

Addendum: Consent for Telemental Health

This document is an addendum to the Counseling Services standard Informed Consent and does not replace it. That Informed Consent is included in a section below, especially for students who have not previously reviewed and signed it. All aspects of informed consent for treatment in that section apply to Telemental Health (TMH) treatment.

What you can expect:

TMH (Telemental health) refers to services that occur via phone or videoconference using a variety of technologies. TMH is offered to improve access to Counseling Services for SUNY Broome Community College students when significant barriers of travel to campus for services exist. SUNY Broome TMH Services will include phone and video conferencing sessions and will provide a brief, short-term supportive counseling model.

However, the results of TMH cannot be guaranteed or assured. You are not required to use TMH. You have the right to request assistance with accessing other service options, which may not be with Counseling Services. You can withdraw this consent at any time without affecting your right to future care or treatment with Counseling Services.

TMH services may not be appropriate, or the best choice of service for reasons including, but not limited to: heightened risk of harm to oneself or others; lack of access to, or difficulty with, communications technology; significant communications service disruptions; or need for more intensive services. In these cases, your counselor will help you establish referrals to other appropriate services.

Benefits:

TMH services are provided to offer the following anticipated benefits:

- Increased access to care (i.e., when access to care is limited due to disabilities, transportation issues, weather, illness, or emergencies)
- Effective care, which is supported by a growing body of literature
- Convenience regarding scheduling, travel time, etc.
- Cost savings (e.g., TMH may reduce travel costs, childcare needs, time off work)
- Reduced perceived stigma (due to not being seen in an office setting)
- Social justice, since removal of barriers can create more equitable access for students

Risks:

TMH services are conducted and documented in a confidential manner according to applicable laws in similar ways as in-person services. There are, however, additional risks including:

- Sessions could be disrupted, delayed, or communications distorted due to technical failures.
- TMH involves alternative forms of communication that may reduce visual and auditory cues and increase the likelihood of misunderstanding one another.
- Your provider may determine TMH is not an appropriate treatment option or stop TMH treatment at any time if your condition changes or TMH presents barriers to treatment.
- In rare cases security protocols could fail and your confidential information could be accessed by unauthorized persons.

Student's Rights:

I have the right to withhold or withdraw my consent to the use of TMH during the course of my care at any time. I understand that my withdraw of consent will not affect any future care or treatment.

I have the right to request any record of my care via TMH through the proper channels set forth by SUNY Broome Counseling Services.

I understand that my provider has the right to withhold or withdraw consent for the use of TMH during the course of my care at any time.

I understand that the rules and regulations that apply to the provision of healthcare services in the State of New York also apply to TMH.

I understand that TMH is designed to be a short term treatment model. Should continued counseling be required, I will be helped to find an appropriate service.

Policies and Procedures:

Counseling works to reduce these risks by phone and video conferencing services and these policies and procedures:

- You may only engage in sessions when you are physically in New York State. Your provider will confirm your location at each session.
- You and your provider will engage in sessions only from a private location where you will not be overheard or interrupted.
- You will use your own phone/computer and your provider will use their phone/computer
- You will *not* record any sessions, nor will Counseling staff record your sessions without your written consent.
- You will provide contact information for at least one emergency contact in your location whom the Counseling staff may contact if you are in crisis and your provider is unable to reach you. Phone and video conferencing sessions will not commence until an emergency contact is provided.

Should there be technical problems with TMH, your provider will call you back, and/or log out of video conferencing and back in within 5 minutes. Make sure that your provider has a correct phone number at which you can be reached, and have your phone with you at session time. Phones may be used even if you have agreed to only video conferencing, if there is a technical issue and video conferencing cannot resume. If you are unable to connect, or get disconnected, please try to connect again and if problems continue call the office or send a message to your provider via the email provided. If we believe you are in crisis and we are unable to contact you, we may call your emergency contact or local emergency services providers.

Please be aware that electronic communication may not be secure. If you have concerns about phone and/or video conferencing sessions, please discuss these with your provider.

Emergencies:

SUNY Broome Counseling Services cannot provide 24-hour emergency management, particularly to those using services at a distance. If you are ever experiencing an emergency, including a mental health crisis, you agree to make use of the following 24/7 resources:

- If on campus, call Public Safety at 607-778-5083 or 9-911 from a campus phone, 911 from a non-campus phone. If in the Binghamton area, call the Crisis Center at 607-762-2302.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255.
- Contact the Crisis Text Line (<https://www.crisistextline.org/>) by texting HOME to 741741.
- Call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room.

Consent to Treatment and Notice of Privacy Practices
SUNY Broome Community College Counseling Services

Counseling Services Contract

Welcome to SUNY Broome Counseling Services. This document contains important information about our professional services. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that we can discuss them at our next meeting. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Counseling Services

Our personal counselors are licensed mental health professionals. Counseling is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and client, and the particular problems you bring forward. Counseling is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for counseling to be most effective, you need to actively participate and work on things discussed both during sessions and at home.

Counseling can have benefits and risks. Since it often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, counseling has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. It often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. But there are no guarantees of what you will experience.

At your first appointment, you will be asked to complete some initial paperwork, which requests relevant background information. Counseling sessions are typically 50 minutes in duration, unless previous arrangements have been made for longer sessions. After the intake process, counseling will make the determination if an outside specialty referral might be in the best interest of the student. In cases where long-term counseling, testing, and/or psychiatric services may be needed, the student will be referred to an off-campus resource.

SUNY Broome Counseling Services utilizes a brief solution-focused model of counseling, which means that a student will typically receive 1-5 individual counseling sessions per semester. Although many presenting issues can be addressed within a triage model, some issues are more difficult to overcome, requiring longer-term treatment. We can provide you with a referral to a counselor in the Binghamton area.

PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY

Fees: Counseling services are available to registered students at no extra fee.

You are not eligible to receive on campus counseling if you are not a registered student, or your status as a student changes while already receiving on campus counseling.

Hours of Operation: Counseling Services is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Hours are limited during winter break, spring break, summer sessions, and during State of Emergencies.

Appointments are recommended to ensure the availability of a counselor. Appointments can be made in person or over the phone. Clients with less urgent needs are encouraged to make appointments to ensure that they are seen in a timely manner. After-hours and on weekends, students are instructed to contact Public Safety at 607-778-5083 or 911 if an emergency. Public Safety will make contact with Counseling Services staff if necessary.

If you are unable to keep a scheduled appointment, or need to change a scheduled appointment, please give the Counseling staff a 24 hour notice (via email or phone), if possible. If you do not show up for a scheduled appointment 2 times within a semester (no call, no show), you may lose the privilege of using the counseling services for the remainder of that semester. If you commit to weekly sessions on a particular time and day of the week, and do not show up for one of these appointments, it might jeopardize you losing your weekly time. If you are more than 15 minutes late for a scheduled appointment, the counselor reserves the right to use the remaining time of that hour for other duties

Contacting your Counselor

Counselors are often not immediately available by telephone. In general, the Counseling Services Department is open between 8 am and 5 pm, our secretary answers calls, and can take messages. You can also use campus email, but note that electronic confidentiality cannot be assured. We make every effort to return your call or email on the same day you make it, with the exception of weekends and holidays. If you are difficult to reach, please leave some times when you will be available. In emergencies, contact your physician or the Community Psychiatric Emergency Program at 607-762-2458. If your counselor will be unavailable for an extended time, we will provide you with the name of a colleague to contact, if necessary.

Excuses and Withdrawals

Counseling Services staff does not provide letters at the time of an initial consultation and cannot provide documentation regarding a student's mental health without a history of services at SUNY Broome Counseling Services during the specified time period. If necessary, students are encouraged to seek letters of support from professionals directly involved in their care such as past or present psychological/psychiatric providers, or medical health providers.

Service Limitations

Broome Community College Counseling Services does NOT accept court mandated counseling orders for our students. Information from a student's counseling file is not intended for the purposes of employment or forensic evaluations. Counselors do not attest to the suitability of a client for a particular position or work environment or make judgments whether the client is a security risk. Counselors do not sign off for emotional support animals or service animals. Counseling Services does not prescribe or monitor psychotropic or any other medications.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

In accordance with the widely accepted principles of clinical practice, all professional and clinical contact with the personal counselors is documented. These records are property on Counseling Services and maintained by the personal counselors. A record is created and maintained for every student who has received an intake assessment or therapy/counseling. They are not a part of your academic records.

Access to Records

The counseling Services Department will adhere to a stricter policy than indicated by FERPA regulations. Clients have a limited right to receive the written copy of information contained in their records. Because these are professional records, they can be misrepresented and/or upsetting to untrained readers. When a client requests to see the record, a counselor will review the material with a client. In the event that the client's counselor is no longer employed by Counseling Services, the Chair, VPSA, or designee will review the record with the client. The Client cannot have access to reports provided by other mental health sources, or any additional paperwork contained in his/her record. Under certain circumstances the progress notes can be released to the student at the discretion of the Chair, VPSA or designee.

Release of Records

Student must sign releases to authorize any information to be shared with a third party. When the student authorizes the release of records or information to a third party external to SUNY Broome Community College, the information released may be written or verbal and include the client's attendance record and a brief summary of the client's clinical progress. Clinical data and reports from other mental health professionals or agencies cannot be released by Counseling Services. The student must request release of these records from the primary source. Consent to release records requires a statement of purpose for the released information, the identification of the recipient, and the date of expiration of the consent form.

CONFIDENTIALITY

There are some situations where counselors are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm, even if I have to reveal some information about a patient's treatment. For example, if the counselor believes that a child, elderly person, or

disabled person, is being abused, it may required that a report be filed with the appropriate state agency. If a client is threatening serious bodily harm to another, Counseling Services may be required to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting police, or seeking hospitalization for the client. If the client threatens to harm himself/herself, the counselor may be obligated to seek hospitalization for him/her or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. These situations rarely occur and your counselor will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

Your signature will be kept on file and be used as indication that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

I acknowledge that I have reviewed a copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices and understand how certain health information about me may be used and disclosed and how I may obtain access to and control this information. I also understand that I may request a copy of this notice at any time. Yes _____

I affirm that I have read this information about the policies and procedures of the SUNY Broome Community College Counseling Services and I give my consent to be treated here. Yes _____

[I have read and understand the above information and all my questions have been answered.] I hereby give informed consent to use Telemental Health in my Counseling Services care, in addition to the standard informed consent.

Name: _____

Student B#: _____

Today's Date: _____