

D'Youville Personal Counseling Center (PCC) **Statement of Understanding**

This document contains important information about our clinical services and policies. Please read it carefully. It addresses your Rights, Privacy, Responsibilities and Consent to Treatment, as well as our Scope of Practice.

Eligibility for Services: Our services are available to all currently enrolled D'Youville College students.

Counseling Staff: The PCC is staffed by Licensed Mental Health Counselors, Mental Health Counselors with Provisional Licensing, and Graduate Level interns in their final year of study.

Scheduling An Appointment: You can make a confidential appointment by using our on-line services found on our webpage, available 24 hours a day. Or by calling 716.829.7819 Monday through Friday. We will need your name and contact information. No further information would be needed at that time. We will schedule a session for you to meet with one our counselors at a time convenient for you. Counseling sessions are 50 minutes in length.

Counseling Services: We offer you a place and time to talk openly about any issues, difficulties, questions and/or concerns. When you arrive for your first appointment, you will be asked to complete a short intake form that will be discussed at the start of your session. During your session, the counselor will listen to you, and through conversation, help you better understand yourself and your situation. Together, you'll develop some goals and plans for change. Results of counseling can be variable, and a positive outcome is dependent on your efforts along with those of your counselor. You may continue to meet with your counselor as long as necessary to meet these goals, or until another plan of action has been established. Sessions can be scheduled weekly or as determined by you and your counselor. You may at any time discontinue or change the frequency of your appointments. It is helpful to discuss this decision with your counselor.

Limitations to Treatment: There are certain situations in which the PCC may not be able to provide services:

- (1) Treatment for disorders of such severity that we cannot provide adequate care (i.e., treatment for an eating disorder that requires closely coordinated medical, nutritional and therapeutic interventions).
- (2) Treatment that falls beyond our areas of expertise or outside the scope of services provided by PCC staff (i.e., situations requiring more intensive monitoring than can be reasonably offered by the PCC, situations requiring documentation of a DSM diagnosis)
- (3) Court-ordered services (i.e., requirements of adjudicated legal sanctions, or forensic oriented treatment)
- (4) For students needing or requesting to meet more than once per week.
- (5) For students who chronically do not show for scheduled appointments.
- (6) For students whose behavior creates a hostile environment affecting staff or other students.

Should your counselor determine that your needs require resources or competencies beyond what we can provide, he/she will assist with a referral to an appropriate off-campus provider.

Medication Services : Your PCC counselor will assist you with a referral to a community provider for medication management if necessary.

Communication with Your Counselor: Counselors are often not immediately available by telephone or email. When your counselor is unavailable during weekdays, please leave a message for them explaining your need. Counselors will respond as soon as possible. In non-emergency situations, PCC staff will not use e-mail or cell phones to conduct therapeutic conversations, as neither is considered secure or confidential. This contact information will be used for scheduling purposes only. Additionally, PCC staff do not access or utilize social media for clinical PCC business.

Confidentiality: The PCC will not release any information about you without your written permission, except as authorized or required by law, or in our judgment, as necessary to protect you or others from an imminent threat to health or safety. Other limits to confidentiality include abuse/neglect of a child, or an elderly or disabled adult. Lastly, we may also disclose confidential information in the event that you need emergency care. In this case, the information disclosed will be limited to that necessary to ensure your safety. Graduate interns are supervised by the Director of the Personal Counseling Center, and thus, information regarding your counseling sessions will be shared between these parties. PCC staff members may also confer with one another as needed to provide integrated care for you.

Counseling Records: In accordance with state and federal law, and professional ethical guidelines, the PCC maintains confidential records of all client contacts. Counseling (psychotherapy) records are completely separate from all other educational records. Records are maintained for six years following the last activity on the file and are then destroyed. You have the right to request to review your records with your counselor. Relevant information from records can be forwarded to appropriate professionals when the client signs an authorization form.

Missed Appointments: Whenever possible, please let us know 24 hours in advance if you cannot make your scheduled appointment. Frequent cancellations and no-shows can impinge on your progress in counseling, the function of our office, and the availability of appointment times for other students. These patterns will be addressed by your counselor when necessary in order to determine the appropriateness for treatment at our center.

Emergency Services: If a mental health emergency occurs when the PCC is not open, contact D'Youville College Public Safety at (716) 829-7777. You may also call Crisis Services of Buffalo at (716) 834-3131. Or 911.

Assessment and Evaluation: The PCC continually seeks to evaluate and improve our services by gathering anonymous data regarding your experiences with us, both clinically and through outreach efforts on campus. This information is used for an annual report of services, program planning and assessing current needs. The data is routinely compiled and reported with no individually identifying information.

Minors Seeking Treatment: If you are under 18 years of age, consent must be obtained from a parent or guardian. Minors under the age of 18 must understand that parents or guardians have the right to access counseling records based on New York State law. PCC staff can provide counseling services to students under the age of 18 with written consent from a parent or guardian. PCC staff may provide services to students under the age of 18 without parental consent only when the following conditions are met:

- (1) The student is knowingly and voluntarily seeking counseling services, and
- (2) The provision of counseling services is clinically indicated and necessary to the minor's well-being, and
- (3) A parent or guardian is not reasonably available, or, requiring parental involvement will have a detrimental effect on the course of treatment, or, a parent or guardian has refused to give such consent and a physician determines that treatment is necessary and in the best interest of the student.

PCC staff may provide an initial intake interview to a student under the age of 18, without parental consent or involvement, in an effort to determine whether the above criteria are present. This policy complies with New York State Public Health Law. In general, we ask parents/guardians to agree to relinquish full access to your records. If they agree, we will provide them only with general information about your counseling, unless there is a high risk of harm to yourself or someone else. In this case, PCC staff will discuss their concerns about your safety with you and your parent(s)/guardian(s).