



Wellness Center ~ Counseling Services

Therapy Agreement/Informed Consent

Welcome to Northwestern College Counseling Services! We provide individual, couple, family and group psychotherapy for currently enrolled students. Our services are provided by trained and licensed professionals (Psychologists, Marriage and Family therapists, Social Workers). We recognize God's presence and grace in our lives. We believe that God is fulfilling a redemptive story in each of our lives, and at times we need help as our stories unfold. The therapists at NWC are here to support you in this process and to assist you as you gain new insights, practices and skills. Working with a therapist involves a shared experience with both student and professional contributing to its effectiveness.

Therapeutic Relationship

1. You can expect your therapist to listen to you, help you explore options and solve problems, assist in goal setting, and provide a private, safe and supportive environment. It will be your responsibility to attend all scheduled appointments, express yourself openly and honestly, be an active participant, work toward agreed upon goals, and complete any tasks given to your best ability. You should notify your therapist if another professional becomes involved with helping you.
2. Therapists have different styles and methods. If you think the approach of your therapist is not benefitting you, please discuss your concerns with your therapist. You may discontinue counseling at any time or request a referral to a different therapist. If we are unable to accommodate your request, we will provide you with referrals to off-campus service providers. If you are not satisfied, you may contact the Director of Counseling Services or the Dean for Student Life.
3. You may contact the Wellness Center office by phone, in person, or by email; however, electronic communication cannot be guaranteed to be secure and confidential.

Appointments

4. We provide therapy within a short-term, problem-focused model. Counseling often occurs over a period of time, which varies according to the client's needs and the availability of the Counseling Center to provide the service. We value your input regarding the services we provide. We will ask you to complete a client satisfaction survey at the close of your work with us.
5. Appointments are 45-50 minutes long. It is important that you keep your appointment and that you arrive on time. The counselor's time and the office space are reserved for you. If you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment, please let us know **24 hours** before your appointment time.

Payment & Scope of Services

6. We are not obligated to provide therapy for every student seeking services from the Counseling Center. It may be determined that a student's needs are outside the scope of the services provided by the Counseling Center, or there may be no current openings to schedule a student. In such cases the Counseling Center will provide the individual seeking counseling with referrals to off-campus professionals. The student is responsible for all costs associated with services from off-campus providers.
7. The Counseling Center provides after hours emergency phone services. If you experience an emergency or crisis and the Counseling Center is closed, **please contact an RA or RD** who can assist you in reaching the on-

call therapist. Other emergency contacts include calling Campus Security, 911 or going to the Orange City Area Health System emergency room.

Confidentiality

8. The content of therapy sessions is confidential in accordance with state law and the ethical standards of our professional organizations (APA and AAMFT). NWC therapists take your privacy very seriously. Information about clients may be shared *within* the Wellness Center for the purpose of documentation, case supervision or case conference, coordination of care, or for emergency coverage. Information shared in therapy will not be disclosed *outside* of the Wellness Center, to parents, professors, roommates, significant other or anyone else, unless one of these special circumstances (which may allow or require disclosing some information) occurs:
- *You sign a release of information request form
 - *Your therapist believes you are at serious risk of harming yourself or someone else
 - *You are abusing a minor or dependent adult
 - *A judge signs a court order requiring release of records for a legal proceeding
 - *You are under an NWC residential contract which requires release of therapy information
 - *Information may also be exchanged between providers for patient care coordination purposes regarding treatment, diagnosis &/or medication.

Record Storage

9. Your therapist will keep records of our work together, which will be stored securely by the Wellness Center. Your entire record will be kept for seven years following therapy. After that time, a summary may be kept for an additional time period. This means if you begin therapy with someone outside the college, even several years after leaving NWC, you can have a summary of your records sent to your new therapist. You may ask to see your records if you wish, but you will need to give advance notice.

I have read the above document and had the opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns with my therapist. My signature below indicates that I have read the information in this document and understand its terms for my therapeutic relationship with Northwestern College Wellness Center.

Signature of Client

Date