

## **CAPS INFORMATION and CONSENT FOR TREATMENT**

*We truly wish to welcome you to CAPS. We respect and support your decision to receive services and want you to know our goal is to provide you with a sense of hope, understanding, and respect.*

It is the practice of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to provide information to those interested in beginning treatment so that you may be familiar with important aspects of our operation and counseling/psychotherapy in general. We encourage you to read this thoroughly and ask your counselor any questions you have, either about our means of operation or counseling/psychotherapy in general.

### **General Information Regarding Treatment**

Research has demonstrated that counseling/psychotherapy is effective with the vast majority of clients. According to the American Psychological Association, nine out of ten Americans surveyed by *Consumer Reports* said that counseling/psychotherapy had helped them. Success of treatment depends on several variables including the nature, chronicity and severity of your problems, and the effort that you put into your therapy process.

It is natural and expected that strong feelings and/or uncomfortable thoughts may arise during the course of counseling/psychotherapy. Coming to an understanding of such feelings is an important part of the process. It is strongly encouraged that you discuss with your counselor any concerns you may have about your treatment.

Finally, it is important to know that other modalities of therapy are available. You should feel free to explore these other therapies or work with another clinician if you find that CAPS services are not as helpful as you would like. We can provide referrals to other clinician within CAPS or in the community, if desired.

### **CAPS Office Policies**

All current FGCU students can receive counseling/therapy services free of charge. There is a cost recovery fee for some testing services. Your clinician will discuss any testing fee with you prior to rendering services.

Generally, you and your clinician will meet for 50-minute sessions. The frequency of these sessions and the length of the counseling/psychotherapy are aspects of the work that your clinician and you decide together. It is important to begin on time since the schedule requires that your clinician end the session promptly, which means that if you start late, you may not have a full 50-minute session.

There will be times when your clinician will be out of the office at educational conferences, vacation, etc. You and your clinician will decide if it is appropriate for another CAPS clinician to see you during these times.

Messages can be left with the office staff (239-590-7950) Monday through Thursday 8AM- 6 PM and from 8AM- 5PM on Fridays. You may also contact us through email (CAPS@fgcu.edu). However, email is not considered a confidential form of communication and you should use your discretion when using email for communication of a sensitive nature. You may leave a confidential message on the CAPS voice mail at any time. Please be aware that messages are not retrieved when the office is closed (nights, weekends, and holidays). Also, understand that many of our staff are not in the office every day and non-emergency messages may not be received and returned for several days.

The following procedures are in place in case of emergency situations. If you experience a crisis that cannot wait until your next scheduled counseling appointment, during the day you may call the CAPS office and one of our clinicians will see you or speak with you as soon as possible. If you are an on-campus student, nights,

weekends, and holidays, you may contact the FGCU Police dispatcher at 590-1900 and he or she will contact the CAPS on-call clinician. If you are an off-campus student, you should go to the emergency room at the nearest hospital or call 911. The time to use an emergency room or call 911 is when someone's physical safety is at risk. Another alternative is to contact the hotline at the Lee Mental Health Center/Vista, at (239) 275-4242.

### **CAPS Attendance Policy**

Serving the needs of over 9000 students with a limited number of staff is quite demanding. CAPS makes every effort to provide individual services as quickly and efficiently as possible. Due to the demand for counseling and psychiatry services, we must adhere to an attendance policy.

This policy applies to students receiving services from any member of the clinical staff, including psychiatrists, case manager, or graduate clinicians.

- (1) Clients who need to cancel or change their appointment WITH A PSYCHIATRIST must do so 24 hours prior to their appointment to avoid a \$45 charge to their student account.
- (2) Clients who need to cancel or change an appointment with any other clinician are expected to do so as early as possible. Contacting CAPS before your appointment time to cancel is required to hold a place in your provider's schedule as an on-going appointment.
- (3) Clients who **no show** for an appointment with any clinician, or do not notify the CAPS Office of a cancellation prior to their appointment time, must call to reschedule within 24 hours or the appointment will be removed from the schedule of their clinician and the psychiatrist.
- (4) CAPS is not a medication clinic. Clients who are seeing a CAPS psychiatrist are required to be either in case management or in ongoing therapy/counseling. Clients who are being seen by our psychiatrist but fail to comply with the attendance policy for case management or ongoing therapy/counseling will be removed from both the psychiatrist's and clinician's schedule. Clients who wish to get back onto the psychiatrist's schedule must meet with a clinician about re-entering the process.
- (5) Only one **no show** for an appointment is allowed in a semester, regardless of whether this is with clinician or a psychiatrist.
- (6) Only three missed appointments total are allowed during the semester, cancellation or no-show, combined from all clinical services. For example, if you no-show a therapy appointment, and cancel two psychiatrist appointments, you will be ineligible for any service for the remainder of the semester. Emergency services are excluded.

Clients who do not comply with this Attendance Policy will become ineligible for CAPS services (psychotherapy, testing, and psychiatry) for the remainder of the semester. Your clinician will provide you with a list of community referrals if you wish to continue with counseling and/or psychiatry services.

### **Record Keeping**

All CAPS clinical records (including intake report, progress notes, assessments or testing reports, consults, and psychiatrist notes) are confidential and not part of any university records. State laws and professional ethics and rules assure this confidentiality. CAPS keeps most records on a secured electronic database. When you make an appointment at CAPS, a confidential file is electronically created for you using your student ID number. Our secured database is separate from all other data keeping systems on campus.

## **Confidentiality/Release of Confidential Information**

CAPS has both a legal and an ethical duty to ensure that clinician/client communications remain confidential, but there are certain legal requirements that may override this duty. According to Florida statutes, there are five exceptions to maintaining confidentiality:

- (1) If CAPS has reason to believe that a child, elder or disabled person is being abused, neglected, or taken advantage of, we are legally obligated to disclose this information to a state agency.
- (2) CAPS may choose to disclose confidential information if we believe someone's safety is seriously/immediately at risk.
- (3) Confidential information may be disclosed when the clinician or psychiatrist is a defendant in a civil, criminal or disciplinary action brought against the therapist or arising from the therapy.
- (4) If there is a waiver (i.e. an Authorization to Release Confidential Information) obtained in writing from the client.
- (5) If a client's mental status or emotional condition is introduced at a legal proceeding, by subpoena, CAPS may be required to turn records over to a court or testify.

We are not experts in matters involving the law, and do not conduct evaluations ordered by a court. If a client is involved in, or intends to commence, a legal proceeding in which any aspect of his or her mental or emotional functioning will be at issue, it is essential that this matter be discussed as soon as possible. A client involved in litigation is potentially subject to certain additional exceptions to the right to confidential communication.

Should it be necessary to release confidential information in a situation where you are not signing a consent to release this information, your clinician will make every reasonable effort to discuss this matter with you first. When possible, it is our preference to make any such disclosures together, from the CAPS office.

At times, CAPS staff will consult with each other when we judge that doing so would be helpful to your care. When speaking with other CAPS staff, every effort to maintain confidentiality will be made. Any CAPS staff with whom your counselor speaks is also bound by confidentiality.

As CAPS is a teaching facility, your clinician may be a graduate student in the field of counseling or social work. This student may ask to audio or videotape sessions with you. You will be notified if your clinician is a student and which of our licensed staff clinicians provides his or her direct supervision.

Psychiatric services and other special consultations and referrals with FGCU Student Health Services require that we release a limited amount of information about you and your situation to facilitate the best care possible for you. Any written information that we send that office on your behalf becomes part of the medical chart kept by Student Health Services, and maintains the same level of confidentiality. Please indicate below your preferences regarding release of this information.

We cannot fax or email confidential records. If you need a treatment summary sent to another provider, please come to the office to sign the Consent for the Release of Confidential Information. Provide the name, address, and telephone number of the person to who information is being released.

