

Washtenaw Community College

4800 E. Huron River Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-4800

Personal Counseling Scope of Practice

Personal Counseling at Washtenaw Community College (WCC) is intended to assist students enrolled in the current semester in meeting their academic, career, and personal needs. Personal counseling offers students an opportunity to explore, organize, and process numerous issues. Personal counseling at WCC uses a short-term, therapeutic, solution-focused model. This generally means 4-8 sessions.

When appropriate, students may be referred to services offered within WCC to assist them in addressing multiple issues common in a college setting. Some of the issues that are commonly addressed in the short-term model at WCC may include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) **Personal Issues** such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, guilt, low self-esteem, grief, stress and adjustment
- (2) **Academic Concerns** such as performance anxiety, low motivation, self-management and underachievement
- (3) **Career Counseling** such as goal setting, information gathering, and decision making
- (4) **Crisis Intervention**

WCC students enrolled in the current semester are entitled to an initial consultation. Options for future services will be discussed in the first appointment. Personal counseling sessions are generally scheduled once per week and will last between 45 and 50 minutes, depending upon the presenting concern. Appointments are requested; however, students may be seen on a walk-in basis for triage if a counselor is available. There are periods each semester when the demand for scheduled appointments exceeds our resources. During those times and depending on circumstances, students may be referred to off-campus resources. Students diagnosed with long-term psychiatric conditions will receive support with academic-related issues, crisis intervention, and referrals to mental health providers. If a student desires more intense or long-term services, a referral will be provided.

LIMITATIONS

Some students may benefit from services that extend beyond the short-term model or from services not offered at WCC. In these cases, WCC provides referral services either after initial triage or as these factors become more apparent during the course of services. Some of the issues that are commonly addressed through referral to services outside of WCC include:

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(1) A need for intensive treatment that will likely exceed the 8 counseling sessions limit as indicated by:

- a. Need, or request, to be seen more than once a week
- b. Desire for uninterrupted, long-term counseling/therapy
- c. Prior history of hospitalizations
- d. Prior history of long-term psychiatric treatment
- e. Chronic suicidality and/or self-injury behaviors or potential to be harmful to others
- f. Indication that short-term therapy may be detrimental or non-beneficial
- g. High likelihood that the student may develop a need for long-term treatment
- h. History of long-standing maladaptive interpersonal patterns that create difficulty in relationships
- i. Students whose needs fall outside the clinical scope of our staff

(2) Students who need specialized services not available through WCC, as indicated by, but not limited to:

- a. Presence of significant drug and/or alcohol problems, for example, substance dependence, primary substance abuse, and/or past failed treatments
- b. Presence of significant eating disorders
- c. Request for psychological testing
- d. Need, or request, for treatment modality not provided by WCC staff

Limits to Service

Long-term counseling services

Counseling services provided by counselors are not all inclusive and are not intended to be utilized for long-term use, psychotherapy, treatment for severe psychological disorders, or court-mandated treatment. Counselors do not diagnose or treat specific mental disorders. Referrals to an outside agency for certain specialized areas such as substance abuse issues, personality disorders, and/or severe depression may be made.

Mandated Counseling

WCC does not provide counseling services or treatment to students mandated to see a counselor by the legal system or by one's attorney due to legal difficulties.

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Personal Motivation for Counseling/Lack of Progress on Counseling Goals

To receive counseling services, a student must exhibit personal motivation. Referral to other resources might be made if the student is not achieving progress on established counseling goals.

Assessments for Employment, Volunteer, or Related Purposes

Counseling services do not conduct assessments or make recommendations/predictions regarding student suitability for employment in various work settings (e.g. Peace Corps, Federal Government, security clearances for the FBI or CIA, military, etc.), volunteer placements, etc.

Substance Abuse

If a student has substance abuse concerns, counselors are available to: a) meet with the student for up to 3 sessions to provide support; b) conduct a safety assessment if necessary; c) determine if the student's counseling needs can be adequately addressed by receiving counseling services at WCC; and/or d) refer the student to other resources.

Privacy, Confidentiality and Records

Information shared by students is kept in strict confidence. Legal constraints and ethical guidelines require that all client interactions are confidential. No record of counseling is contained in any academic, education, or job placement file. We make every reasonable effort to ensure the security of written and electronic records. All counseling personnel have been trained in policies and procedures to protect the security of records and sensitive information. WCC counseling professionals operate as a team and as part of the WCC Care Team and may consult with each other in order to provide the best services to students.

There are a few exceptions to confidentiality: If a student is a danger to him/herself or someone else; if a student tells us about current child abuse or neglect; if a court of law orders us to release information; or if a student gives us written permission to share information.

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