WELLNESS CENTER
INFORMED CONSENT TO COUNSELING

GENERAL INFORMATION

Counseling is a process in which individuals meet with trained professionals to gain greater insight into their circumstances and to develop more effective ways of handling and responding to their situations.

Counselors do not give advice but seek to help you understand yourself and your situation more fully so that you may see your options more clearly and make good decisions for yourself.

Though we cannot guarantee specific results toward your personal or career goals, counseling does benefit many people, and we will do our best to achieve the best results for you.

You have the right for information to be explained in plain language and to ask questions if you do not understand. These sessions are to assist you! You have the right to be treated respectfully by your counselor as well as to terminate counseling at any time.

Students at Wofford College may receive counseling for no charge. Our goal is to get students in for an appointment within two weeks. Most students that attend counseling regularly average about 15 sessions per academic year. If students require a greater frequency of sessions than what the counseling staff can provide, we will work with the student to identify other resources and providers off campus that can provide the frequency and intensity of services that are needed. Students may also refer to the Off Campus Counseling Referral Guide on the Counseling Services website.

Counseling Services staff are only able to provide direct clinical services to students when they are enrolled in the current term and when classes are in session. If students are not enrolled or have withdrawn from the college, they are not able to access Counseling Services. During any academic breaks, students may still access support from the Terrier Care Line (Wofford's 24hour Mental Health Support Line - 864-597-4393) and/or from a provider at home.

At times, a student may be dealing with issues that are beyond the scope of the providers on campus. For example, substance use and eating disorders are diagnoses that may require specialized care. In those cases, students will be referred to specialists off campus that can best help them with their needs. The cost of that treatment will be the responsibility of the student.

Counseling services staff are always happy to assist students with finding treatment options off campus, if necessary.

Wofford does provide psychiatric services on a limited basis. Students who see the psychiatrist must be working with one of the counselors at the Counseling Center. Psychiatric appointments will be scheduled with the Office Administrator upon check out or with your therapy provider.

There is a cost associated with seeing the psychiatrist.

- Initial assessment with the psychiatrist is $35.
- Follow-up appointments are $15.

WELLNESS CENTER
INFORMED CONSENT TO COUNSELING (CONT.)

SCHEDULING

Please use the Wellness Center Portal to schedule appointments. Your provider will discuss the appropriate frequency of your sessions with you. You may use the Wellness Center Portal or call the office at least 24 hours in advance if you need to reschedule or cancel your appointment.

While we do not charge for late cancellations or no-shows, we ask you to remember that there are other people who may be seeking appointment times.

If you are encountering a difficult time and need an appointment more quickly than the next available appointment, please email **counselingservices@wofford.edu** You will be contacted by a provider to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

If you are struggling to find an appointment time but not encountering an emergency, please schedule the next available appointment that works with your schedule. Some students choose to schedule a few sessions out to ensure that they can find a time that works for them. You may then discuss with your provider at your next appointment any scheduling difficulties so that they can assist you.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND COMMUNICATION

Your communication with your counselor is confidential. At times, counselors may consult with each other to assess appropriate support. This information is kept confidential within the clinical staff. Counseling staff may also collaborate with medical staff including the Nurse Practitioner and/or Psychiatrist as part of the integrated care team. Any information that is shared within the Wellness Center is kept confidential according to HIPAA guidelines. You may read the Notice of Privacy Practices for more detailed information.

Please be aware that communications via phone lines may not be confidential because we cannot guarantee absolute security of this method. We have taken steps to ensure confidentiality through our systems. Any written communication, including e-mails, secure messages, and text messages, becomes part of the client's file.

While we make every effort to respond to client communication (phone calls, emails, secure messages) in a timely manner, it may not be possible to respond to them for at least 24 hours or until the next business day. We ask that you use the secure messaging feature on the Wellness Center portal when communicating through electronic means. While we understand that e-mail is a fast and convenient form of communication on a college campus, we cannot ensure the security and confidentiality of this type of communication. If you choose to use email to communicate with your provider, our staff will assume that you have made an informed decision and are accepting the risks associated with that type of communication. E-mails and secure messages should not be used for a crisis situation.

If you are in a crisis in need of immediate assistance, you may contact Campus Safety at (864) 597-4911 or the RA or RLC on duty.

WELLNESS CENTER
INFORMED CONSENT TO COUNSELING (CONT.)

Information shared by you with your counselor will not be released without your permission, except for the following legal and ethical exceptions:

- If, in your counselor's professional opinion, you present an imminent threat of serious harm to yourself or others.
- If you disclose actual or possible abuse or neglect of a minor or vulnerable person, we are required to report the information to the appropriate department or social services.
- If we are ordered by a court of law to release information about you.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read, understand and accept the information and conditions in this document and to provide that you have informed consent to participate in personal or career counseling.

STATEMENT ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

Counselors do not accept friend or follow requests from clients. Social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn) is considered public communication. Connecting on these platforms could compromise your confidentiality. Interacting on these platforms could create the possibility that these exchanges would become part of counseling records.

As we understand that clients will go on to graduate and may encounter former counselors in another capacity that is no longer within the scope of the therapeutic relationship, there may be the opportunity to make case-by-case decisions a certain number of years after graduation.

However, your counselor will never initiate an invitation to connect on social media.

STATEMENT ABOUT EMOTIONAL ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

Wofford Counseling Services staff are not able to provide assessments, recommendations or documentation to support the need for an Emotional Support Animal. ESAs are viewed under the Federal Housing Act as a "reasonable accommodation" for those who have a physical or mental disability. Wofford College guidelines and procedures for ESAs can be found by visiting the Accessibility Services website.

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the above and have access to a copy of this form.

_____ _____

Signature Date