

Counseling & Psychological Services
Services and Policies
St. Thomas Aquinas College
125 Route 340
Sparkill, NY 10976

Eligibility for Services

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

Counseling & Psychological Services

The Office of Counseling & Psychological Services offers time-limited counseling and psychotherapy sessions with a psychologist or qualified mental health professional. Students that are determined to require long-term, intensive treatment, and/or who present with issues that require services beyond the scope of the office will be referred to appropriate treatment services off-campus. Referrals are also provided for students who opt to seek outside services. Counseling & Psychological Services does not provide services that require court testimony or involve litigation

Confidentiality

All communications between the student and psychologist will be held in confidence and will not, except under the circumstances listed below, be disclosed to anyone unless the student gives written authorization to release the information. A copy of the release form is available at the Office of Counseling & Psychological Services.

Limits and Exceptions to Confidentiality

There are legal and ethical exceptions to confidentiality which require that Counseling & Psychological Services staff to take responsible action, which could include breaching confidentiality. The exceptions include:

- When there is a clear and present danger of harm to self or another person. In these circumstances Counseling & Psychological Services is legally required to act in the interest of safety. Actions in these circumstances may include arranging for voluntary or involuntary hospitalization, as well as notifying law enforcement authorities and/or other persons (family, friends, and/or individuals at risk) as deemed appropriate.
- When the clinician has reasonable cause to suspect that a minor is being abused or neglected. Counseling & Psychological Services is 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, the Office of Counseling & Psychological Services may be required to release information contained in the student's records and/ or may be required to testify in a court hearing or proceeding.

If the mental health practitioner providing services is an intern or extern, the student's clinician will consult with the Director of Counseling & Psychological Services for clinical supervision. With the exception of clinical supervision, the aforementioned office policies regarding Confidentiality and its Limits and Exceptions apply to student's receiving services from interns or externs.

Clinical Records

Counseling & Psychological Services documents are not part of a student's educational records. In addition, only Counseling & Psychological Services staff has access to them. If the student submits an Authorization to Release Information form, clinical information can be disclosed to the individual, individuals, and/or agency listed in the release. Disclosure in such cases will be discretionary.

Changing Appointments

If it is necessary to reschedule or cancel an appointment, the Office of Counseling & Psychological Services must be contacted at least 24 hours in advance.

Missed Appointments

Failure to provide 24 hour cancellation notice or not attending a scheduled appointment may result in a rescheduling delay. Frequent cancellations or missed appointments may result in discharge from Counseling & Psychological Services. In such cases, the student will have the option of obtaining an off-campus referral to another mental health professional. Exceptions are made at the discretion of Director of Counseling & Psychological Services for extraordinary circumstances.

Excused Absences/ Assignments

The office of Counseling & Psychological Services does not provide excuses for missed classes or assignments.

Electronic Mail Communications

E-mail communications by students are discouraged for matters involving personal or clinical concerns. Students should be aware that confidentiality of e-mail communications cannot be guaranteed. Counseling & Psychological Services staff will not discuss counseling and psychotherapy issues, clinical concerns, or schedule appointments via e-mail.

Research and Evaluation

Counseling & Psychological 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 a student's file as a part of a project. This activity would always be anonymous and restricted to information relevant to the specific project identified in the student's Authorization to Release Information form.

Emergencies

Should a crisis or emergency situation arise and Counseling & Psychological Services staff is not available, students on campus are encouraged to call Campus Security at extension 4080 for emergency support. On-campus residents may also contact a member of the Residence Life staff. Additional resources in the community for all students include: 911, Rockland Crisis Services (845) 364-2200, Rockland Suicide Hotline (845) 354-6500, Bergen County CarePlus NJ (201) 262-HELP (4357).

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