



CONSENT TO RECEIVE SERVICES (Website version)

Counseling Center
Serra Hall, 300
5998 Alcalá Park
San Diego, CA 92110
619-260-4655

Welcome to the University of San Diego's Counseling Center! We appreciate your coming our way, and look forward to working with you. The following provides important information about our services.

The University of San Diego's Counseling Center (USDCC) offers a variety of psychological and counseling services including assessment, crisis intervention, short-term individual counseling, and group counseling. Services are provided by professional, credentialed counselors. Licensed, doctoral-level psychologists directly supervise interns, graduate trainees, and non-licensed staff.

Eligibility for services and referrals to the community: USDCC provides services to currently enrolled students. Services are provided based on the urgency of presenting concerns and the availability of treatment. Should you require services that the Counseling Center does not provide, we will facilitate a referral to a treatment provider in the community that can meet your needs. An example of the kind of service not offered at USDCC is court-mandated treatment.

Emergency services: In the event of a mental health emergency that occurs during working hours, come directly to the center and inform the front desk staff that it is important that you see a counselor right away. After working hours, contact the USD Public Safety dispatcher by calling 619-260-2222 and ask to speak with the USDCC counselor-on-call. You can also secure emergency mental health services in the community by calling 911, calling the San Diego Mental Health Crisis Hotline at 800-479-3339, or going to a hospital emergency room.

Process of Counseling. Research indicates that most people who engage in counseling benefit from the experience; even so, it is possible for things to get worse before they get better. For example, it can be difficult to discuss troubling memories in counseling, and students who address especially troubling issues may find it difficult to concentrate on their studies immediately after their sessions. You and your counselor will collaborate in developing a treatment plan that suits you, and will work together to determine the pace and form of counseling so as to minimize the risks of counseling.

Confidentiality: The services provided at USDCC and the other USD Wellness Area units are confidential. The Wellness Area units work collaboratively to provide students with the best care possible, and this may involve sharing information about students between units, including the Student Health Center, the Center for Health and Wellness Promotion, Disability Services, and the Counseling Center. This information may include any clinically relevant information deemed necessary for coordinating services between the units. USDCC and the other Wellness Area units will not disclose information to others about you without your written permission *except where such disclosure is required by law*. Such disclosure may occur in the following instances:

When there is reasonable suspicion of abuse of children or elderly persons

If you are a serious danger to someone else

If you are likely to harm yourself unless protective measures are taken

If you are unable to care for your most basic needs, or your health is in serious danger

If your treatment records are subpoenaed by a court of law through a court order

If you are under 18-years-old, your parents or legal guardian may have access to your treatment records

It is also possible that at some point in the future you will be required by an outside agency to sign a release allowing the agency to review your treatment records. This may occur, for example, if you apply for health or life insurance, or if you apply for licensure or certification in some professions, or if you apply for employment in agencies that require a security clearance.

Treatment records: All treatment records are maintained in locked filing cabinets. Access to these records is limited to professional and administrative staff bound by confidentiality agreements.

Recording of counseling sessions: USDCC is a training facility, and you may be asked permission to record your counseling sessions for training and supervision purposes. You may decline to have your sessions recorded without impacting the services you receive.

Research and reports of summary data: From time to time the USDCC uses aggregate information gathered from students for research projects. These projects serve to enhance our services. No identifying information about any individual student is ever disclosed in such projects. Similarly, the USDCC compiles and reports anonymous, summary data about students who use our services, but these reports contain no identifying information about individual students.

Emails sent to Counseling Center staff: Although you may choose to contact USDCC staff via e-mail about such matters as rescheduling or canceling an appointment, note that (1) staff may not check their e-mail regularly, (2) staff may inadvertently miss your e-mail message altogether, (3) e-mail is subject to interception and is not considered reliably confidential, and (4) some staff may choose not to correspond with their clients via e-mail. Bearing this in mind, any urgent or sensitive matters should be handled by means of telephone or face-to-face conversations rather than by e-mail.

Missed Appointments: Please give us as much notice as possible if you have to miss an appointment, so that we can more easily

accommodate other students in need. If there is a pattern of missed appointments, we may reassign your appointments to other students who need our services.

Concerns about our services? Should you have any concerns about the services you receive here, consider addressing them with your counselor, Dr. Steve Sprinkle (director of the Counseling Center), and/or Dr. Moisés Barón (Assistant Vice President for Wellness). Dr. Sprinkle and Dr. Barón can be reached by calling 619-260-4655.

HIPAA summary: The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a federal law that is designed to protect the privacy of client information, provide the electronic and physical security of health and client information, and simplify billing and other electronic transactions by standardizing codes and procedures. The HIPAA Privacy Rule requires a minimum federal standard for the use and disclosure of “Protected Health Information.” We are required to provide you a comprehensive, HIPAA-related “Notice of Privacy Practice” document. Among other things, the document details your rights to inspect your treatment records, request an addendum to your records, request an accounting of disclosures made from your records, and request reasonable restrictions on the disclosure of information from your records. Please retrieve your copy of this document from the front-desk staff, and/or look it up on Website (www.sandiego.edu/usdcc). Please address any questions you have about HIPAA to your counselor or the director of USDCC.