

UNIVERSITY OF MINES AND TECHNOLOGY (UMaT), TARKWA
COUNSELLING AND STUDENT SUPPORT UNIT (CSSU)

INFORMED CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT POLICY

Dear client,

Welcome to the Counselling and Student Support Unit (CSSU) of UMaT. This policy document contains important information about our professional services and confidentiality agreement. It is for your informed consent and agreement to counselling services.

Professional Background and Services

Our Unit is a professional counselling services center. The Unit has several services available to you. These services include counselling and psychotherapy, online supported counselling, personal development workshops, seminars, and peer to peer support, individual and group counselling, marriage and relationship management among other specialised programs.

Our Counsellors are licensed counselling professionals with varied educational backgrounds and professional experiences. We are specialized in the various guidance and counselling services including academic, career/vocational, psychological, emotional, gender and disability, socio-personal counselling among others. We value our relationship with our clients and believe that such relationship is the beacon in the therapeutic process. The CSSU also greatly values each client's autonomy. So we encourage you as a client if you have any concerns or questions, to ask about our professional and personal approaches to counselling.

Our Counselling philosophy

Counselling is a confidential process designed to help client address his/her concerns, come to a greater understanding of self, and learn effective personal and interpersonal skills to help thrive in life. Counselling involves sharing personal information; this process may sometimes be distressing. In the course of counselling, there may be periods of increased anxiety or confusion, feelings of sadness, guilt and

anger among others. Obviously we feel strongly that counselling has stronger benefits than risks. Counselling often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, significant reductions in feelings of distress and increased informed decision making. But there are no guarantees of what one would experience at any point in time during the counselling process.

We believe that each individual is unique and has his own way of addressing resolutions. Thus, we believe in a client centered and wellness models that help clients empower themselves by focusing on what works for them and not in a systematic approach that provides a generic procedure on working on a treatment. We therefore employ integrative approach (eclectic) to meet client's counselling needs.

Counselling Structure

Our first few sessions would involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, we would be able to offer you some first impressions of what our work would include and a treatment plan to follow, if you decide to continue counselling. If you agree to continue, the Counsellor would determine an action plan with you which may include one or more of the following options:

- a. Self-directed study
- b. Online assisted therapy
- c. Peer or mentoring support
- d. Group counselling
- e. Short or long-term individual face-to-face counselling, or
- f. Referral to other services where necessary.

You may also be required to take psychological tests, home work or exercises as part of our diagnosis and interventions for resolution of the problem. Also, there would be occasions where audio and/or video recordings of sessions would be required but in such a situation your permission would be sought first.

Client's Rights and Responsibilities

Our clients' rights include but limited to:

- i. Asking questions on what to expect during and end result of the counselling.
- ii. Declining to proceed the counselling as to the techniques which may be conducted by the Counsellor and without any impediment.
- iii. Raising any concerns and to speak with the Counsellor immediately of any concerns, provided that the Counsellor is likewise available to discuss matters with the client.
- iv. Asking questions about our approach, professional background and experiences.
- v. Refusing or say no to anything we suggest or any approach we use which client may not be comfortable with.
- vi. Where the client is not making progress or the issue is beyond the practice of the Counsellor, client may be referred by using the appropriate referral procedures.
- vii. Changing Counsellor on any grounds.
- viii. Where a client is not satisfied with counselling processes, he/she can report to the Head of the Counselling and Student Support Unit for redress and assistance.

Confidentiality

In counselling, all interactions including the scheduling of appointments, attendance at appointments, the content of sessions, progress in counselling, and records, are confidential.

Within limits provided for by law (i.e. data protection law/right), all records and information acquired by the Counsellor shall be kept strictly confidential in accordance to the principles of a Counsellor-Client relationship. Information received are privileged and would not be shared or revealed to any person, agency, or organization without the prior written consent of the client.

Limitations to Confidentiality

The Counselling staff work as a team in consultation with Management. The Counsellors may consult with other counselling staff to provide the best possible services as well as for professional and training purposes. Furthermore, confidentiality may be broken for the purposes of divulging information in the interest of the client in any of the following circumstances:

- i. There are reasonable grounds to believe that there is a risk of imminent harm to you, property or specifically identified others and/or the abuse of children;
- ii. There are reasonable grounds to believe that a member of a regulated profession has sexually abused a client; or
- iii. When disclosure is ordered by a competent court of jurisdiction.
- iv. We may occasionally find it helpful to consult other counselling or health professionals about a case. During a consultation, we make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of our client. The other professionals are also legally bound to keep the information confidential.
- v. In the case of a minor, a mentally incapable/unstable client and other related situations, a third person (preferably a well-meaning relative) would stand in for the client

Duty to Warn

In the event that the Counsellor reasonably believes that the client is a danger, physically or emotionally, to themselves or another person, consent is given for the Counsellor to warn the person in danger and to contact any person in a position to prevent harm to themselves or another person, including law enforcement agencies, Counsellors and other health professionals.

Counselling Record

No record of counselling is included in any academic or educational record. Counselling records are stored accurately, securely and kept in the Counselling Unit. Although counselling records remain the property of the University, clients have the right to access copies of the personal information we hold concerning them by submitting a written request. Clients may also request with written consent that the Unit releases specific information about their counselling to individuals of their

choice. Client files are kept for five (5) years after termination of counselling before they are destroyed.

Consent to Counselling

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you have both read (or have had it read and explained to you in a language you understand) and understood all the terms and information contained herein. Ample opportunity has been offered for you to ask questions and seek clarification of anything that remains unclear. You understand and acknowledge the limitations concerning confidentiality and accept these limitations.

I consent to participate in the counselling process.

Client Name:

Tel:

Signature:

Date:

Clients who receive Interpretation of Policy Agreement in another Language other than English.

Iin the presence of having had contents of this agreement policy read out and explained to me in the language that I understand, on this..... day of,20...., at, do hereby thumbprint to consent for counselling.

Client Name: **Tel:**

Thumbprint: **Date:**

Witness' Name:

Signature:
Date:.....