Welcome to Fredonia Student Counseling Services (SCS). In order to better serve you, we would like to provide you with some information about our services. This information will be discussed during your first appointment. If you have any questions, please let your counselor know.

What is Counseling? Student Counseling Services utilize a short-term model of therapy. This means that counseling is goal-focused and brief. In most cases, it is expected that sessions will be limited to 6 per semester. Counseling, whether individual or group, focuses on resources, solutions and strategies to deal with your presenting problem. While during your first session, your counselor will ask about many areas of your life, the focus of therapy will be on working toward your specific goals. In order for counseling to be effective, it is necessary for you to take an active role. Participation involves discussing your concerns openly and providing feedback to your counselor about the progress of counseling. Many students find group counseling an effective format for making changes and achieving their goals.

Your First Appointment: During your first visit, called a Triage session, you will discuss your concerns and goals for treatment. This session will help determine the best treatment option. These services may consist of individual or group counseling.

Sessions: Depending on your issues and goals, counseling may consist of one or several sessions. It is expected that most students will utilize fewer than 6 sessions per semester.

Cancellations and No-Shows: Student Counseling Services has limited staff hours with a high demand for service. Our ability to provide services to the greatest number of students is dependent upon you keeping scheduled appointments. We expect that you will notify us in advance if you are unable to keep an appointment.

Confidentiality and Records: Counseling often involves sharing sensitive, personal, and private information. Recognizing this, laws and ethical guidelines require that all interactions with Student Counseling Services, including content of your sessions, records, scheduling of or attendance at appointments, and progress in counseling are confidential. No record of counseling is contained in any academic, educational, or job placement file. Information will not be released to anyone outside SCS without your written permission. In order to provide you with the best possible treatment, we may confer with clinical professionals within SCS. Counseling records are maintained for 7 years after which time they are destroyed.

Exceptions to Confidentiality: For the vast majority of clients, no exceptions to confidentiality are made; however, there are some exceptions to confidentiality, which you should know about before you begin counseling. SCS may disclose information in writing in the following situations:

- You consent to such disclosures;
- A court order mandates disclosure;
- In accordance with statutes mandating reporting of child or elder abuse;
- In accordance with NY SAFE Act reporting mandates;
- Your counselor consults with other professional associates for clinical supervisions;
- It is determined you are a danger to yourself or others.

In any of these situations, your counselor would reveal only the information needed to resolve the immediate crisis or risk of danger. If your counselor believes you are in danger of hurting yourself or others, your counselor may contact people in a position to prevent harm.
Restrictions on Services: New York State Office of the Professions places restrictions on the services mental health counselors are authorized to provide. All mental health counselors at Student Counseling Services are required by law to consult with a physician when treating a person for serious mental illness on a continuous and sustained basis. The law defines serious mental illness as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and autism. If, in the course of assessment and treatment, your counselor suspects that you may have a serious mental illness, he/she will discuss with you the value of a medical evaluation to determine whether medical care is indicated. If it is determined that a medical evaluation is warranted, your counselor will seek your permission to consult with a physician.

Technology and Informed Consent: SCS uses computer technology for scheduling of clients, data collection, and note-taking. The software uses a Microsoft SQL Server, independent from the general college system, to store the data which is encrypted and hidden and is HIPAA compliant. We make every effort possible to protect the confidential information that is entered into the computer system.

Crisis and After-Hours Services: In most circumstances, the difficulties that students face can be addressed through the usual process of setting up an appointment. However, there are crisis situations in which immediate or same-day intervention by a counselor is called for.

Student Counseling Services (SCS) is available after hours to State University of New York at Fredonia student community. If a crisis arises during working hours, students should contact SCS directly by calling 673-3424 or by coming directly to the SCS office. When students come to the SCS office in crisis, they should make the secretary aware that there is a crisis. Outside of regularly scheduled working hours, students living on campus are advised to notify their Resident Advisor (RA) or Resident Director (RD), who may then decide to engage the SCS emergency services. Students may also reach the SCS emergency services by contacting University Police (673-3333).

Risks of Counseling: In therapy, you may learn things about yourself or your relationships. Often growth cannot occur until you confront issues that cause you to feel sadness, sorrow, anxiety or pain. Your therapist will be there to support you as you accept the responsibility for making the choices and changes that are required to achieve your goals. There is also a risk that therapy might not resolve your problem or that therapy alone may not be sufficient. Should this be the case, the therapist will explore alternative plans with you.

Change of Contact Information: You are asked to provide us with your most current address and phone numbers so that you may be reached in case of scheduling conflicts or emergences.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT/CONSENT FOR TREATMENT: I acknowledge that I have read and understand the information described above, and I authorize Fredonia Student Counseling Services to provide for my care. I understand that I may withdraw this consent in writing and terminate treatment at anytime.

Print Name: ___________________________ Date: ________________________________

Client Signature: __________________________

Witness Signature: __________________________ Date: ________________________________