MILLIGAN COLLEGE COUNSELING CENTER

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Counseling Center’s mission is to provide professional, short-term, mental health counseling services at no cost for Milligan College students, faculty and staff as a way to further enhance Milligan College’s Christian community of caring by providing a level of professional care that promotes emotional well-being, spiritual growth, academic success, multicultural diversity and healthy interpersonal relationships.

The Milligan Counseling Center mission statement supports Milligan College’s mission and vision:

As a Christian liberal arts college, Milligan College seeks to honor God by educating men and women to be servant-leaders.

GOALS OF THE COUNSELING CENTER

- Provide counseling and/or referrals for personal and academic concerns for the college community.
- Direct individuals in crisis intervention/emergency to the proper sources of care available to the Milligan community (e.g., Frontier Health Crisis Response Team).
- Support learning and retention of students through appropriate treatment and/or referral.
- Focus on areas of prevention on campus through education, communication and crisis intervention strategies.

Office of Student Affairs

The Milligan Counseling Center provides an extension of service to the Milligan Community. The Office of Student Affairs is responsible for co-curricular life. Its programs and policies are founded on the belief that life outside the classroom influences a student’s growth and development as much as the academic experience. Programs reflect the importance of the residential nature of the College. The process of self-governance in residence halls encourages students to resolve conflicts and to learn how to live effectively in a community. These programs are diversified, but all support the idea that education is a process of intellectual and social growth and change.
PROCEDURES FOR RECEIVING SERVICES

Scheduling appointments: The Milligan Counseling Center is not set up to accommodate walk-ins. It is preferred that clients (Students, Faculty and/or Staff) schedule appointments with the Counseling Center to ensure that they are seen in a timely manner and that the Counseling Center staff is available to assist them. Individuals are instructed to call the Milligan Counseling Center phone number (423-461-8500), which is available to log telephone messages 24/7. Phone calls will be returned within one business day with the exception of weekends (Saturday and Sunday) and holidays, in which case phone calls will be returned by the end of the next business day.

Urgent Care: In the event of an emergency, Clients are instructed to call Frontier Health's Crisis Response Team at 877.928.9062.

Court Mandated or forensically oriented services: Milligan Counseling Center does not offer court-mandated or forensically oriented services.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every Client (at intake) will be presented with the Counseling Center’s Consent for Treatment Policy. The Client’s signature on this document will signify that he/she has read the policy. When obtaining informed consent to counseling, the Counselor must inform the Client as early as is feasible in the therapeutic relationship about the nature and the anticipated course of counseling, involvement of third parties, the limits of confidentiality, and to provide sufficient opportunity for the client to ask questions and to receive answers.

When the Counseling Center believes that a Client poses a clear and present danger to him/her self and/or to others, the Counseling Center may selectively release information, without the Client’s consent, to aid in the care and protection of the Client or the endangered others.

When the Counseling Center has reasonable cause to suspect that a child (a person under 18 years of age) has been subjected to child maltreatment, which may involve abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation or abandonment, as defined by Tennessee State law, the Counseling Center may selectively release information, without the Client’s consent, to aid in the care and protection of that child. The Counseling Center is further required by Tennessee State law to report this information to Department of Children’s Services. Likewise, the Counseling Center is required to report suspected cases of elder abuse and abuse of a vulnerable adult.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) provides that student records maintained by physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, or other recognized professionals and paraprofessionals are not education records. Therefore, Client files do not become part of any permanent record at the College, but are the property of the Counseling Center.
Clients may review their records, in the presence of a Counseling Center staff member, upon written request. The request and the fact that a review occurred will be entered in the Client’s record. Clients may receive copies of the record. The request and the fact that a copy of the records were given will be documented in the Client’s file.

The Client file of a person who is not a student, including but not limited to, a staff member, faculty member, etc., is not an educational record. The file is accessible to the Client.

Tennessee law recognizes the privilege that attaches to the Counselor-Client and Psychologist-Client relationship. The privilege is extended only to licensed counselors and psychologists. Should the Counseling Center receive a subpoena for Client records, the college legal counsel will be consulted prior to taking any action(s). Clients will be notified in advance, if at all possible, of any compliance with a court order, state or federal law that might require disclosure of Client records.

The Authorization for Release of Information form will be used when a Client desires for counseling information to be shared with a third party. The Client’s consent must be informed. The Counselor who is expected to release information must discuss the positive and negative consequences, actual and potential, associated with the release of information.

**CODE OF ETHICS**

The Ethical Principles of Counselors enacted by the American Counseling Association (ACA) serve as the primary guidelines for professional behavior in the Counseling Center. All MCCC Counselors are expected to be familiar with and adhere to these principles in practice. Any interested parties should go to [http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics](http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics) Click on the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics.
DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

I. PERSONAL COUNSELING

The Counselor can assist with a wide variety of personal difficulties, such as self-esteem, depression, anxiety, cultural adjustment, relationship conflicts, and growing up in a dysfunctional family. Personal counseling is designed to assist the student in learning coping skills that will help him/her function positively in the academic environment. Referrals for the above services may also be provided to the student.

II. SERVICES TO FACULTY AND STAFF

Referrals for counseling services are also available to faculty and staff members with issues of a personal nature. The same confidentiality standards that apply to students also apply to faculty and staff members.

III. MANDATED CASES

The MCCC only accepts mandated evaluation cases from the Dean of Students, Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Director and/or Dean of Academic Affairs.

a. The Counseling Center’s staff only provides information relating to students’ mandated evaluation sessions to the Dean of Students, Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Director, and/or Dean of Academic Affairs when students provide their written consent.

The only exception occurs when a student presents a clear and imminent danger to self or others—then the Counseling Center’s staff actively work with the Dean of Students, Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Direct, and Dean of Academic Affairs with information relating to their participation in mandated evaluation sessions to face potential consequences from the Dean of Students, Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Director, and/or Dean of Academic Affairs.

b. When students give written consent to the Counseling Center’s staff to relay to the Dean of Students, Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Director, and/or Dean of Academic Affairs information about their mandated sessions, the only information the deans insist on receiving relates to 1) students’ actual attendance for the assessment session(s) and 2) information that has a bearing on students’ danger to themselves or others. This does not at all preclude the possibility of the deans, students and the Counseling Center’s staff agreeing that other pertinent information can be released, but the deans do not implement sanctions based on students’ decisions to allow or not allow the release of such additional information.

c. Any communication between the Counseling Center’s staff and the Dean of Students, Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Director, and/or the Dean of Academic Affairs about the students’ mandated evaluation sessions will also involve the student in question. Thus, for example, the communication may take place during a face-to-face meeting with the Dean of
Students, Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Director and/or Dean of Academic Affairs also includes the student, or may take the form of a telephone call made in the student’s presence by means of a “speaker telephone”, or may take the form of a memorandum reviewed in advance by the student and/or copies to the student.

*Alternatives for students mandated to participate in counseling*

Any students mandated by the Dean of Students, Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Director, and/or the Dean of Academic Affairs to participate in an evaluation session(s) at the Counseling Center are also afforded the alternative of securing evaluations from Frontier Health Services and/or from an appropriate licensed mental health professional in the community.

*Dissemination of this policy to students*

A copy of this policy is provided by the Counseling Center to all students participating in mandatory evaluation sessions.

Policy Regarding Suicide Threats/Attempts

In those cases where a student poses a threat of harm to self or the College community, the following measures will be taken to assure the well-being of the individual and/or the campus community.

1. In case of emergency, medical assistance will be rendered at local hospitals.

2. At that time, medical/mental health evaluation will be conducted by resident professionals associated with the hospital who will recommend a course of immediate action.

3. Before being allowed to attend classes the student will furnish to the College a written evaluation performed by a licensed psychiatrist/psychologist, indicating the emotional and mental stability of the student. The evaluation must be presented to the Dean of Students within five days of the incident.

At that time a review committee composed of the evaluating psychiatrist/psychologist, The Dean of Students, a counselor from the College, and the Residence Hall Director (if an on campus student), shall determine the advisability of the student remaining in school.

Should the consultation recommend continuation, it must include a program of ongoing counseling service with appropriate professionals. Costs of such services are the responsibility of the student.

To continue in school, a dependent student must have a written statement of parental/guardian consent acknowledging awareness of the incident and indicating a desire for the student to continue enrollment.
In addition, a Release of Information agreement must be on file with the counselor and the Dean of Students to permit an exchange of information relevant to the student's emotional and physical health. Regular progress reports and confirmation of counseling appointments must be provided until such time as the counselor releases the student from therapy.

Should the initial consultation recommend discontinuation of enrollment at the College, an administrative withdrawal will be imposed and the student must leave campus within 24 hours.

Refunds of tuition, room, board, and fees will be made in accordance with the policy as stated in the College catalogue regarding withdrawal due to medical reasons.

Refusal to comply with these guidelines following a threat of harm to self or the College community shall be grounds for immediate dismissal.

RETENTION OF CLIENT FILES

1. All counseling services provided to Milligan College undergraduate/graduate students will be documented in student counseling files. “Hard” paper copies of such documentation will be placed in the student files as soon as such documentation is available and kept in a locked file cabinet in the Counseling Center main office closet, as per HIPPA requirements.

2. All “hard copy” documentation of services and other confidential information will be kept in filing cabinets in a locked room in the Counseling Center. No student files will be removed from the premises, unless required by a court order or some other extraordinary circumstance.

3. Students will complete the New Client Information Sheet at the time of their first session each academic year.

4. Students will read the Consent for Services form and, if in agreement, will sign and date the form at the time of their first session.

5. Progress notes will be completed within 24 hours of services. Progress notes will include subjective and objective observations, assessment of need, and a plan for future services.

6. Documentation of couples counseling will be made in each student’s individual file. References to a student’s romantic partner in such documentation should be limited to a non-specific euphemism (i.e., boyfriend, girlfriend, etc.) or to the partner’s first name, so that the partner’s identity will maintain some degree of confidentiality in the event the student’s treatment documentation is released (i.e., by court order, or by some other appropriate means).
7. Missed, canceled, or rescheduled appointments require a brief note by the counselor indicating what occurred.

8. Documentation of emergency or other services provided after regular working hours will be completed as soon as practically possible, using the “Progress Note” form. The original form will be kept in the student’s counseling file (if applicable).

9. Documentation of any student’s permission to release confidential information will be made using Counseling Center’s release form. The original will be kept in the student’s counseling file.

10. Copies of any correspondence (including email messages) with or about clients will be included in student counseling files.

11. All documentation of services completed by counselors will include a signature block with the documenting counselor’s name, degree, and professional licensure.

12. Clinical files will be organized in chronological order such that the most current documents will appear “on top”.

COUNSELING CENTER’S SCOPE OF PRACTICE

The Milligan College Counseling Center (MCCC) provides short-term/brief supportive individual counseling at no cost for currently enrolled undergraduate/graduate students of the college. Group counseling may also be provided according to students’ needs. These services are provided by second year Master of Science Counseling students who have been deemed academically, personally and professionally prepared by the MSC graduate program. Practicum and intern students are supervised by a full-time faculty member, Dr. Christine Browning, who is a Licensed Professional Counselor with Mental Health Service Provider status (TN #2294), as well as a Senior Psychological Examiner (TN #11808). Services are designed to assist Clients with a number of concerns and to enhance their ability to be more effective and successful in their academic and personal lives. Due to limited resources, a model of brief, goals-oriented counseling is used by the MCCC staff. Students who need long-term or more intensive services will be referred to a Frontier Health professional who has provided limited counseling services to Milligan students in the past. Referrals will be made with the Client’s needs in mind, after meeting with a MCCC counselor, who will follow up with the Client to assure that a good referral was made.

Limited Service

The MCCC does not provide long-term intensive counseling and psychotherapy. It is beyond the Counseling Center’s scope of practice to provide ongoing counseling and psychotherapy for Clients who may be diagnosed with a variety of serious, long-term psychiatric conditions, and individuals who appear to be a recurring high risk to themselves or to the Milligan College community.

Additionally, MCCC does not prescribe or monitor psychotropic or any other medications. Referrals to local medical facilities regarding these needs will be made available.
Students may be mandated for a counseling assessment by an external body (e.g., Student Affairs, Dean of Academics). These Clients will be evaluated to ascertain personal motivation and goals for counseling. Students must have personal motivation and goals for counseling; if not, they may be referred to other campus or community resources. If the mandated goals are beyond the Counseling Center’s scope of practice, Clients will be referred to appropriate resources off campus (e.g., Frontier Health; alcohol/drug abuse treatment).

**REFERRAL SERVICES**

Students presenting to the Counseling Center with problems beyond the scope or qualifications of the staffed Counselors will be referred to the appropriate individual or agency for assistance. Examples of situations that might warrant a referral include but are not limited to:

a. Clients with psychiatric issues that are more appropriately handled by a mental health professional with preferred training (e.g., psychiatrist/psychologist).
b. Clients needing medication due to a mental health diagnosis.
d. Students with imminent risk suicidal ideation.
e. A desired intervention/service is unavailable in the center; the service may be in lieu of, or in addition to counseling center services.
f. The student requests it to protect anonymity or is dissatisfied with counseling center treatment.

Examples of services beyond those offered at the center include long-term counseling requiring multiple sessions each week or long-term weekly counseling; counseling for students with full-fledged eating disorders that require intensive medical, psychiatric, and/or nutritional services; long-term drug and alcohol assessment and treatment; and other similarly complex services as determined by the director of Counseling Services.

The counselor will attempt to provide the Client with all necessary information about the referral source (name, location, cost, hours, phone #, etc.). Requests for information from the referral source will be honored when the Authorization for Release of Information form is completed by the Client.

Students who secure services in the community are responsible for paying for those services. Most community providers accept insurance. Some have a sliding scale fee schedule for students who do not have insurance for mental health services.

**TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

Termination occurs when a Client is no longer in a sustained relationship with the counselor. This can occur when the Client:

a. Has achieved the goals set forth in counseling.
b. Left Milligan College (via withdrawal, graduation or transfer).
c. Has been referred to other sources outside of the center.
d. Does not “show” for at least two appointments or
e. Makes repeated cancellations.

Clients Missed Appointments (No Shows)

1. Any Client who misses an appointment will typically be encouraged to reschedule the appointment. Any exceptions to this practice will be documented in the Client’s file. Exceptions might occur, for example, if a Client has already received encouragement to reschedule after other recently missed appointments.

2. In fairness to Clients wanting to secure timely services from the Counseling Center, Clients who miss an appointment without notifying the counselor will typically be allowed no more than one additional consecutive “no shows” or three “no shows” in one semester before they become ineligible for services. Counselors will notify such Clients of their ineligibility via email, with a copy placed in the Client’s counseling file. Any exceptions to this practice also will be documented in the Client’s file.

MAINTAINING THE COUNSELING CENTER OFFICE/DIRECTOR OF COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling services are rendered by both Practicum and Internship students enrolled in Milligan Colleges Master of Science in Counseling program. Potential practicum/internship students are in their second year of coursework and deemed academically, skill-set and professionally equipped to deliver a quality level of counseling services to Milligan faculty, staff and students. All Clients seen at the Milligan College Counseling Center will be asked to sign a waiver permitting each counseling session to be video-taped, which serves as a supervision tool for the Counselor.

Students at the Milligan College Counseling Center are supervised by Dr. Christine Browning, Director of the Center. Dr. Browning holds a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from the University of Mississippi, is a licensed professional counselor with mental health service provider status (TN License #2294) and a senior psychological examiner (TN License #11808). In compliance with American Counseling Association Ethic’s Code (2014), Dr. Browning will not provide any counseling services to students but will directly supervise all practicum and internship students who conduct counseling sessions. Likewise, in compliance with APA, ACA and Social Work codes of ethics, none of the Psychology, Counseling or Social Work faculty will conduct counseling sessions with students.

Use of Electronic Mail to verify/schedule/reschedule appointments, communicate with Clients: An email account is not deemed necessary or beneficial at this time.