



Northampton Community College

Counseling Services (Bethlehem Campus)

Informed Consent Form

Introduction

Welcome to Northampton Community College Counseling Services. This informed consent form will provide you with general information about our services. Please read it carefully **before signing** as it is important that you understand the nature and terms of the services that we provide. If you have questions or want a copy of this form, please ask your counselor.

Note: You will need to wear a face mask at all times during your counseling session. If you need to remove your mask, your session will continue via Zoom in another office in the suite.

Counseling Services

We offer personal, substance abuse, academic, career (exploration and testing), and crisis counseling on a short-term basis (6 – 8 meetings) to all currently enrolled credit students at no extra charge. The nature of your counseling experience will depend on the particular concerns you want to address with the counselor. A majority of students who have used our services have indicated that brief counseling of 6 – 8 meetings satisfactorily meets their needs. If, however, we decide that you would benefit from longer-term care, or services that the College does not provide, we will work with you to access psychological care or other services in the community. Therapy, diagnostic services, medication prescriptions, and evaluations for legal matters, and after hour's crisis response are not provided. Please note that personal counseling does not include services that require court testimony or involve legal proceedings. With rare exceptions, all of our services are voluntary.

When you receive **personal counseling**, there are many different methods we may use to address your concerns, and your active participation and collaboration are necessary. For counseling to be most successful, you may need to work on things during our meetings and also at home. There are benefits and risks to receiving personal counseling since it often involves discussing distressing aspects of your life. You may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, and loneliness. Although these feelings may be difficult to experience, counseling is likely to lead to stronger and more fulfilling relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. There are no guarantees, but, students usually report finding relief and improvement in their life circumstances following their counseling experience. After our initial appointment, we will be able to offer some recommendations about the most effective ways to address your needs and concerns. If, during that appointment, we determine that you will benefit most from services other than brief (6 – 8 meetings) personal counseling, we may make appropriate referrals. If the brief personal counseling that we offer is the best option, we will usually schedule one 45-minute to an hour appointment per week at a mutually agreed upon time.

Eligibility

All currently enrolled credit students at all campuses of NCC are eligible for up to 6-8 meetings per semester of counseling.

Confidentiality

Counselors at Northampton Community College keep information learned about a student during counseling strictly confidential according to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Records of visits to a counselor are protected and kept separate from academic and other college records. To the extent possible, counselors will not disclose information to anyone outside the counseling relationship without the student's explicit written permission. However, disclosure may be necessary when it becomes evident that the student presents a clear and imminent danger to him/herself or others, when the counselor is mandated to report the abuse of a child or elder, or when the court has ordered disclosure.

Professional records

The laws and standards of our profession require that we maintain counseling records. In keeping with Pennsylvania law, these records are maintained for seven years. Requests for records require your written permission prior to disclosure and only then will we prepare a summary of the records that will then be delivered via strictly confidential means. Because these are professional records, they can be misunderstood and/or disturbing to untrained readers. Therefore, we request that you have a counselor present if you wish to review them yourself.

Cancellation/No Show Practice

We do expect you to be on time for your scheduled appointments. If you cannot keep your appointment, please call 610-861-5342 at least 24 hours before your appointment to reschedule. Consistent 'no shows' or frequent cancellations may impact your receipt of timely services.

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read this document and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship.

I certify that I have read, understand and agree to the information outlined in this form.

Student Signature

Date

Witness (Counselor)

Date