

**UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COUNSELING CENTER:
YOUR INITIAL CONTACT**

We are pleased that you have come to use the services of the Counseling Center. If you have any questions after reading this information please be sure to discuss them with your intake counselor.

SERVICES OFFERED BY THE COUNSELING CENTER: The Counseling Center offers short-term, developmentally oriented counseling and prevention services to university students, including the following: individual, couples and group therapy; help in crises; career, vocational and psychological testing. While a student must be enrolled for six credits to receive individual or couples therapy, groups are open to any student, regardless of credit load

INTAKE AND FOLLOW UP: At your initial appointment, you and the intake counselor will discuss which service(s) best fits your situation. Please keep in mind that the intake counselor may not be the individual with whom you continue to meet. Your intake counselor may consult with other staff to determine the best possible referral for you. You may be asked to call us at a certain time to schedule your next appointment. If you experience a crisis before your next appointment, please call to access crisis services (581-4040).

Certain situations require long-term counseling, which we may not be able to provide. In these cases, we will discuss other referral and treatment recommendations with you. Any need for extended individual counseling and/or changes in the services provided to you will be evaluated periodically.

GENERAL APPOINTMENT POLICIES: The Counseling Center experiences a heavy demand for individual counseling appointments. In order to give access to all students, subsequent appointments are made each time after you leave your appointment. The time between appointments typically increases as we get busier. If you find that you cannot keep an appointment, it is your responsibility to contact the Counseling Center as soon as possible to cancel or reschedule (phone 581-1392). This gives us an opportunity to use the time for another student. If a counselor cannot keep a schedule appointment, every effort will be made to contact you.

Because of the ethical complications of dual relationships, individuals who have been in ongoing counseling at the University of Maine Counseling Center typically will not be considered eligible for training opportunities at this center. However, each circumstance will be considered on an individual basis.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Information shared by you in individual or couples counseling sessions, or through testing, will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Likewise, all participants in group counseling are asked to keep information shared by group members confidential. While information will not be released by Counseling Center staff outside the Counseling Center without your written permission, professional staff may consult with each other to be sure to make appropriate referrals, to improve the quality of services and to provide ongoing training and professional development. The rare exceptions to this rule of confidentiality, as required by state law, include the following:

- 1) if there is reason to believe you might be in imminent danger of harming yourself or others;
- 2) if there is reason to believe that a child or vulnerable adult has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected;
- 3) if there is a valid court order which requires disclosure of information.
- 4) you provide written permission to release information.

Computer Records: Records of the services you receive are stored on the Counseling Center's computers. We have our own dedicated server. Firewalls, passwords and encryption protect all client information stored on computers.

E-Mail and Phone Policy: Email is not a secure means to transmit confidential information. If email is used, there is an inherent risk to confidentiality. Because confidentiality cannot be insured, and because of our belief in the importance of face-to-face contact, we discourage clients from communicating with their counselors through email. However, changes in appointments can be made by phone, and with your permission by email. General therapy concerns should be discussed in person with your counselor.

TRAINING: The University of Maine Counseling Center has a Pre-Doctoral Internship in Counseling and Clinical Psychology accredited by the American Psychological Association, and is a practicum placement for graduate programs for mental health professionals. Consistent with our commitment as a training facility, our trainees are required to videotape and/or audiotape all their counseling sessions, including any intake or urgent care/crisis intervention session. Prior to taping, the process will be discussed and your written permission requested. Because of the ethical complications of dual relationships, individuals who have been in ongoing counseling at the Counseling Center typically will not be considered eligible for training opportunities at this center. Each circumstance will be considered on an individual basis.

I have read this material and understand these guidelines.

Student Signature

Date