



Counseling Services

Subject: Scope of Service

Page: 1 of 4

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PURPOSE

Counseling Services (CS) offers care that is provided by licensed mental health staff or direct supervisees, within an appropriate scope of practice, meaning delivering services consistent with level of training, experience, and competence. Services are provided to clients appropriate for outpatient mental health services while they are enrolled as students at USC Upstate. If it is determined that a client requires services outside of CS' scope of practice or care, staff will assist clients by providing an appropriate referral.

POLICY

CS will provide the following services to students of USC Upstate:

- Individual Counseling (Face-to-Face and Distance Counseling)
- Group Counseling
- Couples Counseling
- Mandated Assessments
- Consultations
- Crisis Interventions
- Medication Management (Contract Based Tele-Psychiatry)
- Supervision of Trainees
- Educational Workshops

Exclusions to Care

Counseling Services' scope of care has certain exclusions. The list of exclusions below are guidelines only and decisions will be at the exclusive discretion of the Director of CS, and may include a clinical discussion with CS' consulting Psychiatrist. Please note that not all clinical concerns are appropriate for Distance Counseling or Tele-Psychiatry services. Some examples of clinical issues that may need to be addressed through a community referral include but are not limited to:

- Individuals with chronic mental health conditions that require longer-term, ongoing care, including some personality disorders.
- A need to be seen more frequently than CS can accommodate (beyond 3-4 times per month).
- Excessive utilization of urgent walk-in services indicating standard session frequency is inadequate. Excessive utilization of crisis services may be defined as walk-ins occurring weekly, in addition to weekly attendance of standard sessions.
- Chronic suicidality and/or recent history of multiple suicide attempts (inclusive of or greater than 2).
- Severe and chronic self-injury.
- A history of multiple psychiatric hospitalizations (inclusive of or greater than 2).
- Multiple Relationships: A multiple relationship occurs when a CS staff member is in a professional role with a client and at the same time is in another role with the client or may reasonably come into another role with the client. Consideration should also be made of developing relationships with others who might be in a close personal relationship with a client. CS staff are to refrain from entering into a multiple relationship if it could reasonably be expected to impair the staff member's objectivity, competence or effectiveness in performing her or his functions as a professional, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the client with whom the professional relationship exists.

Issues that require more specialized care than can be provided at CS, including:

- Significant or chronic disordered eating symptoms posing medical danger
- Significant or chronic substance use/abuse which compromises therapy or physical health and well-being
- Active symptoms of psychosis at risk for progressive deterioration

Other reasons why we may decline services and/or refer individuals to community resources include but are not limited to:

- Lack of motivation or engagement in treatment, as evidenced by:
 - Unwillingness to provide information sufficient for clinical assessment
 - Inability to identify treatment goal(s) appropriate for therapy
 - Inconsistent attendance as evidenced by multiple cancellations or no-shows, despite educational guidance offered by CS (greater than 3 per semester)
 - Attending sessions when intoxicated or under the influence of drugs
 - Poor compliance with treatment recommendations
 - Failure to follow through with recommended treatment in the context of multiple crisis intervention sessions
- Ongoing treatment relationship with another mental health provider to avoid duplication of service and/or mitigate conflicting recommendations
- Inappropriate, harassing, menacing, stalking, threatening, or violent behaviors towards other clients, staff or contract employees
- When any clinical staff member determines that treatment would be detrimental to the client or to the proper functioning of the department

- Other situations that are determined to be outside the scope of services as defined by the Director of CS

Emotional Support Animals

CS will not write letters for Emotional Support Animals (ESA) in accordance with American Counseling Association's 2019 recommendations. A Clinician cannot predict an animal's behavior, and an emotional support animal is very different from a service animal. In addition, an ESA is a recommendation of the provider rather than procured at the request of someone seeking an ESA.

Mandated Assessments

CS does not provide mandated counseling, but does offer assessment services to students who have been mandated by campus officials.

- **Substance Abuse/Dependency:** Substance misuse assessments, typically the Dean of Students, can mandate that students complete a substance misuse assessment when a student has violated the student code of conduct.
- **Risk Assessment:** Students may be mandated to complete a risk assessment for concerns regarding imminent danger to self or others.

Mandated or required treatment is not offered by CS, including but not limited to:

- Counseling ordered through legal proceedings, such as substance abuse treatment, alcohol education, anger management, parenting education, or domestic violence treatment
- Counseling required by employers, government agencies, academic faculty or departments, or classes
- Court mandated treatment. If a student is already in treatment with CS when the mandate is given, the only documentation we can provide is a verification of visit.
- Comprehensive psychological evaluation of any type, including but not limited to:
 - Neuropsychological evaluations
 - Forensic assessments, including but not limited to: custody disputes, fit to stand trial, or not guilty by reason of insanity arguments.
 - Custody evaluations
 - State/Federal benefit programs, including vocational rehabilitation and social security/disability
 - Fitness-for-duty evaluations
 - Pre-surgical mental health evaluations

Scope of Practice for Medication Management

CS medication management providers will not prescribe controlled substances or benzodiazepines to students. Students seeking these classes of medications will be referred off-campus. The prescribing of any medication is at the discretion of the psychiatric provider. There are some clinical issues that may not be appropriate for Tele-Psychiatry (see Exclusions to Care above). One's Clinician, in consultation with the Director of Counseling Services and our consulting Psychiatrist, will determine if a student is a good fit for Tele-Psychiatry. If indicated, the student will be assisted with finding off-campus referrals.

Excused Absences

CS will not offer excused absences. Letters verifying dates of attendance may be given.

Housing Accommodations

CS will not provide documentation for USC Upstate Housing Accommodation Requests. CS staff are members of the USC Upstate Housing Accommodations Committee. Thus, writing a letter could constitute a conflict of interest and could reasonably be expected to impair the staff member's objectivity, competence or effectiveness in performing her or his functions as a professional, or otherwise increase the risk of exploitation or harm to the client.

Disability Accommodations

CS clinicians will complete the USC Upstate Psychiatric Provider Form for students who are actively engaged in CS services, and for whom they have met with frequently enough in order to determine clinical impact upon academics. The student may be referred for Testing Services in order to assist with this determination. Students will then be able to provide this form, and any testing results obtained, to the USC Upstate Office of Disability Services. Disability Services will then determine appropriate accommodations if clinically indicated. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and will only begin once the student is formally registered with the Office of Disability Services.