

## St. Thomas Aquinas College Counseling Services Services and Policies

### Eligibility for Services

Our services are available to currently enrolled St. Thomas Aquinas College students carrying a minimum of six credits. Services are free of charge.

### Counseling Services

We provide time-limited, short-term counseling by a psychologist. If it is our assessment that your treatment needs deserve more intensive or long-term therapy, or require resources or competencies beyond what we can provide, we will assist with a referral to an appropriate off-campus mental health or other services provider.

Services are available during each semester, except when the college is officially closed. In order to serve the developmental needs of the total student body, the center may employ a waiting list which may result in a delay of providing services to you.

We do not provide services that require court testimony or involve litigation.

### Confidentiality

All communications between you and your psychologist will be held in confidence and will not, except under the circumstances explained below, be disclosed to anyone outside of Counseling Services unless you give written authorization to release the information. A copy of our release form is available from our secretary.

### Exceptions to Confidentiality

- When there is a clear and present danger of harm to yourself or another person. In these circumstances we are legally required to take action to protect life. Thus, our actions in these circumstances may include arranging for voluntary or involuntary hospitalization, as well as notifying law enforcement authorities and/or other persons (such as family, friends, and/or individuals at risk) as deemed appropriate.
- When we have reasonable cause to suspect that a minor is being abused or neglected we are legally required to report the abuse to Children and Youth Services or other appropriate county and/or state authorities.
- In the event of a court order or other mandatory legal process we may be required to release information contained in your records and/ or may be required to testify in a court hearing or proceeding.
- In order to provide you with the best care, your psychologist may consult with or receive supervision from another member of our professional staff concerning the service we provide you. Your psychologist may request your permission to record an interview with you for review purposes. Such recordings are never made without your knowledge and written permission to do so.

### Clinical Records

Counseling files are NOT part of your educational records and no one has access to them except the staff members of the Office of Counseling Services. If you submit an Authorization to Release Health Information form, a treatment summary will be provided to another mental health care provider or physician of your choice. If you request release of information to any other party, we will request personal contact with you in addition to the Authorization to Release Health Information form before we will release information. Disclosure in such cases will be discretionary.

### Changing Appointments

If it is necessary to reschedule or cancel your appointment, please call (845) 398-4065 or stop by the center 24 hours in advance.

### Missed Appointments

Failure to provide 24-hour cancellation notice or to attend an appointment may result in a rescheduling delay based on appointment availability and the scheduling needs of other clients. Exceptions may be made by your psychologist for extraordinary circumstances.

### Excused Absences/ Assignments

We do not provide excuses for missed classes or assignments.

### Electronic Mail Communications

E-mail communications by clients are discouraged for matters involving personal or clinical concerns. Students should be aware that confidentiality of e-mail communications cannot be guaranteed. Counseling Services staff may not always be capable of receiving e-mail and do not regularly monitor e-mail after normal business hours.

### Research and Evaluation

Counseling Services seeks to evaluate and improve its services to students by conducting research and evaluation projects each year. Staff members conducting research and evaluation projects may also take selected information from your file as a part of a project. This activity would always be on an anonymous and restricted to information relevant to the specific project identified in the client's Authorization to Release Health Information form.

### Emergencies

There is no guarantee that your psychologist will be available during or outside of the usual business hours of the center. If this is a cause for concern to you, discuss the matter with your psychologist in order to arrange contingency plans.

Should a crisis or emergency situation arise after hours, students on campus are encouraged to call Campus Security at extension 4080 for emergency support. On-campus residents may contact a member of the Residence Life staff. Community resources include 911 and Rockland Mobile Crisis 1-888-568-1112.

Counseling Services  
St. Thomas Aquinas College  
125 Route 340  
Sparkill, NY 10976  
Tel: 845-398-4065  
Fax: 845-398-4151