

NDSU  
Community Counseling  
Services Clinic

Handbook  
Of  
Policies and Procedures

Developed Fall 2005  
By  
Doctoral Seminar Students

Reviewed and edited  
By  
Counseling Program Faculty  
and  
Adopted on April 1, 2006

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## **Mission Statement**

The North Dakota State University (NDSU) Counselor Education Program's (CNED) mission is to provide state, national, and international students who represent a multicultural and diverse society with the appropriate academic preparation, clinical experiences, and personal growth opportunities that can be applied to their work as professional master's and doctoral degree level counselors and counselor educators. We strive to produce graduates that are caring, compassionate, capable professional counselors and counselor educators who are aware of the importance of theory, research, and practice.

The NDSU CNED faculty's priorities are teaching, research/scholarly activities, and service. The goal of the counselor education program is to facilitate student learning. While expectations for each faculty member vary, as a group, we expect that faculty and students are committed to learning as a life-long process that involves intellectual, affectual, and experiential components. Our graduates possess the appropriate knowledge, dispositions, and skills for their chosen career field and become aware of the importance of theory, research, diversity, technology, and ethical practice

## **NDSU Community Counseling Services Clinic Office Manager Job Description**

*The NDSU Community Counseling Services Clinic Office Manager will be primarily responsible for the following duties, in support of the NDSU Graduate Programs in Counseling and Counselor Education. The Clinic Office Manager job is an administrative support position and does not include any counseling or supervision duties:*

### **Clinic and Client Management Duties:**

- Answer incoming phone calls, receive and record incoming messages for faculty and student counselors, schedule client appointments with student counselors, open and close clinic according to scheduled appointments (clinic will be open 30 minutes before the first session).
- Provide clients with reminder cards for scheduled appointments.
- General office administration duties including but not limited to:
  - maintain files and insure confidentiality of client records
  - maintain schedule of emergency on-call doctoral students
  - handle incoming and outgoing mail for clinic
    - Request of Information (ROI) forms need to be sent out within 24 hours of receiving the request from the student counselor.
- Follow screening/intake policy and procedure guidelines when receiving calls from new or potential clients.
- Maintain/update supplies including, but not limited to office supplies and first-aid kit supplies.
- Work in partnership with faculty members to write and secure grant funding.
- Clinic Office Manager will read, understand, and strictly adhere to the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics.

### **Clinic and Client Management Limits:**

Do not give out or volunteer ANY information about student counselors or other clients. If client has a question, tell them the counselor will be happy to call them back. Clinic Office Manager does NOT counsel clients calling in, and is not included on any ROI pertaining to clients or counseling services. The Clinic Office Manager does NOT assign clients to counselors.

Clinic Office Manager does NOT act as a counselor supervisor and does NOT view counseling sessions in progress, does NOT review tapes and does NOT discuss clients or client sessions with student counselors or other clients. The Clinic Office Manager is NOT responsible for reviewing client case notes or signing any student counselor documentation.

Clients are NOT allowed to be in the clinic office at any time. Student counselors will assist in the process of scheduling appointments.

Clinic Office Manager does NOT handle any client issues over the phone or in person. If there is an incident with a client or outside agency, the only persons authorized to deal with the incident are the counselor of record and that person's direct supervisor. They will determine who else should be involved.

The Clinic Office Manager is responsible for collecting payments for sessions from clients. The Clinic Office Manager will follow payment/fee policy and procedure and deliver payments to NDSU Counseling Department Administrative Assistant for deposit into the clinic account.

## **Management of Aggressive or Violent Behavior**

**Policy:** The clinic shall provide a safe environment for all clients, staff, and visitors. As a counselor-in-training, you are not obligated to be verbally or physically threatened.

**Purpose:** To provide for the management of persons who become aggressive or violent.

**Procedure:**

1. Staff shall not be alone in the building during any professional appointment.
2. If a client or visitor is known to be aggressive:
  - Notify other staff of the appointment time and office location, asking the staff to be available if necessary.
  - If the person becomes aggressive, do not be a hero.
  - Try to position oneself between the client and the door.
  - If the situation escalates, escape or scream for help.
  - Do not attempt to restrain the person.
  - Warn children or other vulnerable adults in the agency who may be at risk
  - Call 911 if necessary.
3. Document the incident and file with the Director. (Incident report in appendix)

## **Cell Phone Policy**

**Policy:** Personal cell phone use

**Purpose:** To assure that clients at NDSU Community Counseling Services do not use cell phones for personal phone calls or taking photographs.

**Procedure:**

1. Clients should be informed that the use of cell phones while in the facility for personal calls is prohibited.
2. Clients should be informed that the use of cell phones to take photographs of other clients is a breach of confidentiality and will not be tolerated.

## **Childcare for Clients**

**Policy:** No faculty/staff/student counselor at NDSU Community Counseling Services is authorized to provide childcare for clients during counseling appointments.

**Purpose:** To ensure the safety of the clinic's clients and staff.

**Procedure:**

1. Staff/faculty members and student counselors shall not provide childcare for clients of NDSU Community Counseling Service.
2. Clients should be informed of this in order that they have made independent arrangements for childcare before attending their session.

## Client Access to Counseling Records

**Policy:** Counseling Record Access

**Purpose:** To assure the client's confidentiality is protected as defined by Federal, State and ACA standards.

**Procedure:**

1. Upon a request to read or review the client's record, the client and/or legal guardian must sign a specific release of information that states which portions of the record may be read/reviewed/released.
2. The request for review of records should be documented in the case notes and be initialed by the client and the primary counselor and/or faculty supervisor.
3. An appointment shall be scheduled with the faculty supervisor or the client's primary counselor for the review of the record.
4. Based on clinic policy the following material shall be removed before review by client, guardian, parent or family member: Medical records received from any other agency, any records as identified by the client, that reference information about the client's family members or that the client does not want disclosed to the family.
5. A representative from the clinic shall be present during the review of the record.
6. Counseling records requested by an attorney or by the courts shall be released as per the release of information requested by the attorney and signed by the client and/or legal guardian; a court order for the medical record shall be honored in full compliance with legal statutes.
7. Only faculty may release records.

## Client Records

**Policy:** NDSU Community Counseling Services shall prepare and maintain a single file for each client receiving services through the program so as to communicate the appropriate case information. This information must be in a form that is clear, concise, complete, legible, and current.

**Purpose:** To allow the client and clinic to communicate appropriate case information.

**Procedures:**

1. NDSU Community Counseling Services shall implement a written policy addressing the process by which a client may gain access to the client's own record.
2. If duplicates of information or reports from the single record of a client exist or if working materials are maintained, such materials must:
  - a. Not be a substitute for the single record
  - b. Be secondary to the recording of information with the single record of the client receiving first priority; and
3. A program must apply appropriate safeguards to protect active and closed confidential written electronic, and audiovisual records and to minimize the possibility of loss or destruction in the following manner:
  - a. The information in active and closed records must be organized in a systematic fashion;
  - b. The location of the records of clients and the nature of the information contained therein must be controlled from a central location;
  - c. The clinic administrator must be responsible for the control of records of clients and for the implementation of the policies pertaining to records of clients;
  - d. Access to records of clients and electronically generated documents must be limited to the student counselors, student supervisors and/or faculty supervisors who are providing or supervising direct services to the client and such other individuals as may be administratively authorized;
  - e. The Community Counseling Services must maintain an indexing and filing system for all manual and electronic records of clients;
  - f. The Community Counseling Services must secure records and take reasonable steps to protect the records against fire, water damage, and other hazards; and
  - g. The Community Counseling Services must follow routine procedure for backup of data files for electronic systems.
4. Clients records may include but are not limited to:
  - a. Identification data;
  - b. The name and address of the legal representative, conservator, guardian, and representative payee of the client;

- c. Pertinent history, (a diagnostic impression) presenting professional need, client strengths, and desired outcomes and expectations;
- d. Prescribed medications;
- e. Relevant medical information;
- f. Reports of assessment and individual treatment planning,
- g. Signed and dated progress notes regarding the client's progress toward the attainment of the client's treatment plan objectives;
- h. Reports from referring sources;
- i. Reports of service referrals;
- j. Reports from outside consultants;
- k. Designation of the student counselor, doctoral student supervisor, and faculty supervisor for the client;
- l. Reports of team conferences;
- m. Reports of family conferences;
- n. Correspondence pertinent to the client;
- o. Signed and dated release forms;
- p. Discharge summary describing client's progress including a discharge plan which identifies the treatment goals not yet achieved as well as any problems that have been deferred for treatment by a subsequent provider.

## **Client/Family Rights and Responsibilities**

**Policy:** The rights and responsibilities of clients/family will be respected.

**Purpose:** NDSU Community Counseling Services shall treat all clients and their families with respect and dignity.

**Procedure:**

1. Clients/Family members will be treated without discrimination based on physical or mental disability
2. Clients/family members will be treated without regard to race, creed, national origin, sex or sexual preference.
3. All information will be handled confidentially in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and standards.
4. Clients/family members will not be subject to physical, emotional or sexual abuse or harassment by employees or another client.
5. Clients/family members have the right to be informed in a language that he/she understands
6. NDSU Community Counseling Services will protect the fundamental human, civil, constitutional and statutory rights of each client.
7. NDSU Community Counseling Services shall implement a written policy that describes the rights of clients and means by which these rights are protected and exercised.

## Confidentiality

**Policy:** All faculty, staff, students, volunteers, faculty supervisors, and supervisors in training of NDSU Community Counseling Services shall strictly adhere to ACA code of ethics and all applicable state and federal laws.

**Purpose:** To protect the privacy of agency clients and to ensure highest standard of care from NDSU Community Counseling Services Clinic, NDSU Counseling program, faculty, staff, and students.

**Procedure:**

1. All NDSU Community Counseling Services staff, faculty, and student counselors, will read, understand, and follow the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics regarding confidentiality.
2. All NDSU Community Counseling Services staff, faculty, and student counselors, shall adhere to the ACA Code of Ethics and all applicable state and federal law regarding client identity and records.
3. Any violation of client confidentiality may result in termination for paid staff and/or disciplinary action for students, staff and faculty.
4. Written authorization shall be required for the release of any client information. The authorization shall be signed and dated by all clients age 14 and over, and witnessed. Parent or guardian shall sign authorization for clients under the age of 14.
5. Exceptions for release of information without a legally signed release of information from the client or parent/guardian are in accordance with the ACA Code of Ethics.

## Contraband

**Policy:** Weapons and mood-altering chemicals shall not be tolerated in the building or on the grounds of the clinic building.

See NDSU Policy Manual Section 155.

**Purpose:** To ensure the safety of the clinic's clients and staff and to obey civil law and legal requirements.

**Procedure:**

1. The following items are not permitted in the building or grounds of the clinic:
  - Weapons of any type as defined by the clinic staff.
  - Alcohol and/or any drugs of abuse, legal or illegal.
  - Tobacco for clients under the age of 18.
2. If the above items are found or reported to be present:
  - Staff and student counselors shall avoid confrontation that may escalate the situation.
  - Staff and student counselors will call 911 for emergency assistance if the situation is imminently dangerous.

## Termination/Transfer Criteria

**Policy:** NDSU Community Counseling Services will terminate/transfer clients according to ACA Code of Ethics.

**Purpose:** To ensure that clients are being terminated and transferred according to criteria.

**Procedure:** Before a program may transfer or terminate a client, the client must have:

1. Achieved the goals articulated in the client's individualized treatment plan and resolved the problems that justified admission to the present level of care with progress evaluated and a determination has been made that the client is ready for a less intensive level of care or independent living.
2. Been unable to resolve the problems that justified admission to the present level of care despite amendments to the treatment plan and no further progress is likely indicating the need for another level of care or type of service.
3. Demonstrated a lack of capacity to resolve problems indicating the need for another level of care or type of service.
4. Experienced an intensification of problems or has developed new problems and can be treated effectively only at a more intensive level of care.

## **Documentation of Services Provided**

**Policy:** All staff and student counselors shall use the approved forms for all documentation.

**Purpose:** To ensure that all clinic staff and student counselors use approved documentation forms.

**Procedure:**

1. Forms shall be revised as necessary. When revised, the new form shall replace all remaining old forms.
2. Appropriate forms must be filled out in total and secured ASAP after the involvement pertinent to that form.

## **Dress Guidelines**

**Policy:** NDSU Community Counseling Services personnel shall consistently dress in professional attire.

**Purpose:** To ensure that faculty, staff and student counselors present an appropriately professional appearance and to represent NDSU Community Counseling Service with pride.

**Procedure:**

1. Faculty, staff and student counselors are expected to dress in the same manner that they would expect to see as appropriate if they were seeking services from any other mental health services provider.
2. Appropriate dress is related to client service. The faculty member in charge is ultimately responsible for any questions that arise regarding “appropriate professional attire”.

## **Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider**

**Policy:** NDSU Community Counseling Services is committed to equal access to its programs and employment for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or socioeconomic status.

See NDSU Policy Manual Section 100.

**Purpose:** To define NDSU Community Counseling Services policy of nondiscrimination.

**Procedure:**

1. The Community Counseling Services is governed by the NDSU policy on Equal Opportunity.
2. This policy of nondiscrimination will be stated in all appropriate materials produced and distributed by the clinic.

## **Fees and Payments Policy**

**Policy:** The NDSU Community Counseling Services program shall seek payment for services.

**Purpose:** To provide guidelines in the collection of payment for services.

**Procedure:**

1. Prior to the first counseling session, cost of services and potential methods of payment shall be discussed with client by the clinic Office Manager.
2. The Clinic Office Manager will have the client complete and sign the Agreement of Cost for Services and Payment form and file the form in the client's file.
3. The clinic Office Manager will thereafter maintain all financial records under the direction of the faculty supervisor.
4. The faculty supervisor may wave the fee for any client.

## Fire Safety

**Policy:** NDSU Community Counseling Services will do all that is reasonable possible to protect the safety of staff, student counselors, and clients.

See NDSU Policy Manual Section 164 (#6.)

**Purpose:** To provide safety for clinic clients, student counselors, and staff if there is a fire.

**Procedure:**

1. The person discovering a fire must call 911, or request another staff person to do so immediately.
2. Staff will evacuate all clients and visitors out of the area of danger and/or out of the building away from danger.
3. While evacuating the area and building, close all doors.
4. No persons will be allowed to return to the area/building until the Fire Department declares an "all clear."
5. Evacuation routes shall be posted in each public area.

## **Hours of Operation**

**Policy:** The clinic will have established hours of operation.

**Purpose:** To ensure that the general public, clients, and other professionals and agencies are able to access the clinic services.

**Procedure:**

1. Clinic hours of operation will be set by the faculty supervisor.
2. Changes to the clinic hours of operation must be approved in advance by the faculty supervisor.
3. Staff and student counselors will be available during their scheduled hours to perform the duties and responsibilities associated with their job.
4. No one should be in the clinic alone with a client.

## Incident Reporting

**Policy:** All extraordinary incidences shall be reported and investigated.

See NDSU Policy Manual Section 164 (#1.)

**Purpose:** NDSU Community Counseling Services shall provide a safe and secure facility and grounds.

**Procedure:**

1. Extraordinary events may include but are not limited to:
  - a. Personal injury
  - b. Personal property loss, damage or theft.
  - c. Interpersonal assault
  - d. Illegal activitiesand occur to any staff, client or visitor of NDSU Community Counseling Services offices, common areas of the building or on the grounds.
2. An Incident Report form shall be filed with the clinic ASAP and within two working days.
3. The faculty supervisor shall complete appropriate follow up about the incident to ensure the incident was effectively handled.
4. The clinic shall retain the Incident Report form for a minimum of seven years.

## Mandated Reporting

**Policy:** All faculty, staff, and students of NDSU Community Counseling Services shall strictly adhere to all applicable laws regarding mandated reporting of child or vulnerable adult maltreatment.

**Purpose:** Professionals having knowledge of or reasonable cause to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is abused or neglected, or has died as a result of abuse or neglect, must make a report of the circumstances.

**Procedure:** A person mandated to report, or any person wanting to report suspected child or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect, should contact the county social service agency in which the alleged incident occurred.

- If a staff/faculty member or student counselor suspects that abuse or maltreatment has occurred, they will call the county social service agency in which the suspected incident occurred. Local social service agency numbers are provided on the useful phone numbers section of this manual. Reports must be made within 24 hours of gaining knowledge of the information.
- In Minnesota cases of abuse or neglect, a verbal report must be followed by a written report within 72 hours of making the verbal reports.
- In North Dakota cases of abuse or neglect, a verbal report must be followed by a written report if requested by the county social services office.
- In order to maintain both client and mandated reporter privacy, records of abuse or maltreatment reports are NOT kept in client files, but in a separate, locked file at the clinic.
- If a staff/faculty member or student counselor has reason to believe that a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, he or she should contact the local police department for assistance.

## Screening/Intake Procedure

**Policy:** Screening/Intake Procedure

**Purpose:** The NDSU Community Counseling Services program is an educational counselor training center. Clients requesting counseling services will be informed of the following scheduling procedure to assure the most appropriate placement of client with student counselor.

**Procedure:**

1. Clinic Office Manager will get the following information from all clients requesting services:
  - Name
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Brief statement about presenting concern
  - Days/times available for counseling
  - Contact phone number
2. Clients requesting counseling services will be informed by the clinic Office Manager that NDSU Community Counseling Services are not available for crisis/emergency situations. These calls are to be directed to appropriate agencies or 911 for immediate services.
5. NDSU Community Counseling Services faculty supervisor and practicum/internship registered student counselors will meet on a regular basis to determine the most appropriate placement of client with a student counselor.
6. After placement, the clinic Office Manager will contact the client with appointment information (counselor name/date and time of counseling appointment).

## **Transportation of Clients**

**Policy:** No faculty/staff/student counselor at NDSU Community Counseling Services is authorized to provide transportation for clients to or from the clinic for counseling appointments.

**Purpose:** To ensure the safety of the clinic's clients and staff.

**Procedure:**

1. Clients are informed that they are responsible for their own transportation to and from the Community Counseling Services clinic.
2. Staff/faculty members and student counselors shall not provide transportation in his or her personal vehicle for clients of NDSU Community Counseling Clinic.

## **Videotaping and Closed Circuit Television Policy**

**Policy:** The NDSU Community Counseling Services program shall utilize videotaping and closed circuit television for the purpose of student counselor supervision.

**Purpose:** To provide appropriate procedure to be used in obtaining client consent for videotaping and closed circuit television supervision.

**Procedure:**

1. Clients will be informed of videotaping and closed circuit television utilization and purpose.
2. The student counselor will have the client sign the appropriate consent form.
3. The student counselor will deliver the signed consent form to the clinic administrator for appropriate filing in the client's file.

## **Pre-requisites for and Responsibilities of Student Counselors**

### **ADMISSION**

#### **CNED 794A - Practicum**

1. Degree seeking students who have obtained a grade of “B” or better in CNED 710 Counseling Techniques, CNED 715 Professional Orientation and Ethics, CNED 720 Group Counseling and CNED 711 Counseling Theory may be admitted to practicum. The following are required before registering:

- a) Completed written practicum application form.
- b) Videotape of role playing session with the student being the counselor. \*see “Supervisor Evaluation of Practicum Counselor” at the end of this appendix (E).
- c) A letter of recommendation from the student’s advisor affirming their readiness for practicum.
- d) Deadline dates: November 1 for Spring practicum, April 1 for Fall or Summer practicum.

2. If a student does not have the required grades in prerequisite courses, he or she may be admitted to practicum if two Counseling Program faculty members agree to work with the student to remove deficiencies.

3. The faculty reserves the right to delay practicum enrollment for other than academic concerns.

#### **CNED 794B - Internship**

1. Practicum is required for all students and must be successfully completed before enrolling in internship.

2. Students should be aware of all internship requirements and deadlines. Contact the faculty internship supervisor for application information before the midterm of the semester prior to the intended internship. (See Appendix H.)

3. Students are responsible for locating an appropriate site and, if necessary, a site supervisor.

4. The internship supervisor may request faculty approval for internship plans when a student has not completed specific courses that may be viewed as necessary for the internship experience.

### **LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Proof of liability insurance must be provided to the practicum faculty supervisor or faculty internship supervisor prior to the beginning of the experience. Liability insurance for students can be obtained through ACA, ASCA, or through a private carrier.

### **STUDENTS’ RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students must consistently demonstrate the appropriate use of relationship building skills and the use of appropriate counseling techniques and strategies while participating in all aspects of the practicum and internship experience, including working with clients, classes, individual and triadic supervision, and group supervision. Students must also consistently demonstrate adherence to ethical and legal guidelines of the counseling profession.

