

# Counseling Office Client Information

**Eligibility:** Counseling services are available to all currently registered students, at the University of Arkansas - Pulaski Technical College. Students include all part-time and full-time students.

**Intake Interview:** All clients are scheduled for an initial interview (intake) with a Counseling office staff member. The purpose of the intake interview is to gather information about the client, his/her concerns, background data, contributing factors to current problems, and goals for counseling. Further, the intake interview is used to identify those clients who can benefit from Counseling and those who should be referred elsewhere.

**Cancellations & Missed Appointments:** It is important that the client arrive on time for his/her appointment. If the client is not going to keep a scheduled appointment, (e.g. due to illness, absence from school, no longer wants counseling) we ask that the client call the Counseling Office or email and cancel the appointment at least 24 hours in advance at which the time the client will be asked whether or not he/she wants to reschedule.

**Concerns and Complaints:** The Counseling Office staff strives to provide counseling that demonstrates respect for every client, treats all with dignity, and is sensitive to the diversity that is present in those we serve. If your counselor does not meet these standards in counseling with you, we encourage you to let us know. First, you may take your concern directly to your counselor and attempt to resolve the issue(s) with him/her. If that interaction does not result in a satisfactory solution - or you are uncomfortable speaking directly with your counselor about your concern, request to speak with Michelle Anderson, the Dean of Student Life and Wellness (501-812-2756). The Dean of Student Life and Wellness will arrange a meeting with you to review the issue/s and attempt to find a suitable resolution.

Counseling Sessions: The Counseling Office uses a **Brief Counseling Model:** The following will be addressed: (A) identifying specific and attainable goals; (B) Attention is given primarily to the present and on some cases the past; and (C) Both counselor and client are active; homework assignments are commonly used. A counseling session is typically 50-60 minutes in length and sessions are commonly scheduled on a once/week basis.

UAPTC Counseling Services offers brief one-on-one counseling for students dealing with problems like anxiety and depression, eating and body image, alcohol and drug concerns, family, friend, roommate, and relationship problems, academic problems and life decisions, and crises and trauma.

Some difficult or long-standing problems may not be completely resolved in short-term treatment, but brief, solution-focused therapy could help facilitate subsequent personal efforts to change. In cases where long-term therapy seems best, staff will assist the student with a referral to an off-campus resource

## Client files:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) provides that students records maintained by professional counselors, physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists or other recognized professionals and para-professionals are not educational records. Therefore, client files do not become part of any permanent record at the college, but are the property of the Counseling Office. A client's file is maintained at the Counseling Office for a period of seven (7) years from the date of last contact. A client's file is destroyed after this seven (7) year period.

Clients may review their records in the presence of a Counseling Office staff member, upon written request. The request and fact that a review occurred will be noted in the client's record. Clients may receive copies of their record unless the Counseling Office, upon review, believes disclosure would be detrimental to the client's health or well-being. The client file of a person who is not a student, including but not limited to, a staff member, faculty member, student's spouse, etc., is not an educational record.

Client session notes are kept in a safe, secure location and stored and maintained in the client's file. The entire file including client demographic information and other personal information is maintained in a secured location that can only be accessed by the counselor.

## Disclosure of Client Records:

Arkansas law recognizes the privilege that attaches to the counselor-client. The privilege is extended only to licensed counselors and psychologists. Should the Counseling Office/Counselor receive a subpoena for client records, college legal counsel will be consulted prior to taking any action. Clients will be notified in advance, if at all possible, of any compliance with a court order, state or federal law that might require disclosure of client records

## E-mail Communication:

E-mail is an important means of communication. However, e-mail is not a secure means to transmit confidential information. Therefore, the Counseling Office will use e-mail to communicate with clients only (a) in response to the client's initiation and (b) with the client's consent to send messages to their e-mail address