

INFORMED CONSENT FOR IN-PERSON SERVICES DURING COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Face-to-Face Appointments

The Counseling Center may offer in-person appointments during the COVID-19 pandemic. If there is a resurgence of the pandemic or if other health concerns arise, however, in-person services will be discontinued and your services will be provided via telemental health. Some examples include but are not limited to; your health or exposure to COVID-19, your provider's health or exposure to COVID-19, health or exposure to COVID-19 of an individual who was physically in the Counseling Center, a student or provider's need to meet via telemental health, stay-at-home order, and/or the university closing. Due to confidentiality, there may be instances when the Counseling Center is unable to provide more information regarding any decision to discontinue face-to-face services and move to telemental health.

Risks of Opting for In-Person Services

You understand that by coming to the office, you are assuming the risk of exposure to COVID-19 (or other public health risk). This risk may increase if you travel by public transportation, cab, or ridesharing service.

Your Responsibility to Minimize Your Exposure

To obtain services in person, you agree to take certain precautions which will help keep everyone (you, your provider, other staff, students, etc.) safer from exposure, sickness and possible death. If you do not adhere to these safeguards, it may result in the discontinuation of in-person services and starting / returning to telemental health. To minimize exposure:

- You will only keep your in-person appointment if you are symptom free.
- You will take your temperature before coming to each appointment. If it is elevated (100 Fahrenheit or more), or if you have other symptoms of the coronavirus, you agree to cancel the appointment (you may receive telemental health services if appropriate).
- You will arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before your appointment time.
- You will use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when you enter the office.
- You will adhere to the safe distancing precautions set up in the waiting room and therapy offices. For example, you won't move chairs or move within 6 feet of individuals in the Counseling Center.
- You will wear a mask or face covering in all areas of the office (as will Counseling Center staff).
- You will keep a distance of 6 feet and there will be no physical contact (e.g. no shaking hands).
- You will try not to touch your face or eyes with your hands. If you do, you will immediately wash or sanitize your hands.
- You will take steps between appointments to minimize your exposure to COVID-19.
- If you have a job that exposes you to other people who are infected, you will immediately let the Counseling Center know.
- If your commute or other responsibilities or activities put you in close contact with others (beyond your family or roommates), you will let me the Counseling Center know.
- If a resident of your home tests positive for COVID-19, you will immediately let the Counseling Center know; treatment will begin/resume via telemental health or a referral will be provided in the event telemental health is not deemed an appropriate service.

Any of the above precautions may change if additional local, state or federal orders or guidelines are published. If that happens, the Counseling Center will notify you.

Our Commitment to Minimize Exposure

The Counseling Center has taken steps to reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus within the office and we have posted our efforts on our website and in the office. Please let me know if you have questions about these efforts.

If You or Your Provider Is Sick

The Counseling Center is committed to keeping you, the Counseling Center staff, and all of our families safe from the spread of this virus. If you show up for an appointment it is believed that you have a fever or other symptoms, or believe you have been exposed, you will be required to leave the office immediately. We can follow up with services by telemental health as appropriate.

If Counseling Center employees test positive for the coronavirus, you will be notified so that you can take appropriate precautions if you are deemed a close contact.

Your Confidentiality in the Case of Infection

If you have tested positive for the coronavirus, the Counseling Center may be required to notify local health authorities and/ or the BSU contact tracing team that you have been in the office. If we need to report this, only the minimum information necessary for their data collection will be provided. No details about the reason(s) for your visits will be shared. Additionally, if an individual has tested positive for the coronavirus and was in the Counseling Center at the same time you were, the Counseling Center may be required to notify local health authorities that you have been in the office. By signing this form, you are agreeing that we may do so without an additional signed release.

By signing below, I request services at the Bemidji State Counseling Center and understand and agree to all policies and practices noted above. I understand that I may withdraw this consent and terminate services at any time, for any reason. I understand that this informed consent will remain valid for the duration of services. I affirm that I have read the policy statements in this informed consent.

Signature

Date

Office Safety Precautions in Effect During the Pandemic

My office is taking the following precautions to protect our patients and help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

- Office seating in the waiting room and in therapy/testing rooms has been arranged for appropriate physical distancing.
- My staff and I wear masks.
- My staff maintains safe distancing.
- Restroom soap dispensers are maintained and everyone is encouraged to wash their hands.
- Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is available in the therapy/testing rooms, the waiting room and at the reception counter.
- We schedule appointments at specific intervals to minimize the number of people in the waiting room.
- We ask all patients to wait in their cars or outside until no earlier than 5 minutes before their appointment times.
- Credit card pads, pens and other areas that are commonly touched are thoroughly sanitized after each use.
- Physical contact is not permitted.
- Tissues and trash bins are easily accessed. Trash is disposed of on a frequent basis.
- Common areas are thoroughly disinfected at the end of each day.