get the most out of life as a university student. Your participation is on a voluntary basis, but it is limited to a set number of sessions, ordinarily ten (10) per academic year. Short-term counseling by a psychologist or mental health professional is provided based on availability. Occasionally services may be provided by a psychology trainee under the supervision of a psychologist, and you will be so advised. References to a psychologist in this document also apply to any other clinical service providers at CAPS.

Our hours are from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, during each semester, except when the university is officially closed. Summer hours vary. Appointments can be made in person or by telephone.

During your initial appointment (called an intake interview), the psychologist will ask questions and listen in an effort to understand the specific concerns that have brought you here. This provides a general sense of your background and other areas of your life so that your concerns may be understood in a fuller context. The intake process usually takes only one or two meetings, although it could take several. Once an initial understanding has been reached by you and your psychologist, a recommendation will be made to you regarding how best to proceed in order to help you with your concerns. This may be individual or group counseling here at CAPS. We can also assist you to get connected with other sources of help on campus or in the community if the difficulty in question is one that is outside our competence or our resources (for instance, an academic problem that could best be helped by tutoring or career counseling, or a situation that deserves more intensive or long-term therapy than we can provide). You may contact other agencies directly at any time.

In the counseling process, it is better in the long run if we listen and help you clarify your own thinking rather than give advice or directions. Although ordinarily we work with people individually or in counseling groups, we are glad to consider whatever context makes sense for a particular situation, such as meeting with roommates or with other persons. Counseling sessions are usually 45-50 minutes long and are scheduled at regular intervals; we have found that a once-a-week schedule of sessions is ordinarily most practical and helpful. Some students come for only one or two counseling sessions, while others come for more. There are contingencies for emergencies.

You and your time are important. Expect your psychologist to keep appointments and, when necessary, to reschedule well in advance, give you complete attention during sessions, and strive to provide the most effective services possible.

A feeling of trust and safety is critical for persons to grow and learn about themselves. Therefore, the confidentiality of our work here is taken quite seriously. No one outside the center will be given any personally identifiable information about you without your written permission. We consider the very fact of your coming here to be your own business. We are, for instance, willing to see or talk to parents also, but we would only talk to them if you wanted it so. We do not get involved in administrative decisions about students whom we are seeing in counseling except for rare instances that are discussed ahead of time with the student. There is no record anywhere else of your visit here; your file is not part of your educational record and no one outside of CAPS has access to it at any time. Our own records are destroyed after a reasonable period of time. There are exceptions to confidentiality mandated by law; details of CAPS' policies are provided on an Informed Consent to Services Statement which you will be asked to read and sign. Professional organizations generally guide our practices; these include the American Psychological Association.

Should you at any time have a concern about your experience here, consult with your psychologist.

Thank you for your attention to this welcome message. We are glad you are here and are ready to assist you. Please review the following form which you will be asked to sign at your first appointment.

8/1/2011

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Informed Consent to Services Statement

The information below provides details about some of the policy and procedures guidelines of CAPS. Students requesting services are asked to read this material and to sign to acknowledge that they have done so. Thank you.

1. Eligibility for Services

Services are available to currently enrolled Edinboro University of Pennsylvania students without cost while classes are in session, including Summer School.

2. Counseling / Psychotherapy Services

We provide time-limited, short-term counseling by a psychologist, counselor, social worker, or psychology trainee receiving clinical supervision. If it is our assessment that your treatment needs deserve more intensive or long-term therapy or require resources or competencies beyond what we can provide, we will assist with a referral to an appropriate off-campus mental health or other services provider. Services are available during each semester, except when the university is officially closed. In order to serve the developmental needs of the total student body, the center may employ a waiting list which may result in a delay or delays in providing services to you.

3. Confidentiality

All communications between client and psychologist will be held in confidence. In working with you, your psychologist may consult with or receive supervision from another member of CAPS clinical staff and the staff of EUP Student Health Services concerning the service we provide you. Otherwise, information will not be revealed to anyone outside of CAPS unless you give written authorization to release the information. A copy of the form to authorize release of information is available from our secretary. Among the CAPS staff, information may be disclosed only if there is a need-to-know basis.

PLEASE NOTE: There are legal and ethical **exceptions to confidentiality** which require that the psychologist take responsible action:

(a) When there is a clear and present danger of harm to yourself or another person. In these circumstances we are legally required to take action to protect life. Thus, our actions in these circumstances may include arranging for voluntary or involuntary hospitalization, as well as notifying law enforcement authorities and/or other persons (such as family, friends, individuals at risk), as deemed appropriate.

(b) In the case of apparent child abuse or neglect, if you are a minor. In this circumstance we are legally required to report the abuse to Children and Youth Services or other appropriate county and/or state authorities.

(c) In the event of a court order or other mandatory legal process.

4. Counseling Records

Counseling files are *NOT* part of your educational records and no one has access to them except the staff of Counseling and Psychological Services. Complete records are maintained for seven years from the last date service was rendered. Subsequently, they are destroyed.

Upon written request, we will provide a copy of your treatment summary and/or other pertinent portions of your record to another mental health care provider or physician of your choice. If you request release of information to any other party, we will require personal contact with you in addition to the written request before we will release information. Disclosure in such cases will be at the discretion of CAPS.

5. The Counseling Process

Counseling is a process by which people who are dissatisfied with some aspects of their lives enter into a relationship with a trained professional to gain greater insight into their situation and to develop more effective ways of responding to life experiences. Psychologists usually do not give advice or make decisions for their clients; rather they ask questions, make comments, and provide suggestions to help you understand yourself more fully, make your own choices, and become more self-reliant. The counseling process may entail emotional pain, stress, and life change. Although counseling helps most people, it is not always or completely effective.

Physical and emotional symptoms can be caused by medical as well as psychological factors. You may wish to obtain consultation with your physician. Your compliance with a psychologist's request for medical consultation is strongly encouraged.

Progress towards your goal can only occur if you are an active participant in the process. Be ready to talk honestly about what is important to you and to make action plans for improvement based on the professional evaluation and recommendations you receive. Though a treatment plan is recommended by your psychologist following the intake process, only those approaches which you find mutually agreeable will be followed. You may request a transfer to work with a different CAPS psychologist. Services may be withheld if you are intoxicated or if other conditions exist which would substantially nullify the services and therapy process.

You may discontinue your counseling participation at any time, but there can be much to learn from planning to move on. You are encouraged to discuss this part of the counseling process with your psychologist. The final decision is, of course, yours to make. However, ***you are expected to notify CAPS and cancel any appointments previously scheduled.*** Alternatively, you may request referral to or directly contact another mental health professional or outside agency at any time. When you terminate services, you may receive a brief, routine questionnaire. We will appreciate your assistance in helping us evaluate our services in order to maintain and improve their quality.

6. We do not provide services that require court testimony or involve litigation.

7. We do not provide excuses for missed classes or assignments.

8. Staff Training

On occasion your psychologist may request your permission to record a session with you for review purposes. Such recordings are never made without your knowledge and written permission to do so. All recordings are safely secured to maintain confidentiality and erased after review.

9. Communications by E-mail and Cell Phone

Electronic mail (e-mail) communications by clients are discouraged and are inappropriate for matters involving personal or clinical concerns. Students should be aware that confidentiality of message transmission by e-mail cannot be guaranteed. CAPS' psychologists and staff may not always be capable of receiving electronic mail, nor do they regularly monitor e-mail. Similarly, the confidentiality of cell phone communications cannot be guaranteed. However, students may elect to be contacted by CAPS using these media.

10. Changing and Rescheduling Appointments

If it is necessary to change or cancel your appointment, please call 732-2252 or stop by CAPS 24-hours in advance to provide notice. However, we want to stress that a casual attitude toward keeping

appointments can significantly hinder the counseling process. You are responsible to reschedule any appointments that you miss or cancel. Please cancel any appointment you will not attend so that the time can be offered to another student. **Missed appointments, i.e. non-attendance without prior notice before a scheduled appointment time, will result in a \$15.00 fee being charged to your university student account.**

11. Termination of Services Due to Missed and Canceled Appointments

Each failure to provide 24-hour cancellation notice or to attend a scheduled appointment will be counted toward a maximum limit. ***No more than three missed and canceled appointments combined are permitted during an entire academic year, beginning with the fall semester. When a student incurs the limit of three, services at CAPS are terminated for the remainder of the academic year.*** Notice will be provided to the student via student e-mail account, if permitted, or by U.S. Mail along with a list of community referrals. Additional referral assistance may be requested from CAPS. Exception to the limit may be made by your psychologist for extraordinary circumstances. A student may appeal termination of services to the Director of CAPS.

12. Emergencies

There is no guarantee that your psychologist will be available during or outside of the usual business hours of the center. If this is a cause for concern to you, discuss the matter with your psychologist in order to arrange contingency plans.

Should a crisis or emergency situation arise after hours, students are encouraged to call Student Health Services at 732-2743 or the University Police at 732-2921 for emergency support. On-campus residents may contact a member of the Residence Life and Housing staff, alternatively. In addition, trained counselors are available 24-hours a day by calling:

456-2014 in Erie County -- Crisis Services (Safe Harbor Behavioral Health)
724-2732 in Crawford County -- Crisis Hotline/Meadville Medical Center.

In other areas, consult your local telephone directory or directory service.

If you have any questions or are not sure that you are clear about any of these policies, please feel free to discuss these matters with your psychologist.



My signature below affirms that I have read the policy statements appearing on *ALL FOUR (4) PAGES* of this "Welcome to Counseling and Psychological Services" and Informed Consent to Services Statement, and I have received a copy. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and receive further explanation.

I, (please print name) _____ hereby request counseling services from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Counseling and Psychological Services and understand and agree to all practices noted above. I understand that I may withdraw this consent and terminate counseling at any time, for any reason. Otherwise, it will remain valid during the academic year in which it is provided.

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____
Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Witness Printed Name): _____ Title: _____

SAMPLE

