



## STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICES

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

### AGREEMENT FOR INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING SERVICES

UAB Student Health and Wellness approaches health and mental health comprehensively. This document contains important information about counseling services.

#### ***Communication with Your Counselor***

Counselors communicate with clients through the Secure Patient Portal, which is part of clients' electronic medical record (see below); counselors also contact clients by phone. Except in certain circumstances, counselors do not communicate with clients by e-mail. To contact your counselor through the Secure Patient Portal, visit our website, and log-in with your Blazer ID and password.

*In the event that a counselor needs to contact me, I prefer to communicate by:*

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Secure Patient Portal

*If a counselor contacts me by phone, I request:*

- A detailed message; specific information about my counseling appointment or treatment
- A general message; request for a return call, without leaving identifying information from Counseling Services
- That he/she does not leave a message/information on my phone

#### ***Confidentiality***

State and federal laws, and the codes of ethics for counselors, prohibit counselors from releasing your mental health information to anyone, without your written authorization. However, it is important that you understand the following limits of this confidentiality:

1. Counselors may seek consultation and/or clinical supervision, if counselors believe that supplementary expertise would render the best possible service to you.
2. Alabama law requires counselors to report child abuse and neglect, suspected child abuse and neglect, elder abuse, suspected elder abuse, abuse of adult in need of protective services, and suspected abuse of an adult in need of protective services to the Department of Human Resources.
3. Counselors comply with court orders to release mental health information.

- a. The court may order counselors to testify about confidential matters, if you enter legal or administrative proceeding in which you raise the issue of your mental health status (e.g. worker's compensation claim, sanity hearing, mental distress as a result of an accident).
  - b. The court permits counselors to reveal facts about your treatment if you accuse your counselor of malpractice.
4. Counselors are required to attempt to warn and protect an intended victim(s) if they believe you pose a serious threat of physical violence to another identifiable individual.
  5. Counselors are required by law to intervene if they believe that you are in imminent danger of harming yourself.
  6. Counselors and staff within the Student Counseling Services reserve the right to contact UAB Division of Student Affairs administrative offices and/or emergency personnel for assistance if you (or other clients) display threatening or disruptive behavior.
  7. Counselors may call emergency personnel if you need emergency medical treatment (while in the Counseling Services office) and cannot give consent or directives for medical treatment.

### ***Minors and Age of Majority***

UAB students who are under 19 years of age (also known as minors) can be seen for services in Student Counseling Services. As with all students, appropriateness for treatment will be considered (i.e. severity of the problem and the best treatment options for the issue presented).

Since 19 is the "Age of Majority" in Alabama, if a student under the age of 19 discloses any current abuse being perpetrated upon a minor, counselors will seek consultation, and then if deemed necessary, make a report to the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

### ***About Counseling***

Counseling offers opportunities for you to learn to resolve problems and cope with life stressors effectively. During the course of counseling, you may experience distressing memories, feelings, and thoughts; similarly, the insights you gain may change aspects of your life, including personal relationships. You have the right to refuse to participate in any area of counseling and to limit your level of personal exploration. Counseling services are available to actively enrolled UAB students. To maximize the benefits of counseling, it is best to promptly communicate your questions, concerns, needs, and/or plans for treatment to your counselor.

### ***Limits to Counseling Services***

It is unethical for Student Counseling Services counselors to treat you if you see another mental health practitioner for individual counseling.

### ***Missed Appointments***

Since the scheduling of an appointment is a reservation of time specifically for you, **the failure to cancel a same-day appointment prior to the start of that appointment time or to cancel an advance appointment without 2-hours advance notice will result in a \$25.00 late cancellation/no-show charge.** The \$25.00 late cancellation/no-show fee will be charged to your Student account if your appointment with a provider or counselor is missed at the SHWC. If you arrive 15 minutes late for an appointment, you will be asked to reschedule. You will also be charged a late cancellation/no-show fee.

You may appeal a late cancellation/no-show fee within 30 calendar days of the appointment date when charged in error. The appeal form can be found at <http://www.uab.edu/students/health/no-show-policy>.

### ***Cancellations***

Appointments can be cancelled on the Patient Portal or by phone.

If you late-cancel (cancel with less than 24 hours' notice) twice, or miss two scheduled appointments within a school term, you are required to wait until the following term to schedule with your counselor.

### ***Inclement Weather Closings and Appointments***

In the event of inclement weather, Student Counseling Services will follow the general University closing directives (if classes are cancelled, Student Counseling Services will close and your appointment will be cancelled). Student Counseling Services is NOT considered "a clinic" or "medical services." When University operations re-open, you may contact the office during regular business hours at (205) 964-5816 to reschedule your appointment. If you experience a mental health emergency and need immediate assistance, please go to the nearest hospital emergency department or contact 911 or the UAB Police Department at (205) 934-3535. 24-hour crisis talk lines are available by calling the Crisis Center at (205) 323-7777 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255.

### ***Counseling Records***

Records of sessions with a counselor in Student Counseling Services and dates of services provided are maintained and kept in the Student Health and Wellness Center's Electronic Medical Record system which is stored in a secure data center and is encrypted. Counseling records are not part of your college educational record. In addition to licensed Student Counseling Services staff, Student Health Services physicians and nurse practitioners have access to your records for the purpose of consultation. The Student Health Services medical providers are bound by Alabama laws of confidentiality and will not discuss your records with others unless required or permitted under applicable law.

