



Counseling and Disability Services  
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*University System of Georgia*

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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 and success of students by providing holistic counseling services addressing personal, career, and academic needs.

## **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. Our mission is to provide programs and services that enhance personal, academic and career exploration, promoting 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 Swainsboro Counseling Office (478-289-2039) or Erin Martin in the Statesboro Counseling Office (912-623-2406.)

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/](http://www.ega.counseling_center/). Once you enter this page, click on the Counseling Manual link.

## **COUNSELING SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

- SECTION A. PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY
- SECTION B. PROCEDURES FOR RECEIVING SERVICES
  - I. Scheduling of Appointments
  - II. Walk-in Students
- SECTION C. CONFIDENTIALITY
- SECTION D. COUNSELING CODE OF ETHICS
- SECTION E. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES
  - I. Personal Counseling
  - II. Career Counseling
  - III. Academic Counseling
  - IV. Services to Faculty and Staff
- SECTION F. CRISIS INTERVENTION
- SECTION G. REFERRAL SERVICES
- SECTION H. TERMINATION OF SERVICES
- SECTION I. RETENTION OF CLIENT FILES
- SECTION J. FORMS

## **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 may consult with Counseling Center staff and may be seen in a crisis as appropriate. They will immediately be referred to a provider in the community following any crisis interventions provided. Faculty and staff will not be eligible for on-going counseling services. 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. Likewise, students enrolled during fall semester and who are pre-registered for the following spring semester, may be seen between semesters.

### **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 strongly preferred that clients schedule appointments with the Counselor to ensure that they are seen in a timely manner 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.

The right to services may be terminated if a student does not show for 3 sessions within a 12-month period, or has an excessive number of cancellations. A cancellation within 24-hours of the session will count as a “no-show” appointment unless the counselor believes there is a valid reason for the short notice.

### **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 and will be subject to counselor availability. 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).

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](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 low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, sexual identity concerns, relationship conflicts, eating disorders, and issues stemming from/related to family of origin. Personal counseling is designed to assist the student in learning coping skills that will help them function positively in the academic environment. Personal counseling is an active process requiring participation by the client, both in and out of sessions. Couples counseling may be sought if both parties are currently enrolled as students at East Georgia College. Couples may be referred out should their needs extend beyond the scope of practice or resources available through the Counseling Center.

### **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 resources for 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 assessment 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-**

Faculty members and staff at East Georgia College may consult with Counseling Center staff and may be seen in a crisis as appropriate. They will immediately be referred to a provider in the community following any crisis interventions provided. Faculty and staff will not be eligible for on-going 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 brief service offered to students who are in serious or immediate emotional distress. Counseling staff are available to handle emergencies such as suicidal/homicidal ideation, reports of rape or sexual assault, physical assaults as well as other types of crises. If a student is in psychological crisis, visit or call the Counseling Center during regular business hours at 478-289-2039 or speak with Chassity Crews (student services administrative assistant) 478-289-2071 to report the emergency. Statesboro faculty/staff and students should contact the Statesboro Counseling Center at 912-623-2406 or contact Caroline McMillan (Statesboro Center Director) at 912-623-2405. After hours during the week or on weekends, call Campus Security at 478-455-0125. If someone has attempted suicide or inflicted serious bodily injury on themselves, call 911 immediately.

### **Crisis intervention procedure – Regular hours**

(Note: If a student has harmed themselves/others or attempted suicide OR is actively under the influence of drugs/alcohol, crisis intervention is not yet appropriate. They must first have their physical condition stabilized before psychiatric evaluation can occur.)

#### **A. Screening for crisis intervention**

A person is a clear and present danger to himself/herself if:

- A) The person expresses suicidal/homicidal ideations with a plan and/or intent that could be reasonably executed if intervention is not ordered; or
- B) The person has threatened to inflict serious bodily injury on themselves and there is a reasonable probability that such conduct will occur if intervention is not ordered; or
- C) The person's behavior demonstrates that they lack the capacity to care for their own welfare leading to a reasonable probability of death, serious bodily injury, or serious physical or mental debilitation if intervention is not ordered; or
- D) The person has inflicted, attempted to inflict or threatened to inflict serious bodily harm on another, and there is reasonable probability that such conduct will occur if intervention is not ordered.

#### **B. If student presents to the counseling office and it is determined that crisis intervention is necessitated:**

- A.) Call campus police to notify of circumstances and request police presence. If crisis arises on campus, but student does not present in the counseling office, police should be notified first and student should be transported to counselor's office for consultation. Counselor should meet with student with police present (either outside of the counseling room or inside, depending on student's behavioral presentation) *Counselors, under no circumstances,*

*should put themselves at risk for harm due to belligerent or combative students.*

- B.) Obtain releases of information and discuss with student who they would like to notify, if anyone, regarding the circumstances surrounding their hospitalization. Determine whether breach of confidentiality is warranted to ensure safety of student/others. Consultation with other clinical staff should be sought as feasible.
- C.) If student will voluntarily accept intervention, campus police will transport student to local ER for evaluation. If counselor availability allows, counselor will accompany student to ER to provide collateral information to mental health professional conducting evaluation in addition to providing support and education to the student regarding the hospitalization process.
- D.) If student will not voluntarily accept intervention and it has been deemed that they are a danger to self/others, public safety will be notified for transfer.
- E.) Following inpatient treatment/referral to community, counselor will make contact with student to provide referrals to community resources as needed and to conduct a mental status exam. Options for treatment will be discussed to include continuing therapy through EGC Counseling Center, treatment through local mental health clinic, treatment through private therapist/psychiatrist of student's choosing or a combination of such.

### **C. Procedures for After-Hour Emergencies-**

**If housing or campus police have reasonable suspicion/concern regarding a student's presentation and it is believed that the student is in psychiatric distress/a crisis:**

- A.) Contact campus police to ensure safety of student/others and transport student, if needed, to a secure area for assessment.
- B.) Police/housing will contact on-call counselor. Counselor will gather information from police/housing and the student as needed. Counselor will then give a recommendation on whether student should be met with for a face to face evaluation and/or transported for further crisis evaluation. If no crisis assessment is warranted, student will be scheduled to follow-up with counselor the next business day. If crisis assessment/hospitalization is recommended, student will be transported by campus police to ER. If unwilling to accept treatment and the student has been assessed as a risk of harm to self/others, campus police will be contacted.
- C.) Counselor will provide support to student via phone/in person contact (as needed) while awaiting mental health professional to arrive. Counselor will provide collateral information to mental health professional who arrives and will coordinate with them as appropriate. Counselor will ensure that student has necessary information to follow-up with the Counseling Center following

discharge from inpatient treatment. Referrals will be made/provided as appropriate following discharge.

#### 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  
478-289-2530

Behavioral Health Link (24hr Crisis Hotline/Referral Source)  
1-800-715-4225

## **SECTION G**

### **REFERRAL SERVICES**

Student presenting to the Counseling Center with problems beyond the scope of practice and/or 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 severe psychiatric diagnoses that are more appropriately handled by a mental health professional with preferred training,
- b. Students requiring medication management services due to a mental health diagnosis,
- c. Students with chronic suicidal/homicidal ideation or psychotic symptoms,
- d. Students presenting with a primary substance abuse diagnosis,
- e. A desired intervention/service is unavailable in the center; the service may be in lieu of, or in addition to counseling center services,
- g. Ethical concerns related to one counselor seeing two clients individually (romantic partners, friends, family members etc.),
- f. 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. Is no longer a student at 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 and/or fails multiple appointments.

### **No Show**

A client is considered a "no show" for the purpose of termination if he/she does not call at least 24 hours prior to their appointment time (unless the counselor believes there is a valid reason for the late notice.)

### **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 or fails 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.

### **Failure to Reschedule Appointments**

A client who fails to keep a scheduled appointment that does not make contact with the counselor to reschedule within 1 week of the missed appointment, will be terminated. The client's case may be reopened based on counselor approval/availability.

### **PRN Status**

Client files will be kept open on a "PRN" (as needed) status. If no further sessions are scheduled after a 3 month period, then the client should be terminated and file closed. His/her file may be reopened if he/she seeks an appointment at a later date.

## **SECTION I RETENTION OF CLIENT FILES**

Client files will be maintained for a period of 7 years following the last face-to-face counseling contact/session 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 Counseling and Disability Services office. 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 (a Nationally Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and Licensed Associate Professional Counselor) and Vice President of Student and Enrollment 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 (if feasible), 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 receive copies of the record or otherwise reproduce it (in part or whole) as deemed appropriate by the Counseling Center staff.

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.

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\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name Student ID#

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Counselor Signature Date

**Revised December 12, 2011**

**EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE  
COUNSELING AND DISABILITY SERVICES**

**Authorization For Release of Information Form**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Student/Client

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student ID #

I hereby request and authorize: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address/Contact Information)

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

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**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: