

Bill of Client Rights

1. To consult with a counselor who will help you identify key issues and potential resources and strategies for assistance. Recommended resources might include CS or other services available at NAU, in Flagstaff or in other communities. A consultation or counseling session can take up to 45 minutes.

Counseling is a conversation or series of conversations between you and a trained professional, who may be a psychologist, a social worker, a counselor or a trainee. A trainee is an advanced graduate student or recent graduate who is in the process of being trained as a professional so they can get their professional licensure. The conversations between you and the professional are intended to help you clarify confusing issues in your life, or to help you manage difficult relationships, or to help you find ways to lessen emotional distress.

If more than the initial assessment is recommended, the frequency of sessions, number of sessions, goals, and type of counseling (e.g., either individual or group counseling) will be determined by you and your counselor within the limits of our center's resources and within our professional staff's clinical expertise. CS is designed to address short-term issues and concerns; issues requiring longer-term treatment will be referred elsewhere. Sometimes students may find that a referral to a counselor off campus will more likely meet their counseling needs; your counselor will help you with such a referral, if appropriate.

Group counseling brings people with common therapeutic goals together. CS groups are professionally led and are typically 90-minute weekly meetings for about 10 weeks of the semester. Frequently offered groups deal with: enhancing relationships, support for relaxation/stress management, women's issues, alcohol/drug education and recovery, eating and body image concerns, and personal growth.

2. To have what you say be confidential. What you say during counseling is confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone without your permission. Notes from meetings - along with any related items such as correspondence, psychological inventories, or referral information - will also be kept secure and confidential and will not be shared with anyone without your permission.

There are, however, some exceptions to confidentiality. Mental health professionals are required by law, and by their professional ethics, to break confidentiality if any of the following situations arise: (a) If a counselor believes that someone is seriously considering and likely to attempt suicide; (b) if a counselor believes that someone intends to assault another person; (c) if a counselor believes someone is engaging or intends to engage in behavior which will expose another person to a potentially life-threatening communicable disease; (d) if a counselor suspects abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a minor or of an incapacitated adult; (e) if a counselor believes that someone's mental condition leaves the person gravely disabled; (f) if ordered by the courts.

3. To receive quality team treatment. Another exception to confidentiality involves our team approach at CS. Supervision: All trainees and unlicensed staff counselors receive regular supervision from another professional at this center, who will be reviewing the progress of your counselor's work with you. Digital Recording: Counselors may electronically record their counseling work for training purposes and to assure quality service. If your counselor's work will be recorded, s/he will explain such procedures to you and request your informed consent in advance. Consultation: (a) To ensure the quality of comprehensive services, counselors may consult with health service providers at Campus Health Services-Medical Services. (b) Counseling Services is part of Campus Health Services, which also includes Medical Services. On a regular basis, the counseling staff meets with staff from Medical Services to coordinate treatment. (c) The Director of Disability Resources (DR) at NAU often consults with CS regarding students. On a regular basis, the counseling staff meets with the Director of DR to coordinate treatment of clients. Shared information: CS and Medical Services share an electronic health record system and, when treatment reasons arise, consult with each other through secured messages and through shared secured chart notes.

Confidential information about the characteristics of the students who utilize CS and the services students have received is maintained in a secure, electronic database. This information is gathered for the

purposes of program evaluation, and, in selected situations, research studies. Research results are provided only in summarized form and will not identify individual clients.

If a student uses Emergency Services (during regular hours or after hours), it may be necessary to let others in the University system know you are in crisis in order to coordinate services for you and/or to minimize the negative impact the crisis might have on others in the community. We therefore may notify Residence Life, Student Life, Police, and/or Medical Services with only minimal information. We may also notify family members and/or other appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of you or other persons.

4. To know the costs of services. Information regarding costs are available on the center website, as part of the initial assessment, and at Patient Services.

5. To receive after-hours support. Individuals experiencing a psychological emergency after-hours (evenings, weekends, holidays) may contact the Counseling Services on-call provider for support and safety planning by calling 928-523-2261.

6. To be referred to Disability Resources when appropriate. Individuals struggle with many different concerns. Sometimes these concerns indicate a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Please feel free to discuss with your counselor whether your concerns might constitute a disability and whether you might want to talk with a coordinator in Disability Resources at NAU (phone: 928-523-8773). Please note: Counseling Services staff members do not write letters of support for assistance animals at the request of a client/student.

7. To give feedback to your counselor. In addition to an anonymous survey CS conducts each semester, you are encouraged to tell your counselor what is helping and what is not. This feedback can increase the effectiveness of counseling as well as your overall satisfaction with the process and outcomes. Should you decide that you would like to switch to a different counselor at Counseling Services, you will be encouraged to speak directly to your current provider about this decision. If you are not comfortable with this, you will be asked to speak to either the CS Director or CS Clinical Coordinator before being permitted to switch counselors. If you have any concerns regarding your client rights, please contact Julie Ryan, Executive Director, phone 928-523-6343 or Julie.Ryan@nau.edu.

Please note: E-mail is not a confidential form of communication with Counseling Services or with your counselor and staff members may not check e-mail after-hours or on weekends. If an emergency arises, please use the telephone to contact us at 928/523-2261; this CS office number provides access to emergency services during and after office hours.

Counseling Services staff members do not interact with, accept friend or contact requests, or “follow” current or former clients on any social networking site (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) or blog. Doing so blurs the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship and interferes with everyone’s right to privacy. Additionally, these sites do not offer a technologically secure forum and the client’s confidentiality is very likely to be compromised through interactions that are publically viewable.