CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Policy Statement

Student Counseling Services strives to maintain confidentiality of students using the counseling services.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

This policy is required for the effective communication of university policy regarding confidentiality for counseling services.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

All members of The University of Southern Mississippi community.

Website Address for this Policy

www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-stua-scs-001

Definitions

Policy/Procedures

Many people, when coming to visit a counselor, are concerned about confidentiality (privacy). They don't want anyone to know that they're coming for counseling, and they don't want anyone to know what they say to their therapist. We do our best to minimize these concerns. The Student Counseling Services operates within professional guidelines. Therapists are professionally and ethically obligated to keep what you say confidential. They may seek input from other therapists at the center in order to improve the quality of your care, but no information about your
counseling will be released to, or discussed with, anyone outside the center without your explicit, written permission.

There are some exceptions that you need to know about. First, if there is a risk of imminent harm to yourself or another person (e.g., a serious intent to commit suicide or homicide), therapists have a legal and ethical duty to protect life. Second, therapists must release information when a court of law orders them to do so. Third, if we believe a child, elderly person, or mentally retarded person is being abused, therapists will report this. Fourth, if you are in a medical crisis, therapists may sometimes provide necessary medical information (e.g., about medications) to medical personnel.

People coming to counseling sometimes worry that their insurance companies will have access to their records. This is not the case at the center. Since there is no charge for services to Southern Miss students and Southern Miss employees, no insurance companies are involved.

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**Review**

The Director of Student Counseling Services is responsible for the review of this policy every four years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

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**Forms/Instructions**

N/A

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**Appendices**

N/A

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**Related Information**

N/A

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**History**

11/01/11: Formatted for Institutional Policies website.
02/21/13: Formatted for template. Minor editing throughout.
**Amendments**: Month, Day, Year – summary of changes
Authorization

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY
STUA-SCS-000-001

As the Responsible Officer, I have reviewed this policy and believe it represents the current policy.

[Signature]
Responsible Officer

[Signature]
Date 3/5/13