


Policy Group	Student Affairs	Policy Number	ACA-STU-09	 جامعة زايد ZAYED UNIVERSITY
Responsible Office	Office of the Provost	Distribution	External	
Date Approved	10 November 2019	Effective Date	17 October 2019	
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PROCEDURES

Student Counseling Center Services

1. Scope of Practice

- 1.1 The Zayed University Student Counseling Center provides confidential counseling services to students to support their wellbeing, personal growth and academic success. Individual counseling is limited to a maximum of 12 sessions, renewable depending on student's needs. Students seeking services are informed of session limits during the intake session. When students are in need of specialized services beyond the scope of the center, counselors take the necessary steps to assist students with referral resources for appropriate services in the community.
- 1.2 The Student Counseling Center liaises with colleges/administration to offer accommodations to students with verified mental health and psychosocial needs.
- 1.3 The Student Counseling Center liaises with colleges/administration to offer accommodations to students with chronic and non-chronic illnesses according to their health conditions by the Outreach Officer.
- 1.4 In order to maintain the standards of the profession as well as the administrative independence and neutrality that is required of the center, counselors do not extend their services to:
 - a) Participation in any committees related to administrative proceedings, (e.g. student discipline investigations), except where the purpose of participation is limited to the clarification of a student's psychosocial situation.
 - b) Participation in administrative decision making (e.g. leave of absence, withdrawal, or readmission to academic programs), except in situations when colleges/administration offices seek a counselor's evaluation of a student's mental health status and/or psychosocial issues. Reports produced by the counselling center require a minimum of two evaluation sessions and aim to provide colleges/administration with information clarifying the student's situation but does not make a recommendation regarding the administrative decision at hand.

2. Hours of Operation

- 2.1 The Student Counseling Center is normally open for appointments from 8:30am to 3:30pm, from Sunday to Thursday. Students may seek services or contact counselors any time during these hours by emailing, calling or walking into the center. Outside of these hours, students are guided to the Wellness Center.
- 2.2 The center ensures that there is always at least one counselor scheduled to work during the hours of operation. When counselors take vacation or leave this should

be done in compliance with the HC policies. In cases of sick leave or unexpected absences, the counselor should inform all scheduled clients about the same by email along with options for rescheduling sessions. The Director of the center is to be notified of any early departure or late arrival of the counselors so that he/she can ensure coverage of services such as responding to crises or availability for consultation.

- 2.3 Due to the limited number of counselors, students are advised to schedule appointments in advance. Walk-in students are seen by a counselor on a first-come, first-serve basis with the exception of crisis situations. During peak or high demand periods, clients will be placed on a waiting list if needed. Students in crisis are always given priority over walk-in or regularly scheduled appointments.

3. Professional Conduct of Counseling Staff

- 3.1 As professionals, counselors at the Student Counseling Center are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner consistent with the Zayed University Code of Ethics as well as the standards of practice prescribed by the counseling profession. It is expected that counselors fulfill their primary responsibility to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of their clients. When the prescribed ethical and professional standards of conduct are breached it is considered misconduct. In order to avert such situations all counselors are expected to:
- a) sign an ethical pledge;
 - b) clearly state their educational credentials as well as licensure or certification status by using a title or initials such as “licensed mental health counselor” or a statement such as “licensed by the HAAD” in all official communications as well as documents and reports;
 - c) practice only within the competency areas for which they are trained and experienced;
 - d) observe the established policy and procedures for the Student Counseling Center;
 - e) consult with colleagues, when needed, to ensure the provision of quality services to students;
 - f) undergo regular supervision as appropriate and needed;
 - g) seek appropriate Continuing Professional Development opportunities to continue their professional growth as well as to keep themselves abreast of research findings, new developments and updates in standards of practice.
- 3.2 In compliance with the standards of practice prescribed by the profession (American Counseling Association [ACA]) any counselor anticipating leave of employment or resignation should develop a transfer plan for the clients well in advance. This requires the counselor to notify his/her clients well in advance of the expected leave or termination of services. Following this step, the counselor proposes referral of the client to an identified colleague in the center. The referral procedures are carried out only after completion of appropriate clinical and administrative processes including consent to release of information and transfer of the client file and records.

4. Intake Procedures

These are the general guidelines that apply when a student seeks counseling services.

- 4.1 All students seeking counseling must:
 - a) read and sign the General Consent Form;
 - b) attend an intake session during which their presenting issues are explored and assessed in order to determine the most suitable service that can address their concerns. Based on the information gathered during the intake session, each student may be offered regular counseling sessions or a program, or be provided with a referral to either another on-campus resource or an off-campus service;
 - c) make appointments with their counselors and notify them of any rescheduling or cancelations.

- 4.2 It is the responsibility of the counselor to:
 - a) explain the recommended services;
 - b) answer as many of the student's questions as possible;
 - c) obtain the student's agreement to receive the recommended services;
 - d) have the student fill out a Release of Information Form if needed;
 - e) inform the students of their rights and obligations for receiving the center's services as explained in the General Consent Form;
 - f) fill out any forms needed to document the intake session.

5. No-show, Cancellation and Rescheduling

- 5.1 Clients should attend their regular appointments with the counselor. It is the client's responsibility to contact the center at least 24 hours prior to the appointment if they wish to cancel or reschedule.

- 5.2 If the client fails to show for or cancels three (3) appointments without enough notice time, the client is placed back on the waiting list before they can book another appointment.

6. Services Provided by Student Counselors

Professional counselors assist students who are experiencing difficulties or challenges related to their well-being and personal development which may interfere with their ability to take full advantage of the educational opportunities before them. The counseling services provided are:

- 6.1 Individual Counseling
- 6.2 Group Counseling
- 6.3 Assessment Services
- 6.4 Crisis Intervention Services
- 6.5 Consultation Services
- 6.6 Outreach Programs
- 6.7 Referrals

6.1 Individual Counseling

One-to-one counseling sessions are offered to students whose issues will require this mode of counseling. This option shall be discussed with the student and his/her consent is obtained before receiving the service. Students will receive normally 12 sessions, renewable depending on student's needs.

6.2 Group Counseling

This mode of counseling is offered to students who may benefit from peer group interaction towards resolving their issues. Clients may be self-referred to groups or referred by a counselor based on the client's presenting issues, which may be

suitable for group counseling (e.g. social anxiety, assertiveness issues, adjustment to college, eating disorders, difficulty developing relationships/friendship). Students will be screened for suitability to participate in groups and will be informed of possible risks and benefits of this type of treatment.

6.3 Assessment Services

- a) A comprehensive psychosocial assessment is conducted during the intake interview;
- b) Psychometric assessments may be administered to a student based on need;
- c) The counselor is responsible for explaining the purpose of the assessment, as well as explaining the scores and any action that may be required;
- d) Assessment is carried out by counselors who have received the required training.

6.4 Crisis Intervention Services

- a) Crisis intervention is offered during the center's regular hours of operation. After regular hours, students in crisis are advised to contact available community help lines.
- b) A crisis is defined as a situation in which:
 - i) the student is disoriented and confused and cannot function with rational thought process due to a severe psychological crisis;
 - ii) the student is in imminent danger of hurting himself/herself or others;
 - iii) the student is unable to resolve the crisis by himself/herself without professional intervention;
 - iv) the student's normal psychological functioning has deteriorated indicating that he or she is experiencing psychological distress and is in need of immediate attention;
 - v) the student is under threat of recent or ongoing harm or abuse and cannot protect or defend himself/herself;
 - vi) the student is experiencing severe emotional distress or confronting a critical situation such as suicidal ideation, thoughts of hurting self or others, anticipating assault or abuse by someone else, death of a close relative or friend etc.;
 - vii) the student is impacted by ongoing or recent traumatic experiences that have taken place on or off campus.
- c) The goal of crisis intervention is to provide clients with immediate safety and emergency care, stabilization of emotions, and plan for further follow up. Crisis intervention cannot substitute regular counseling sessions or cannot be considered as a means for a client to get access to a counselor without an appointment. The Student Counseling Center adopts clear procedures to evaluate crises to meet the needs of students without interfering with other regular cases
- d) Crisis procedures:
 - i) In the event a student walks in presenting a crisis, the student will be scheduled for the first available counselor appointment available that day;
 - ii) The counselor will attend to the student for a brief period assessing the severity of the crisis and assisting in creating a plan for how to manage the crisis until the student's next appointment;
 - iii) Once the counselor ascertains the severity of the crisis, he/she establishes a clear frame for the crisis intervention and shares it with the client (e.g. this is not counseling, focus on the immediate crisis at hand, attend to physical safety concerns);

- iv) The counselor then assists the client in self-care, in decreasing immediate distress, and in developing a viable plan for safety, through expanding on and utilizing existing and potential support resources, etc.

6.5 Consultation Services

Consultation services may be offered to students, faculty and staff, as well as parents based on request. A consultation is a brief meeting with the purpose of exchanging information and referring the person(s) receiving the consultation towards appropriate resources. This service is student focused and aims to help all parties make appropriate decisions on a range of issues related to a student's wellbeing. Confidentiality shall be applied when offering such services.

6.6 Outreach Programs

Outreach programs aim to reach out to the Zayed University community through psycho-educational workshops and presentations on a range of mental health topics designed to promote awareness of psychological wellbeing among students. These services have the primary goal of reaching out to students who may not be inclined to utilize the services from the center. The procedures for designing and delivering outreach programs are as follows:

- a) Outreach programs may be delivered in different formats (e.g. training, workshops, lectures, documentary/film shows, discussion groups) and modes (e.g. online), to provide both preventive and responsive programs to enhance the psychological wellbeing of students.
- b) The focus will be on the development of students' life-skills as well as psycho-educational information to raise awareness on a range of mental health issues.
- c) Faculty and staff may also request specific outreach programs to be delivered to students. The Student Counseling Center team will evaluate these requests and indicate how they will be accommodated. The Outreach Officer will act as point of contact regarding the above with faculty and staff.
- d) Student volunteers and interns may be involved in the planning, designing and delivery of the programs.
- e) When an outreach program is planned, the team is also expected to develop appropriate promotional materials (brochures, pamphlets, information leaflets etc.) reflecting the content of the program.
- f) All outreach programs are followed up with evaluation and feedback from the target audience. It is mandatory that an evaluation form is given to all participants attending the outreach programs.

6.7 Referrals

- a) Referrals to the Student Counseling Center
 - i) When a faculty, staff member or senior administrator makes a referral to the center, he/she has to fill out a referral form indicating the reason for the referral (e.g. behavioral observation of the student). Referrals can be made by email or by visiting the center.
 - ii) Any release of information to the person/department referring a student to counseling will not be completed without obtaining permission from the referred student.
 - iii) The signed Release of Information Form is kept in the client file as well as any written report or phone consultation.
- b) Clients can be referred out of the center if they need:
 - i) Medical assistance;
 - ii) Psychiatric evaluation and medication;

- iii) Social support services;
- iv) Other services on campus (e.g. Student Accessibility Services, Registrar Office, College Advisor, etc.).
- c) When a client requires services beyond the scope of the services of the Student Counseling Center:
 - i) The counselor will discuss the referral options with the client and seek his/her agreement to avail the services.
 - ii) The counselor should document the release of information as well as the referral information in the client's file.

7. Confidentiality and Privacy

- 7.1 Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the students seeking services at the Student Counseling Center is one of the most important ethical principles that counselors adhere to.
- 7.2 In accordance with the standards of the counseling profession, no information regarding a client is released to anyone without the informed consent of the client except in the following situations:
 - a) Potential harm to self, others or society;
 - b) There is reason to suspect abuse of a child or vulnerable adult;
 - c) When it is required by law.
- 7.3 When situations arise where a release of information is needed, the same is documented in the client file along with the Release of Information Form including the purpose of the release, the specific information requested to be released, and to whom the information is released. The Intake reports, assessments including progress notes, and termination summaries will only be released when required by law.

8. Documentation of Services

- 8.1 A client file is opened for any student who has contact with a counselor, including contact in the form of phone consultations. This does not apply for sessions with faculty, staff or a student who calls or walks in with concerns regarding a potential client (concerned about another student, requires a referral, recommendations for behavioral issues, etc.).
- 8.2 Contents of client files include Personal Data, Consent Form, Intake Assessment, and Progress Notes. When applicable, client files may also include Assessment Reports, reports by other professionals, release of information forms, copies of referral forms, other miscellaneous notes (e.g. copies of email, phone contacts, consultations with or about the client), termination and/or client transfer to another counselor.
- 8.3 Client information is to be updated regularly and should be presented in a clear, accurate, comprehensive and legible manner.
- 8.4 Client records are kept on a secure digital professional software for record keeping. It is the responsibility of the counselors to log out of Titanium at the end of a working day. No confidential materials (client records, video or audio tapes) should be removed from the center.
- 8.5 Client files are kept secure for seven (7) years after the termination of services and then disposed of in a safe and secure manner.

9. Revision History

Date	Revision
14 June 2020	Non-substantive change: Added External Distribution.
17 December 2019	Updated the policy number (from STU-ADM-14) and the numbering format.
10 November 2019	Approved by the Vice-President (VP Decision #200 of 2019) Revision: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated to reflect current international practices.
10 November 2015	New procedures, approved by the Academic Council.