

SECTION: Student Development/Counseling Services
SUBJECT: Counseling Services

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Philosophy, Characteristics, and Policies of the Asbury College Student Counseling Service

Operating Philosophy

The following policies and procedures outline the counseling experiences made available to currently enrolled students of Asbury College through the Asbury College Student Counseling Center (SCS).

As a student service within the Student Development department of Asbury College, the Student Counseling Services reflect the same institutional values of educating the whole person. Specifically linked to the student development mission, the Student Counseling Services are designed to assist in this process by “*advocating in a sensitive and professional manner for the needs of students while endeavoring to nurture them toward becoming whole persons (i.e., spiritual, intellectual, social, moral, physical)*” (Student Development Statement of Purpose, point 3). Divided into the Student Counseling Center and the Career Development Center, the Student Counseling Services are dedicated to integrating Biblical principles and professional psychological practice for the purpose of developing the whole person in light of the academic goals of the institution. In response to the varying academic, emotional/social, and developmental needs of students, the Student Counseling Services utilize a number of preventive, counseling, and consultative methods and materials to provide a balanced and dynamic counseling experience in support of the growthful mission of Student Development, in particular, and the academic-spiritual mission of Asbury College, in general.

The primary function of the SCS is to provide a counseling service at no cost to currently enrolled students of Asbury College and a consultation service for professionals within Student Development. Secondly, the SCS provides a training opportunity to qualified graduate students seeking a counseling internship. These services constitute a worthwhile and high quality professional support agency for the Asbury College community.

The SCS is staffed by four full-time counselors, one part-time counselor, and an office manager. The director and the part-time counselor are licensed psychologists. Of the remaining three full-time counselors, two are certified by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) and one is applying for the national certification examination. One of the full-time counselors serves as director of the Career Development Center and oversees the delivery of career counseling and job placement services. The office manager provides clerical and receptionist services for the operation of the SCS.

The Student Counseling Services seeks to render professional services consistent with accepted ethical standards. It is understood that the SCS staff and those supervised by these professionals are obligated to adhere to the "Ethical Principles of Psychologists" (A.P.A., 1992) in the delivery of services to the students of Asbury College.

Characteristics of the Student Counseling Services

Location

The Student Counseling Service (SCS) is located on the second floor of the Fletcher-Early Building (Student Development) on the Asbury College campus. It consists of a reception area, five counseling offices, a file room, and a library. The telephone number is (606) 858-3511, ext. 2323.

Service Hours

Counselors provide counseling services from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Evening hours are currently available each Monday and run from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Appointments can be made in person or by telephone through the office manager. Crisis (emergency) counseling is available during office hours at the SCS. After office hours or on weekends during a semester, a professional counselor is available through the college switchboard (606-858-3511, ext. 0). The switchboard operator will take the name and number for the caller and will contact the counselor-on-call by telephone or pager. The counselor will then call back the student in crisis.

Duration of Sessions

Generally, individual sessions are typically 45 minutes in length. Group sessions are typically 1 hour and 30 minutes in length. The number of individual sessions can range from one to ten with the average number of sessions being approximately eight. Appointments will be arranged at the convenience of the counselor and the client. Due to the demand for services, a 10-session limit has been instituted for individual personal/social counseling for the Fall and Spring Semesters. There is no limit for career counseling, group counseling, and job placement services. In the case where clients have not achieved their personal/social goals within the allotted time, the counselor will facilitate an appropriate referral to an off-campus professional.

Client Qualification

Counselors work with a variety of clients. Typical concerns might be (but are not limited to) family conflicts, marital relationships, dating relationships, anxiety, depression, etc.

Persons of any age, race, sex, creed, or national origin may request counseling as long as they are currently enrolled students of Asbury College.

Asbury College employees who are currently enrolled as students and *in some cases* the family members of employees who are students are not permitted to receive counseling at the SCS. The SCS will assist in facilitating an appropriate referral to a local or regional professional.

Cost

There is no cost to the clients of the SCS. It is offered as a service of Student Development at Asbury College for the benefit of currently enrolled students.

Services

Educational planning

Academic advisors help students chart their academic course through a selected major. The SCS can assist a student in choosing a major and/or planning for graduate studies.

Career counseling

As part of a four-year process to assist students in making satisfying vocational plans, career development includes individual and group counseling experiences in a program to help students learn about interests, abilities, personality, values, and various career opportunities to assist in making satisfying vocational plans.

Personal/social counseling

The SCS provides an opportunity for students to talk with a professional counselor about issues of importance to them.

Marriage/couple counseling

Premarital, marriage, and divorce counseling are offered for students. In addition, couples counseling for roommates is available to improve communication and interpersonal relations.

Counseling on human sexuality

The SCS provides, for men and women, information and a chance to talk about sexual development and concerns.

Relaxation training

College is a stressful environment. Learning to cope better with stress is important in becoming a more effective student and person. Stress management counseling and relaxation training is available through the SCS.

Group counseling

Support and therapeutic group experiences which include personal growth and a number of other topical groups/workshops are offered during the academic year.

Test interpretation

Interest, personality, and intelligence (by referral from Support Services) tests are provided and interpreted by a counselor in the context of the counseling session to assist with counseling process, career planning, and personal development.

Information library

An up-to-date library of academic, career, and personal self-help information is available. *Discover*, a self-guided computer program, is available to assist you in career exploration and graduate school planning. There is also a *Career Information and Service Center* to assist students in beginning the career assessment process.

Referral resource

Counselors have an up-to-date knowledge of many resources in our community. They can refer to other specialized services, including long-term counseling resources, found within the surrounding geographic area..

Policies and Procedures

Confidentiality

Any student who voluntarily approaches Student Counseling Services and seeks counseling for any reason, will receive confidential counseling. Included in this are students whose behavior violates community standards as described in the Student Handbook.

Confidentiality does not imply that the staff of the Student Counseling Service in any way endorses or approves of behavior that violates Student Handbook standards, nor is counseling a shelter or protection from judicial action should students be apprehended for such behavior. It does mean that students can safely share their difficult situation with a counselor in the Student Counseling Service and can trust that professional to handle this information without disclosures. Moreover, no other officer, administrator or staff person of Asbury College will have access to information revealed to or discovered by the counselor in the process of counseling. The only exceptions to this are the voluntary, written authorization from a student to release specified information or situations listed below.

1. Life threatening events (self or other)
2. Child abuse (actual or suspected)
3. Spouse abuse or another type of dependent care neglect or abuse
4. Court-ordered release of information

If the behavior that violates community standards continues after counseling is underway, the counselor may recommend that the student enter a more structured therapeutic program than the Student Counseling Service can offer. If the student accepts this recommendation, the counselor will work for appropriate transition to the selected off-campus program. If the student refuses to follow this recommendation, the counselor will work for an appropriate referral.

If a student receiving services in the SCS becomes part of the judicial process in Student Development for a violation of community standards, he or she will not be exempted from disciplinary action. The consequences that follow a Handbook violation will be applied without regard for his or her status as a SCS client. If the client desires his or her counselor to advocate during the judicial process, it is permissible for the counselor to choose to do so after educating the client about judicial proceedings and obtaining the appropriate authorizations to release information.

The Student Counseling Service does not encourage forced referrals. However, it is possible that a student may be offered counseling as a part of the judicial process in Student Development. In this case the student will be asked by the referring body, Student Development, to authorize a limited release of information so that a counselor can respond to questions regarding attendance. Should a student be referred to the Student Counseling Service for services in such circumstances, the counselor will use the first session with the student to explain the limits imposed by the judicial process, discuss specific goals, and make recommendations for referral off-campus if needed or wanted. It remains the student's choice and responsibility to participate in counseling services.

Policies that promote confidentiality at the Asbury College Student Counseling Service are based primarily on the Ethical Principles of Psychologists of the American Psychological Association. Thus, the resulting departmental standards are adhered to on an individual level while also emphasizing “departmental confidentiality” as supported by Principle 5a. of the Ethical Principles. Departmental confidentiality provides the opportunity for college counselors to consult with other SCS staff on a “need-to-know” basis for the purpose of providing the highest possible quality of service to students who are clients.

The professional staff, counseling trainees, and other “volunteers” who provide psychological services at the Student Counseling Service are oriented to and required to adhere to the Ethical Principles of Psychologists in the performance of their duties. If an individual providing services at the Student Counseling Service happens to be associated with another body (i.e., marriage and family therapy, social work, mental health counseling, pastoral counseling) that maintains its own established ethical principles, it is understood that the Ethical Principles of Psychologists will be used as the primary standard for ethical decision-making. Verification of each individual’s familiarity with and agreement to adhere to the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists is reflected in a statement signed prior to the assumption of counseling duties and responsibilities.

Client Records

All client contacts are recorded in individual files. These files are located in the SCS and are not available to anyone outside of the staff of the SCS. The information contained in the files does not become part of academic or placement information for the use of Asbury College. Except in special circumstances mandated by law, the information is ultimately under the control of the client who has the only authority to authorize release of the information.

Maintenance of the files is the responsibility of the Director of SCS and the SCS office manager. Client files are maintained in locked filing cabinets in a locked file room. Only professional staff have keys to this room, and only professional staff members and the office manager can “pull” files. No files or portions of files can leave the second floor of Fletcher-Early Building. No case notes, reports, or file information can be produced or used off-site without authorization of a professional staff member and written client consent. American Psychological Association guidelines dictate that complete records are maintained for a minimum of three years after last contact with the client. Records, or a summary, are then maintained for an additional seven years before disposal. If a client is a minor, the record is extended until three years after the age of majority.

Emergency Procedures

The Asbury College Student Counseling Services provides emergency services for the student community 24 hours a day during Fall Semester, Spring Semester, and two Summer Terms. Emergency services are provided during holidays that fall within these academic periods. No emergency services are available during Christmas Break or the break following the end of the last Summer Term and the beginning of the following Fall Semester.

What is an Emergency?

Any situation involving a student who is experiencing a crisis of a “serious” nature and requires immediate counseling attention constitutes an emergency. Sometimes the emergencies can be handled effectively by the Student Counseling Services (SCS) staff. Other times referral sources must be utilized. In cases of a completed suicide, a suicide attempt with high lethality, death of a student on campus, or an abduction, counselors will participate in a campus-wide crisis management plan.

“Serious” situations may fall into, but are not limited to, the following categories:

1. Imminent suicide/homicide attempt
2. Traumatic events
3. Aggressive reaction (present or imminent)
4. Psychotic reaction or other serious psychological disturbance not easily handled at the SCS
5. Severe depression, anxiety, etc.

General Procedures for Handling Emergencies

During office hours, the SCS professional staff and interns are available to provide virtually immediate consultation for crises among the student population. Emergency telephone calls or emergency walk-ins are given first priority in scheduling. Since there is no on-call counselor during office hours, it is the practice of the SCS to respond with the most available counselor or intern. If there are no available counselors or interns, the office manager, in consultation with the Director of Counseling Services, will interrupt or reschedule a regular appointment so that emergencies can be handled promptly.

After office hours and on weekends, the SCS professional staff on-call counselor is available to receive calls through the college switchboard. Counselors are on-call for a period of one week (Monday evening through Monday morning). Interns do not provide on-call services. When the switchboard operator receives a telephone call for emergency counseling assistance, the operator immediately calls the on-call counselor by telephone with the name and number of the caller. The caller is then called back. If the on-call counselor is unavailable for 10 minutes, the operator calls the SCS pager. In the event that the page is not returned for 15 minutes, the operator calls the next person listed as on-call on the emergency services schedule. In the unlikely event that none of the on-call counselors are available, the operator calls the Student Development on-call professional.

The aim of SCS on-call counseling is to provide telephone assistance to students in crisis or other Asbury College personnel working with students in crisis. It is possible that circumstances may necessitate an after-hours face-to-face contact with the student. In these situations, it is preferable to meet the student in the RD office of their dorm or at the SCS office. If the meeting must take place at the SCS office, a security guard is contacted through the college switchboard. The security guard is asked to remain in Fletcher/Early until the meeting is completed.

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