INFORMED CONSENT FOR IN-PERSON SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Northern Arizona University (NAU)
Counseling Services (CS)

This document contains important information about NAU’s decision to initiate/resume in-person services in light of the COVID-19 public health crisis. Please read this carefully and let your provider know if you have any questions. Your signature and initials indicate that you are aware of the risks associated with in-person services and you agree to follow all Campus Health Services/Counseling Services safety precautions.

Decision to Meet Face-to-Face
You have agreed to meet in person for some, or all, future sessions. However, if there is a resurgence of the pandemic or if other health concerns arise, it may be required that your appointments are provided via telehealth. If you have concerns about meeting through telehealth, you will talk to your counselor about it first and try to address any issues. You understand that, if your counselor believes it is necessary, they may determine that a return to telehealth is required for everyone’s well-being. If you should decide at any time that you would feel safer staying with telehealth services, your decision will be honored, as long as it is feasible and clinically appropriate.

Risks of Opting for In-Person Services
You understand that by coming to NAU’s CS, and by engaging in a service that requires you to spend approximately 45-50 min in an enclosed room, you are assuming the risk of exposure to COVID-19 (or other public health risk). This risk may increase if you travel by public transportation, cab, or ridesharing service.

Your Responsibility to Minimize Your Exposure
To obtain services in person, you agree to take certain precautions, which will help keep all of us safer from exposure, sickness and possible death. If you do not adhere to these safeguards, your counselor reserves the right to shift to a telehealth arrangement. Initial each statement below to indicate that you understand and agree to these actions:

• You will only keep your in-person appointment if you are symptom free and you have not tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 10 days.____
  o CDC symptoms of COVID include:
    ▪ Fever or chills
    ▪ Cough
    ▪ Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
    ▪ Fatigue
    ▪ Muscle or body aches
    ▪ Headache
    ▪ New loss of taste or smell
    ▪ Sore throat
    ▪ Congestion, runny nose
    ▪ Nausea or vomiting
    ▪ Diarrhea
• Campus Health Services/Counseling Services personnel will take your temperature before coming to each appointment. If it is elevated (100 Fahrenheit or more), or if you have other symptoms of COVID-19, CS will cancel your appointment at no charge to you or proceed using telehealth.____
• You will not enter Campus Health Services/Counseling Services more than 5 minutes before the start of your appointment, unless you have been instructed to arrive early for paperwork completion.____
• You will adhere to the safe distancing precautions set up in the waiting room. For example, you will not move chairs or sit where signs have been placed asking you not to sit.____
• You will wear a mask in all areas of the building until you reach your counselor’s office. At that time, you and your counselor will discuss whether either of you feels more comfortable keeping your masks on during your appointment.____
• You will keep a distance of 6 feet from your counselor and other CS staff/clients, and there will be no physical contact (e.g. no shaking hands, hugs) with CS staff.____
• If you have a job that exposes you to other people who are infected, you will immediately let your counselor know.____
• If someone you live with tests positive for COVID or is demonstrating related symptoms, you will immediately let your counselor know and CS will then shift to counseling via telehealth.____
CS may change the above precautions if additional local, state, or federal orders or guidelines are published. If there is a resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic or if other health concerns arise, NAU may require that counseling appointments be conducted via telehealth as appropriate. If you have concerns about meeting through telehealth, you can discuss these concerns with your counselor, who will assist you with community referral recommendations as appropriate.

NAU’s Commitment to Minimize Exposure
NAU’s CS has taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 within the office and has posted details related to these efforts on the website and in the office. Please let your counselor know if you have questions about these efforts.

If You or Your Counselor are Sick
You understand that CS is committed to keeping the NAU community safe from the spread of COVID-19. If you present for an appointment and staff have reason to believe that you have a fever or other symptoms, or believe you have been exposed, you will be asked to leave the office immediately. You will be given the option of rescheduling or following up with services by telehealth as appropriate. Should you be exposed, resources can be found here.

If a CS staff member that you had contact with tests positive for COVID-19, you will be notified immediately so that you can take appropriate precautions and/or seek out testing.

Your Confidentiality in the Case of Infection
If you or others with you in the CS waiting room have tested positive for COVID-19, CS may be required to notify local health authorities that you have been in the office for contact tracing purposes. If this report is necessary, CS will only provide the minimum required information, and will not go into any detail about the reason for your visits. By signing this form, you are agreeing that CS may do so without an additional signed release.

Telehealth Appointments
If CS decides at any time that your in-person services should be suspended for safety purposes, CS can provide secure Zoom video conferencing telehealth services if you meet the following standards for feasible and clinically appropriate telehealth:

- You are physically located in Arizona.
- You provide a back-up means of communication in case the technology fails.
- You use a secure internet connection.
- You attend your sessions in a safe and private space.
- You are not at risk of acting on thoughts of suicide or harming others. If you experience suicidal or homicidal thoughts or behaviors which cannot be managed on an outpatient basis, CS may contact local authorities for a welfare check. CS may also refer you to a higher level of care in your community.

Informed Consent
This Informed Consent supplements the general informed consent that you signed at the initiation of counseling services.

Your signature below shows that you agree to these terms and conditions.

_____________________________  ______________________________
Client                                                   Date

_____________________________
ID#

_____________________________
Parent/Guardian (if client is under 18 yrs of age)  Date