

## **North Greenville University Counseling Policies and Documentation**

Whether encountering a difficult situation, an immediate crisis, or an ongoing mental health concern, NGU Counseling is available to help. Our staff includes state-licensed counselors during NGU weekday work hours, and an additional licensed counselor to address after-hour needs.

### **Purpose and Mission**

NGU Counseling seeks to encourage and facilitate personal and interpersonal growth and healing by providing Christ-centered, individual and group counseling for students, faculty and staff. The goal is to help these individuals become whole emotionally, relationally, spiritually, psychologically and academically.

### **Policies**

We support the policies and expectations of North Greenville University, but are aware that students will not always be in agreement with those expectations. Although we respect those differences, NGU Counseling will always uphold the policies and expectations of the University while abiding by the ethical guidelines of the State of South Carolina and the American Counseling Association so that we can assist every client in making wise and healthy decisions. We do not see a conflict between wise and healthy living and the NGU lifestyle expectations as outlined in the Enlightener.

NGU Counseling will work to provide a comprehensive counseling program to assist students, staff and faculty to define and accomplish personal mental health and academic goals. These services are offered by:

- Providing short-term, goal-oriented counseling on an as-needed basis for students, faculty and staff with written consent from the client, potentially coordinating care and consultation with faculty, staff, parents and NGU services.
- Referring clients to community providers to address specific needs.
- Conducting educational workshops and training on topics central to student growth and development.
- Responding promptly to crisis situations involving the NGU individual and community.
- Serving as a resource on issues critical to psychological and emotional wellbeing and developmental growth.
- Planning and implementation of programs that reflect NGU's mission and goals.

NGU Counseling seeks to provide individualized assessment and care for all NGU students, faculty and staff. Treatment recommendations will reflect the method of care most appropriate to each individual's situation, and may include:

- Brief or extended individual therapy with a designated counselor
- Extended psychotherapy with a community provider
- Group counseling

- Brief marital/premarital counseling
- Psychiatric evaluation with a community provider such as a psychiatrist
- Referral to another campus office that can provide the services requested, including pastoral counseling, career counseling or academic counseling
- Mental health crisis services (on-call)

All counseling services are conducted from a Christian, Biblical, Christ-centered, clinical and confidential approach that is compassionate and respectful.

The first appointment with NGU Counseling is an intake and assessment session. At this initial session, the counselor will determine if the treatment plan should be for a brief 4-6 session schedule or for a more extended period of time. Sessions typically last 45-60 minutes. In addition, NGU Counseling offers referrals to outside mental health agencies if in the best interest of the client.

Students, staff or faculty who have been to NGU Counseling in previous semesters may request to return to the same counselor or request a new counselor.

Appointments are scheduled between Monday and Thursday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, and Friday, 8:30 to noon.

Scheduling an initial appointment with NGU Counseling is done by calling the Director of Counseling at (864) 663-0249 or by email to [counseling@ngu.edu](mailto:counseling@ngu.edu). Inquiries will be processed and the person will be contacted for an initial appointment.

### **Records and Confidentiality**

The NGU Counseling Staff is committed to protecting the individual client's personal health information. All psychological records and documentation are strictly confidential and are protected by federal and state laws, as well as professional ethics. Student records are covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g, 34 CFR 99). Non-student records are covered by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (45 CFR).

State and federal laws dictate that student, faculty or staff records cannot be released or disclosed without written consent of the client except under the following conditions:

- In the event of a health or safety emergency
- Threat of harm to self or others
- Suspected child abuse
- Suspected abuse of the elderly or disabled
- Court order or subpoena

NGU does not have the right to read or question counseling records without the written consent of the client, except in the cases noted above.

### **NGU Policy Statement Regarding Faculty and Staff Conducting Personal Counseling with NGU Students, Faculty, and Staff or Family Members of Students, Faculty and Staff**

NGU Counseling provides professional counseling services and seeks to uphold good ethical decision-making, and protect NGU Counseling and NGU for the benefit of faculty, staff and students. NGU and NGU Counseling recognizes that there are faculty and staff members who may hold certification, licensing, or registration as Biblical or clinical counselors, and may have significant experience as lay or professional counselors. Such education, training and experience can enable one to better minister to NGU students, faculty and staff who need help. However, what follows is the guideline for responding to requests for personal counseling services from students, faculty and staff, offering or otherwise initiating counseling services, or executing counseling services for NGU students, faculty or staff, or family members of students, faculty or staff.

Personal counseling may only be conducted by those hired or contracted by NGU to serve as personal counselors. As for faculty, they have not been hired to provide personal counseling services; it is outside the scope of their job description. Faculty counseling students from a class taught is termed a “dual role” or “dual relationship” and is recognized by the State of South Carolina and the American Association of Christian Counselors as unethical (See SC Code of Ethics 36-19 (B) (9), and AACC Code of Ethics ES1-140). Furthermore, for a faculty to conduct personal counseling to gain hours for licensing is a liability or malpractice issue (See SC Code of Ethics 36—19 (A) (8)).

Personal counseling stands in contrast to Biblical counseling, academic counseling, career counseling, advising, mentoring or discipleship in that personal counseling is clinical and Biblical, must follow the ethical and practical guidelines of NGU Counseling Policies and Documentation, and ACA and LLR ethical guidelines, and is covered by personal and NGU liability insurance specific to personal counseling. NGU malpractice insurance in regard to counseling services only covers those employees hired for the role of personal counselor, or contracted for counseling services for a specified period of time. A contracted person will be urged to acquire personal professional liability insurance. It is understood that faculty and staff will on occasion give personal counseling to a student or other faculty or staff member as it naturally occurs in conversation, what is prohibited is the one-time or regular scheduling of appointments for personal counseling, or providing personal counseling to an individual for more than a single walk-in occurrence. If after such an occurrence it is assessed that the individual needs clinical and professional counseling services, the faculty or staff member must refer them to the Director of Counseling, other NGU designated counselor, the Assistant Vice President of Student Life or the Director of Student Life in order to provide appropriate continuity of care.

The faculty and staff first response to a student, faculty or staff request for personal counseling services is to refer them to the Director of Counseling, other NGU

designated counselor, Assistant Vice President of Student Life or the Director of Student Life by personally introducing them to these referrals, or giving them the phone number and email address to contact the Director of Counseling or referrals themselves in order to schedule an initial appointment for screening and assessment.

Additionally, the counseling of students, faculty or staff to generate required clinical face-to-face hours for licensing, certification or registration is prohibited by reason of the preceding two paragraphs unless detailed within the job description or specific contract to provide counseling services.

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