



Counseling and Disability Services
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POLICY/PROCEDURES MANUAL

COUNSELING SERVICES

EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE

East Georgia College. . . Education with a Personal Touch
An Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action Institution

Foreword

Purpose: Our purpose is to improve the educational experience for students by providing counseling services that address the students' personal, career, and academic needs since these areas of a students' life are connected to academic performance.

Mission Statement

The Counseling Services Department at East Georgia College, a division of the Student Services Department, is committed to providing an equal opportunity for all students. The counseling services staff is responsible for coordinating on-campus counseling services to all students. The counseling staff is also available to provide counseling services to East Georgia College faculty and staff. Our mission is to provide programs and services that enhance career awareness and exploration, and promote the transition from a two-year educational setting to other career development opportunities, employment, or a four-year institution of higher education.

About This Manual:

This policy manual was approved on April 29, 2008. This manual is designed to explain some of the services available through the East Georgia College Counseling Office; however, this manual is not all inclusive. When revisions are made to this manual, corrected pages may be removed and replaced with the most current information.

This document will be on file with the Counseling/Disability Services Office. To receive this document in an alternative format, please contact Anna Marie Reich in the Counseling Office (478-289-2039).

This document is also available on the East Georgia College Home Page. You can access it in PDF format by going to www.ega.counseling_center/. Once you enter this page, click on the Counseling Manual link.

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SECTION A PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY

The goal of the Counseling program is to work collaboratively with students, academic divisions, departments, individual faculty members, student services, and other pertinent departments of the institution to enhance student's academic, personal, and career success.

Counseling services are available to all regularly enrolled students, faculty members, and staff at East Georgia College. The Counseling Center is supported by the Student Activities fee that students pay each semester. No additional charges or fees are collected for the services offered by the Counseling Center.

Students include all persons in the following categories:

- a. All students enrolled in undergraduate programs sponsored by the College
- b. Students who have been enrolled during the spring semester and pre-registered for the coming fall semester may receive services during the summer, even though they are not enrolled summer semester.

Faculty and Staff include all persons in the following categories:

- a. Part-time and full time individuals who are currently employed by East Georgia College
- b. Administrative/professional and support staff

SECTION B PROCEDURES FOR RECEIVING SERVICES

I. SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS

It is preferred that clients schedule appointments with the Counselor to ensure that they are seen timely and that the Counselor is available to assist them.

Clients can initiate an appointment with the Counselor by in-person contact, email, or by phone.

II. WALK-IN CLIENTS-

Clients with appointments take precedence over walk-in clients. Clients seeking counseling services on a walk-in basis will be seen on a first come, first serve basis. Clients with less urgent needs are encouraged to schedule an appointment to ensure that they are seen in a timely manner.

SECTION C CONFIDENTIALITY

Every client (at intake) will be presented with the Counseling Center's confidentiality policy. The client's signature will signify that he/she has read the policy.

When obtaining informed consent to Counseling, the Counselor must inform the client as early as is feasible in the therapeutic relationship about the nature and anticipated course of counseling, involvement of third parties, the limits of confidentiality, and provide sufficient opportunity for the client to ask questions and receive answers.

When the Counseling Center believes that a client poses a clear and present danger to himself/herself and/or to others, the Counseling Center may selectively release information, without the client's consent, to aid in the care and protection of the client or endangered others. When the Counseling Center has reasonable cause to suspect that a child (a person under 18 years of age) has been subjected to child maltreatment, which may involve abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation or abandonment, as defined by Georgia law, the Counseling Center may selectively release information, without the client's consent, to aid in the care and protection of a child. The Counseling Center is further required by Georgia law 2103.5 and 2103.6 to report this information to Family and Children's Services.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) provides that student records maintained by physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, or other recognized professionals and Para-professionals are not educational records. Therefore, client files do not become part of any permanent record at the College, but are the property of the Counseling Center.

Clients may review their records, in the presence of a Counseling Center staff member, upon written request. The request and fact that a review occurred will be entered in the client's record. Clients may not receive copies of the record or otherwise reproduce it (in part or whole).

The client file of a person who is not a student, including but not limited to, a staff member, faculty member, student's spouse, etc., is not an educational record. The file is accessible to the client unless the Counseling Center believes disclosure would be detrimental to the client's health or well-being.

Georgia law recognizes the privilege that attaches to the counselor-client and psychologist-client relationship. The privilege is extended to only licensed counselors and psychologists. Should the Counseling Center receive a subpoena for client records, the college legal counsel will be consulted prior to taking any action. Clients will be notified in advance, if at all possible, of any compliance with a court order, state or federal law that might require disclosure of client records.

The Authorization for Release of Information form will be used when a client desires for counseling information to be shared with a third party. The client's consent must be informed. The Counselor who is expected to release information must discuss the positive and negative consequences, actual and potential, associated with the release of information.

SECTION D CODE OF ETHICS

The Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct enacted by the American Psychological Association (APA) as well as the American Counseling Association (ACA) serve as the primary guidelines for professional behavior in the Counseling Center. All EGC Counselors are expected to be familiar with and adhere to these principles in practice. Any interested parties should go to http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html#10_01 in order to look at the code of ethics for the APA. The code of ethics for the American Counselor Association can be found at <http://www.counseling.org/Resources/CodeOfEthics/TP/Home/CT2.aspx>, click on 2005 ACA Code of Ethics.

SECTION E DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

I. PERSONAL COUNSELING-

The Counselor can assist with a wide variety of personal difficulties, such as self-esteem, depression, anxiety, sexual identity, relationship conflicts, eating disorders, and growing up in a dysfunctional family. Personal counseling is designed to assist the student in learning coping skills that will help them function positively in the academic environment.

II. CAREER COUNSELING-

Early career planning is crucial in assisting students in finding jobs that are a good fit. Career counseling and planning will assist the student in matching their specific skills and preferences to specific types of work/careers so that they can build the career that they want. The Counselor can also assist with resume preparation, job interviewing skills and practice, as well as provide information regarding job opportunities. Choosing a career/major can be overwhelming for many students. Career counseling services are designed to assist the student in exploring career aptitudes and interests, determine career values, and to learn more about specific job requirements and opportunities for employment. We offer individual counseling as well as testing to assist the student in identifying their career interests.

III. ACADEMIC COUNSELING-

Academic counseling exists to assist students with issues that affect their ability to learn. Test preparation and test anxiety are two of the most common problems that students encounter in this area. The Counselor can assist you in learning strategies to overcome test anxiety as well as develop better study habits/test taking skills.

IV. SERVICES TO FACULTY AND STAFF-

Counseling services are also available to assist faculty and staff members with issues of a personal nature. The same confidentiality standards that apply to students also apply to faculty and staff members receiving counseling services. Faculty and staff members are encouraged to refer students experiencing academic, personal, career, or disability-related issues to the Counselor.

SECTION F CRISIS INTERVENTION

Crisis intervention is a service offered to students who are in serious or immediate emotional distress. Counseling staff are available to handle emergencies such as suicide attempts, suicidal ideation, reports of rape or attempted rape, physical assaults, and other types of crises. If a student is in a psychological crisis, visit or call the Counseling Center during regular business hours at 478-289-2039 or speak with Peggy McDaniel (student services administrative assistant) 478-289-2071 and report the emergency. Statesboro faculty/staff and students should contact the Statesboro Counseling Center at 912-688-6912 or contact the Statesboro Center Director at 912-486-7056. After hours during the week or on weekends, call Campus Security at 478-455-0125.

A. Screening for Admission to a Hospital

1. A person is a clear and present danger to himself/herself if:
 - A) The person has inflicted serious bodily injury on himself or has attempted suicide or serious self-injury and there is a reasonable probability that such conduct will be repeated if admission is not ordered; or
 - B) The person has threatened to inflict serious bodily injury on himself and there is a reasonable probability that such conduct will occur if admission is not ordered; or
 - C) The person's behavior demonstrates that he so lacks the capacity to care for his own welfare that there is a reasonable probability of death, serious bodily injury, or serious physical or mental debilitation if admission is not ordered; or
 - D) The person has inflicted, attempted to inflict, or threatened to inflict serious bodily harm on another, and there is a reasonable probability that such conduct will occur if admission is not ordered

B. Procedures during Counseling Center hours (8:00am-5:00pm)

1. Consult with Counseling Staff member on opposite campus whenever possible
2. If hospitalization is recommended, initiate the following procedures
 - a. contact appropriate family member(s)
 - b. call local mental health clinic
 - (1) Give your name, position, and EGC Counseling Center
 - (2) state that you "want to refer someone whom we consider an emergency"
 - (3) ask to speak to the mental health professional that is 'on-call'
3. Have information about client collected: name, address, nature and duration of problem, SS#, permanent address, next of kin needed for admission
4. speak with mental health professional
 - a. include why you feel the client needs to be hospitalized
5. arrange transportation with campus police to hospital; staff member will accompany client at hospital
 - a. If client is volatile, inform mental health professional
 - (1) Campus police will arrange transport to hospital.

- (2) Evaluation by Mental Health Professional and/or doctor will be conducted at hospital.
- b. mental health professional will come to EGC if we can't get client to accept transportation and client is not volatile; this option should be used sparingly
- 6. Evaluation (15 minutes to 2 hours)
 - a. accompany client to local hospital
 - b. mental health professional will talk with EGC staff member and will subsequently see client alone
 - c. mental health professional will decide whether or not to facilitate long-term hospitalization in a mental health facility.
- (1) If long-term hospitalization is recommended, a member of law enforcement or a family member will be contacted to transport client to the long-term mental health hospital/facility.
- (2) If hospitalization is not recommended, the mental health professional in collaboration with Counselor will suggest alternatives.
 - (a) continue counseling with EGC counseling center
 - (b) begin treatment with local mental health center or a psychiatrist of the client's choosing
 - (c) local mental health center doctor and/or psychiatrist will prescribe medication for client if necessary

C. Procedures for After-Hour Emergencies-

- 1. Contact local mental health helpline for assistance, follow similar procedures as above.

Local Resources-

Emanuel Medical Center
 117 Kite Road
 Swainsboro, GA
 478-289-1100

Emanuel County Sheriff's Dept.
 101 Court Street
 Swainsboro, GA
 478-237-8771

Swainsboro Police Dept.
 212 North Main Street
 Swainsboro, GA
 478-237-8967

East Georgia Regional Medical Center
1499 Fair Road
Statesboro, GA
912-486-1000

Pineland Mental Health Helpline
912-764-5125
OR 1-800-PINELAND

Domestic Violence Safe Shelter
912-764-4605

Savannah Rape Crisis Center
912-233-7273

St. Joseph's Candler Call Care Center 800-622-6877
OR 912-921-3360

The Refuge Domestic Violence Shelter
Vidalia, GA
(912) 538-9935 OR (866) 873-3843

Sexual Assault Crisis Hotline 912-531-1771

Ogeechee Behavioral Health Services (After Hour Emergencies)
(800) 715-4225

SECTION G REFERRAL SERVICES

Student presenting to the Counseling Center with problems beyond the scope /qualifications of the staff Counselors will be referred to the appropriate individual or agency for assistance. Examples of situations that might warrant a referral include but are not limited to-

- a. Students with psychiatric issues (e.g., schizophrenia) that are more appropriately handled by a mental health professional with preferred training
- b. Students needing medication due to a mental health diagnosis
- c. Students with suicidal ideation
- d. A desired intervention/service is unavailable in the center; the service may be in lieu of, or in addition to counseling center services
- e. The student requests it to protect anonymity or is dissatisfied with counseling center treatment

The counselor will attempt to provide the client with all necessary information about the referral source (name, location, cost(s), hours, phone #, etc). Requests for information from the referral source will be honored when the Authorization for Release of Information form is completed by the client.

SECTION H TERMINATION OF SERVICES

Termination occurs when a client is no longer in a sustained relationship with the counselor. This can occur when the client –

- a. has achieved the goals set forth in counseling
- b. left EGC (via withdrawal, graduation, or transfer)
- c. has been referred to other sources outside of the center
- d. does not 'show' for at least two appointments or
- e. makes repeated cancellations

No Show

A client is considered a "no show" for the purpose of termination if he/she does not keep a scheduled appointment and makes no contact with Counselor within two weeks of the appointment.

Repeated Client Cancellations

It is expected that students, on occasion, will miss their scheduled appointment. Habitual no-shows and cancellations, however, raise problems with the schedule of the Counselor. A client who cancels for three consecutive sessions will be terminated. No further sessions will be scheduled. The client may seek approval to be seen by discussing the issue with the Counselor. The Counselor will determine whether or not to offer the client another appointment.

PRN Status

Client files will be kept open on a "PRN" (as needed) status. If no further session is actually scheduled, then the client should be terminated. His/her file can be reopened if he/she seeks an appointment later.

SECTION I RETENTION OF CLIENT FILES

Client files will be maintained for a period of 7 years following the last contact with a client. At the end of the 7 year period, files will be destroyed. A record of destroyed files will be maintained by the Student Services Administrative Assistant. This record shall include the client name, date of last contact, and date file was destroyed. Client files reopened prior to this 7 year period can be copied for the purposes of including relevant information in the new file; however, original documents must remain in the student's original file.

SECTION J
FORMS

EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE COUNSELING CENTER CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Confidentiality is an ethical standard that protects clients from the disclosure of information without their consent. Client contacts with the Counseling Center are confidential. We will not provide information (without your written consent) about clients to friends, partners, faculty, parents, employers, or anyone else outside of those associated with the Counseling Center. Those associated with the Counseling Center are the staff counselors and supervisors (Nationally Certified School Psychologist, Nationally Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, and Vice President of Student Services).

The Counseling Center will release information from the counseling sessions to third parties only at the request of the client. The "Authorization For Release of Information" form, signed by the client and a witness, will be used for this purpose. The client must give informed consent and his/her Counselor will discuss, prior to release, the information to be released, to whom, and for what purpose. The client will be advised about the possible effects of disclosure.

There are, however, limited exceptions to this policy. When the Counseling Center believes that a client poses a clear and present danger to himself/herself and/or to others, the Counseling Center may selectively release information, without the client's consent, to aid in the care and protection of the client or endangered others. When the Counseling Center has reasonable cause to suspect that a child (a person under 18 years of age) has been subjected to child maltreatment, which may involve abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation or abandonment, as defined by Georgia law, the Counseling Center may selectively release information, without the client's consent, to aid in the care and protection of a child. The Counseling Center is further required by Georgia law 2103.5 and 2103.6 to report this information to Family and Children's Services.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) provides that student records maintained by physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, or other recognized professionals and Para-professionals are not educational records. Therefore, client files do not become part of any permanent record at the College, but are the property of the Counseling Center.

A client's file is maintained at the Counseling Center for a period of seven (7) years from the date of last contact. A client's file is destroyed after this seven (7) year period.

Clients may review their records, in the presence of a Counseling Center staff member, upon written request. The request and fact that a review occurred will be entered in the client's record. Clients may not receive copies of the record or otherwise reproduce it (in part or whole).

The client file of a person who is not a student, including but not limited to, a staff member, faculty member, student's spouse, etc., is not an educational record. The file is

accessible to the client unless the Counseling Center believes disclosure would be detrimental to the client's health or well-being.

Georgia law recognizes the privilege that attaches to the counselor-client and psychologist-client relationship. The privilege is extended to only licensed counselors and psychologists. Should the Counseling Center receive a subpoena for client records, the college legal counsel will be consulted prior to taking any action. Clients will be notified in advance, if at all possible, of any compliance with a court order, state or federal law that might require disclosure of client records.

Your signature indicates that you have been provided and read the Confidentiality policy. Please feel free to review or ask questions about the policy when you meet with your counselor.

_____/_____
Signature Date

Revised February 28, 2007

**EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE
COUNSELING AND DISABILITY SERVICES
Authorization For Release of Information Form**

Name of Student/Client

Date of Birth

I hereby request and authorize:

to obtain from: _____
(Name of Person or Agency Holding the Information)

(Address)

the following type(s) of information from my records (and any specific portion thereof):

for the purpose of: _____

I intend this document to be a valid authorization and remain in effect for the period of time that I am enrolled as a student at East Georgia College.
I understand that I can withdraw this consent at any time.

Signature of Student/Client

Date

Signature and Relation of Witness

Date

USE THIS SPACE ONLY IF STUDENT/CLIENT WITHDRAWS CONSENT
I hereby withdraw the above Authorization for Release of Information. I understand that I must sign the withdrawal below (original signature on student's copy of this form is acceptable) immediately notify East Georgia College Counseling and Disability Services by telephone or in person, and bring the form to the Counseling and Disabilities Services office. The withdrawal of consent is not completed until Counseling and Disability Services receives the signed form.

Date this authorization is revoked by student/client

Signature of Student/Client

Date Withdrawal Received by Counseling and Disability Services _____

Signature of Counseling and Disability Services office: _____