

UNDERSTANDING PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

STUDENT COUNSELLING



WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

If you would like to make an appointment to see a counsellor to learn more about this topic, please contact the counselling service on your campus.

Distance students can contact any one of the campuses. Please tell the receptionist if you need an urgent appointment.

CONTACT DETAILS

ALBANY

Health and Counselling

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (09) 443 9783

Email: Studenthealth@massey.ac.nz

MANAWATU

Student Counselling Service

Turitea Campus, Palmerston North

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (06) 350 5533

Email: s.counselling@massey.ac.nz

WELLINGTON

Student Counselling Service

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (04) 801 25 42

<http://crow.massey.ac.nz>

<http://health-counselling.massey.ac.nz>

STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES

SKILLS – INSIGHT - SUPPORT

0800 MASSEY | MASSEY.AC.NZ

Client Satisfaction Survey: Periodically the Counselling Service conducts a survey of the service to gauge client satisfaction and to look at ways of improving what we offer. Clients participate voluntarily in the survey and there is no way for us to identify who has or has not filled in the questionnaire, making the feedback completely anonymous.

UNDERSTANDING PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

When you come to a Massey Counselling Service it is usually to discuss personal issues. You are entrusting your personal information to another person and may wonder how private your story is with the counsellor or within the Counselling Service.

All our staff adhere to the Privacy Act 1993, which is a law that governs how personal information is collected and used. It requires staff to respect the privacy of personal information that they have access to.

IN PRACTICE THIS MEANS:

1. If anyone such as your lecturer, a friend, or your parent phones one of the counselling services, the staff will not tell them that you have seen a counsellor unless they have your permission to do so.
2. If we have to phone your home, we will not mention the name of the Counselling Service.

Instead the staff member will leave their first name and the service phone number, for you to return the call.

3. In addition to the Privacy Act, counsellors are governed by their professional codes of ethics. This means they do not disclose your personal information except in limited circumstances. An example of this is when you ask a counsellor to support your request for an extension on an assignment. In this case the counsellor must provide information relevant to your request. No unnecessary personal information is provided.
4. Sometimes clients give counsellors permission to share certain information with their parents, their doctor or to specific lecturers. Again, the information given is kept to the minimum needed for that specific situation.

Information may be given without your permission in the following circumstances.

1. **Incapacity:** When, in the professional opinion of the counsellor, you cannot give permission yourself, this permission is sought from those who are able to look after your interests e.g. next of kin.
2. **Legal requirements:** If we are compelled by law to disclose information then we may have to do so in certain but very limited circumstances.
3. **Safety:** If the counsellor believes that you or someone else is at risk of serious and immediate harm, a counsellor, usually after consulting a professional colleague may disclose sufficient information to another person to enable them to assist you or the person in danger.

SUPERVISION

Counsellors regularly discuss cases with professional colleagues. In these situations no names or other identifying information are used and any such consultants are bound by similar ethical and legal confidentiality requirements. The purpose of these discussions is to improve the quality of counselling.

COLLECTION AND STORAGE OF INFORMATION

Confidential Information: When you come to the Counselling Service for your first appointment, we request certain information which enables us to gather statistics. This provides us with information about patterns of service use. When used for statistical and administrative purposes, no information is included that would identify individuals.

Case Notes: After the counsellor has met with you, case notes are written up. The counsellor only writes enough information about treatment to enable another counsellor to take over, if necessary. The counsellors are also careful about writing anything that would be detrimental to the client, should the case notes be subpoenaed (i.e. ordered to be brought before a judge in a court of law). This is of course a very rare event and could only occur where your counselling is relevant to a specific court case. An example of this might be when a client lays criminal charges of sexual abuse against another party.

Storage of Case Notes: Case notes written by counsellors are kept in a locked filing cabinet. We take every reasonable precaution to ensure the files are only accessed by authorised people. After hours the files are protected by a monitored security system.

If you return to the service and see a different counsellor then your notes will be retrieved and passed to that counsellor.

Records are retained for the legally required time, currently 10 years. The information is yours and you may access it or obtain copies at your request, with some limitations.

Letters about clients: At times counsellors may write letters to academic staff, or referral letters to other agencies. A hard copy of the letter is kept in the client's file. We do not keep letters relating to clients on the computer's hard drive.

