



NORTHERN

Counseling Center Scope of Practice

Mission:

The mission of the Counseling Center, a department of the Division of Student Affairs, is to help students resolve personal difficulties that may interfere with optimal personal and academic functioning; and acquire the skills, attitudes, abilities, and knowledge that will enable them to attain educational and personal goals. The Counseling Center fosters a culture where help seeking behavior is normal, encouraged, and supported across campus and the greater community.

Services Provided:

1. Confidential clinical services that help students achieve their academic and personal goals.
2. Providing education, training, and support to the campus community regarding the needs of students through outreach, programming, and consultation.
3. Providing prevention programming on range of behaviors pertinent to college population including: high risk alcohol/drug use, domestic and dating violence, suicide prevention.

Eligibility for Services:

Our services are available to eligible students whose concerns fall within our scope of practice. *Students whose primary location is Northern and are currently enrolled in a minimum of 6 (six), on campus, credits at NSU are eligible for services.* In order to facilitate a brief counseling model, NSU Counseling Services limits sessions to 8 (eight) sessions per academic semester. This *excludes* dual enrolled high school students and SDSU Accelerated Nursing Students.

Confidentiality and Limitations:

All contacts with the Counseling Center are confidential and remain separate from academic records. Staff will not release information about students without written permission unless situation warrants as outlined in the Informed Consent, or as required by a lawfully issued court order with appropriate notice to the student.

Issues commonly addressed through brief individual or group counseling:

- Academic related issues
- Mood or self-esteem issues
- Relationship issues
- Adjustment concerns such as dealing with new life circumstances
- Grief and loss

Services Limitations:

Some services are outside our scope of practice, require specialized providers, or may interfere with our ability to meet our many requests for service. Examples included, but are not limited to, need or desire for long-term weekly services, family or couples counseling, significant substance use/abuse, significant disordered eating symptoms, chronic suicidality or chronic self-injury, psychiatric medication management, court-mandated counseling services (except alcohol diversion programming, Insight Program), assessment for obtaining documentation for academic, employment, or housing accommodations, and comprehensive psychological evaluations. When possible, a referral will be provided.

Denial of Services:

Services may be denied at the discretion of the Counseling Center Director and primary counselor when appropriate. This will be discussed with the client when possible and referrals will be provided.

- Lack of motivation or engagement in treatment
- Ongoing treatment relationship with another mental health provider

- Inappropriate, harassing, menacing, threatening, or violent behaviors

Possible exceptions to exclusionary criteria:

Occasionally, Counseling Center providers may provide services that temporarily extend our scope of practice. Exclusions will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the consultation and approval by the Counseling Center Director.

Crisis Counseling and Emergencies:

You may contact the Counseling Center during hours of operation if you or someone you know is in a crisis situation and/or you are uncertain of their ability to keep themselves safe. Counselors are not first responders and are not dispatched on or off-campus to assist with behavioral health crisis. Students who are not willing or unable to get to the Counseling Center on their own should be referred to emergency services.

Telehealth Offerings:

Telehealth sessions may be available and appropriate during instances where the client or counselor is unable to attend face-to face sessions due to health concerns. Telehealth is provided via Zoom Health, which offers additional security features to ensure the confidentiality for the client. Some limitations of telehealth include:

- Students who are outside of South Dakota at the time of the counseling session due to restrictions with counselor licensure
- Acute distress as telehealth is not advisable as in person contact is required for adequate assessment.

Consultation:

The Counseling Center is available to receive information regarding students who may need support and/or behavioral health care. Due to confidentiality, the staff will never indicate if the student is seeking services. The information collected will never be shared (except as described under confidentiality).

Outreach and Education:

Classroom presentations, student organizations and department meetings are opportunities to normalize help seeking behaviors, build relationships, and encourage a healthy concept of behavioral health and prevention programming. For group or class presentations, please call at least two weeks in advance. During peak times, or when staffing is limited, we may restrict our availability for requests as we are required to prioritize individual counseling services for students.

Hours of Operation:

The Counseling Center is open during regular business hours July 22-June 21 annually. Due to contract limitations, there are periods of office closure May 22-July 21 and will be posted on our website. Existing clients will be referred to off-campus resources during periods of office closure as needed.

Fees for Service:

Mental health services and consultations are provided to all eligible students free of charge and will not be billed to insurance.

Individuals referred to the Insight Program (Alcohol Diversion Program) will be charged for those services. Individuals may be referred to the programs after being found responsible for alcohol related conduct violations on-campus, or through the court system after a legal violation off-campus. Individuals will be placed in an appropriate diversion program at the discretion of the Prevention Services Coordinator and/or the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Contact the Counseling Center for a current schedule of fees.

Counseling Center Staff:

Counselors employed by the Counseling Center are licensed or are under a plan of supervision toward completing licensure, by the South Dakota Board of Examiners for Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists. This government entity enforces the code of ethics as published by the American Counseling Association (ACA). A copy of the code of ethics can be found by visiting the website: <https://www.counseling.org/Resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>