

Medical Student Counseling Center
University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine
Client Rights, Responsibilities, and Informed Consent

The following policies and procedures pertain to clinical services provided to medical and physician assistant students through the Medical Student Counseling Center. We ask that you read this information and acknowledge that you have read and understand it.

I have the right...

- To confidentiality under federal and state laws.
- To be informed of and ask questions about services including the qualifications of my counselor.
- To be a collaborative partner with my counselor in the development of plans and goals.
- To make an informed decision about whether to accept or refuse counseling.
- To withdraw or terminate services at any time.
- To select a counselor of my choice.

I understand ...

Eligibility, Scope, and Location of Services

The Medical Student Counseling Center (MSCC) staff of licensed clinicians offers confidential academic support, career and personal counseling services to medical and physician assistant students enrolled in the Carver College of Medicine. The Center location is 1240 MERF in the Carver College of Medicine. A satellite office is located in GH 238. MSCC services are available Monday-Friday, 8AM -5PM. Earlier or later appointment times may be available by request.

During periods when in-person courses and clerkships are suspended at the University of Iowa and Carver College of Medicine, and/or when a student located in Iowa requests a telehealth appointment, MSCC appointment-based services will be available through telehealth including telephone and Zoom video-conferencing.

Medical and physician assistant students must read this information sheet and confirm they have done so to participate in in-person and/or telehealth session(s). Telehealth sessions must be scheduled in advance.

Most commonly, an initial appointment will be for a consultation, wherein you and your counselor will collaboratively determine services of best fit for you.

If it is determined that your needs indicate more intensive services or require resources or competencies beyond what MSCC counselors can provide, we will assist with a referral to an appropriate health care provider.

Students on leave of absence may continue to receive MSCC services. Withdrawal or dismissal from school may limit eligibility.

Telehealth Policies and Procedures

To receive an initial consultation via telehealth, we require that you provide your name, student status, local address, current telephone number, and address of current location.

Telehealth sessions will take place through a telephone call or the Zoom video-conferencing platform, and the counselor will explain how to use it.

All parties are prohibited from recording a session.

Clients must use a smartphone, tablet, or computer with a webcam to participate in a video-conferencing session.

Clients must agree to be in a quiet, private space that is free of distractions during the session.

Clients must agree to use a secure internet connection rather than public/free Wi-Fi.

It is important to be on time. If a client needs to cancel or change a telehealth appointment, the client must notify the counselor in advance by phone or email.

To provide services remotely, your counselor will create a back-up plan with you (e.g., phone number where you can be reached) to restart the session or to reschedule it, in the event of technical problems.

Your counselor will discuss a safety plan that includes at least one emergency contact and the closest emergency department to your location, in the event of a crisis situation.

Your counselor will ask you to confirm your current location. Because MSCC counselors are licensed to practice only within the state, counselors are not permitted to provide mental health counseling for students when the student is located outside of the State of Iowa.

Emergency Procedures

Your counselor will review resources and procedures if you need mental health care after hours. For urgent or emergency mental health needs outside of MSCC hours, 24-hour resources in Iowa City include: CommUnity Local Crisis Line: 319-351-0140 and UIHC Psychiatry Resident on Call: 319-351-1616. In the event of a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1

Risks and Benefits of Services

There are potential risks and benefits associated with receiving counseling and mental health services through the MSCC. MSCC counseling services may involve the risk of remembering unpleasant events, may arouse strong emotions, and may impact relationships with significant others. The potential benefits from MSCC counseling services may be increased self-understanding, increased capacity and skills to cope and deal with stressors, and reduction of troublesome mental health symptoms. Engaging in counseling may lead to greater personal growth.

Additional risks associated with telehealth may include but are not limited to the possibility that, despite reasonable efforts on the part of the counselor, the transmission of client personal information could be disrupted or distorted by technical failures and/or the transmission of personal information could be interrupted by unauthorized persons. During University shutdowns, MSCC counselors may be located away from MSCC offices, typically in their homes. Clients will be verbally informed of the location of their counselor. Counselors will do their best to secure confidential space but soundproofing and protection from interruption by other members of households cannot be guaranteed. Similarly, clients should be mindful of the privacy and security of their own physical and on-line environment.

Telehealth services may not be as complete as face-to-face services. Remote counselors may have access to the clinical scheduler and documentation system, but that access is not guaranteed. When practicing in the absence of access to the case documentation, counselors may be working with limited background information. Additionally, if a counselor is not able to access the clinical documentation system, they may keep session notes on printed paper in a secured location until they are able to transfer the information at a later time.

Confidentiality

All MSCC counseling services are confidential and will not, except under the circumstances explained below, be disclosed to anyone unless you give written authorization. A copy of our authorization for release of information form is available from an MSCC staff member. In situations involving danger and/or risk of imminent harm to yourself or specifically identified others, child abuse, or dependent adult abuse, your counselor is required to disclose certain information in order to protect you and/or others. In certain legal situations (for example, lawful court order of your counseling records or your use of mental condition as a legal defense), your counselor is required to disclose information as necessary to comply with the law in that situation. If at all possible, your counselor will discuss the procedures for doing this with you and enlist your assistance in resolution of the situation that has necessitated such disclosure.

Electronic Communication

Email is not a secure mode of communication and should not be used to communicate private information. Please use session time or the telephone to speak directly with your counselor when sharing private information. The MSCC may use email for the purpose of scheduling appointments with your agreement. MSCC counselors neither accept nor seek out friend/contact/message invitations from current or former clients on any electronic social network.

Counseling Records

MSCC counseling files are not part of academic records and no one has access to them except the professional staff of the MSCC. Records are maintained electronically in a secure data base for seven years and then destroyed.

You may review your counseling records. This review follows established MSCC procedures as well as University, state and federal laws pertaining to confidentiality and release of healthcare information.

Upon your written request, we will provide a written summary of your record to another licensed health care provider of your choice. If you request release of information to any other individual, we will request a written release and may request personal contact with you to discuss the type of information to disclose. Couples counseling notes require the written release of both participants per this office's policies.

Staff Consultation

Your counselor may consult with or receive supervision from another MSCC clinical staff member concerning the service we provide you.

Changing or Missing Appointments:

If you need to change or cancel your appointment, please contact your counselor by phone or email as soon as possible.

Evaluation

The MSCC seeks to evaluate and improve its services to students by conducting utilization and outcome measures of counseling services. Evaluation information is always reported in aggregate and does not include any identifying information.

I am responsible for...

- Participating in the counseling process.
- Rescheduling or cancelling an appointment I am not able to appear at as scheduled.
- Contributing to the development of plans and goals with my counselor.

I have read and understand the above and any questions have been addressed.

Client Signature

Date

Client Name (please print)