

# Student Consent for Services and Policy Statements

**Welcome to the Counseling Services.** The staff of the Counseling Services hopes that you will have a positive counseling experience at LSSU. The following information provides details about some of the policies and procedures of Counseling Services. It is important for you to have an understanding of the services we provide before your first counseling session.

We ask that you **read this material and sign it** to acknowledge that you have read and understood it. Thank you.

**The major aim** of Counseling Services is to promote the growth and well-being of students. Any concern of a student is regarded as important and is treated with respect. We support your right to know about and to participate in decisions about your counseling.

**Our services are available** to all current students who are enrolled at LSSU with a minimum of 9 credits or more. There is no fee for our services. From September through May, appointments are generally available from early 9-5 during the week. Services are limited during vacations and the summer. Counseling Services is closed when the university is closed

**Counseling Services is designed** to provide students with short term counseling. If, after discussion with you, the counselor decides that your concerns require more than our short term model of services can provide, the counselor will assist you in finding an off campus resource(s) that can meet your needs.

**Appointments** are limited, in general, to 45 minutes. Counseling Services expects students to keep all scheduled appointments. However, circumstances may require cancellation and we ask that you call Counseling Services with as much advance notice as possible. We do our best to return phone calls and e-mails within 48 business hours.

Counselors do make **referrals for services** we do not provide. For example, if you and your counselor decide a medication consultation would be helpful, you will be referred to a prescriber. Counselors refer students to other campus resources, health professionals and community resources, when appropriate.

## What to Expect from Counseling

Counseling Services provides short-term (generally but exceptions exist) individual counseling, consultation, support groups, resource and referral services, outreach and student advocacy.

Counseling is an individually tailored process which is designed to assist you in dealing with your concerns, coming to a greater understanding of yourself, and using effective means of coping.

Counseling occurs within a relationship between client and counselor, working together. You and your counselor will work out an agreement together regarding the goals of the work and the time frame and mutually discuss how to proceed. You should expect to be able to discuss with your counselor any concerns you have, whether about your reasons for seeking counseling or about the process of counseling itself.

The counseling relationship usually involves sharing personal information with your counselor. This information may be sensitive, very private, or even distressing. Therefore, it is possible during the course of counseling for some people to feel some anxiety. If you should feel this way, it is important to share this information with your counselor. While the outcome of counseling is most often very positive, the degree to which any particular individual will reach their goals or achieve their desired level of satisfaction is not predictable. Most students find this experience extremely beneficial and rewarding.

You may discontinue your counseling at any time. However, you are encouraged to discuss this part of the counseling process with your counselor. This way you can share and discuss with your counselor what was useful and what could have been improved.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

It is the policy of LSSU Counseling Services to keep your counseling information confidential with some exceptions noted below. Counseling Services will not release information regarding your use of our services without your written consent. This means that under normal circumstances, no one outside the Counseling Services is given any information – even the fact that you have been here – without your written consent. Parents, teachers, and other University staff outside the Counseling Center may not have access to information about your contacts here without your permission. Counseling Services keeps a confidential counseling file of students seen at Counseling Services. Counseling files are not part of your academic record, and no one has access to them except our staff. Our records are kept for seven years.

### ***Exceptions to Confidentiality***

There are some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be maintained. These circumstances may include:

- If there is evidence of clear and imminent danger of harm to yourself or others, a counselor is legally required to report this to the appropriate persons in order to ensure safety. We will take whatever steps are required by law, or permitted by law, to help prevent the potential harm from happening. This may include contacting your family, guardian, designated emergency contact and/or LSSU officials that are part of the university intervention response team known as StART.
- If you report information indicating that a child, disabled or elderly person is suffering abuse or neglect;

- When there is a court order, counselors may be required to disclose information as necessary to comply with the law. If you file a complaint against Counseling Services or the college we may need to release relevant information in order to protect ourselves.

**Student Workers:** Our student workers at the receptionist desk are trained on the issue of confidentiality. They answer telephones and schedule appointments only. They do not have access to personal information about students receiving counseling services.

**Email Policy.** The electronic mail system is not a confidential system and we will not initiate contact with you through email unless given permission by you. If you use this way to contact us, we will assume you have given us permission to respond to you by email.

**Evaluations.** Your feedback regarding the services offered at Counseling Services is very important. We ask that you complete a brief student satisfaction survey toward the end of your services.

**Emergencies.** Counselors in Counseling Services are not always available if you are in crisis. Therefore the following procedures are recommended:

**\*For students living on Campus:** call LSSU Public safety at 635-2100 or 911 or Hiawatha Behavioral Health at 800-839-9443. Depending upon the nature of the assistance needed, you may also call your Resident Advisor, Community Advisor or Area Coordinator,

**\*For all other students:** Call 911 or Call LSSU Public safety at 635-2100 or Hiawatha Behavioral Health at 800-839-9443 or go to your local emergency room.

**Please sign below** with the knowledge that you have read and understand the information written above. Your signature indicates that all questions regarding the meaning of these statements have been answered to your satisfaction.

This is to affirm that I have read the Student Consent for Services Form and Policy Statements and have had the opportunity to ask questions and receive further explanation. I understand the risks and benefits of counseling, the nature and limits of confidentiality, and what is expected of me as a student receiving services at LSSU Counseling Services.

---

Name (please print)

---

Signature

---

Date