



SHWC Counseling Services Scope of Practice Statement

Scope of Practice Statement

Our goal is to provide all SOU students who seek counseling services with the most appropriate and best possible available care. SHWC counseling services are provided to help individuals develop self-awareness, recognize alternatives, and feel empowered to take charge of their lives. Our services are short-term in nature and serve to help students pursue their academic, social, and health/wellness goals.

Counseling Services

A student requesting mental health counseling at the SHWC is directed to a triage counseling session with one of the licensed clinicians or supervised interns on staff. In this session, the student and counselor will work together to ascertain the student's needs and resources; and then decide on the best plan for the student. This could include further assessment and short-term counseling at the Student Health & Wellness Center, or a referral to an off-campus provider for longer-term counseling, and/or a referral to another student service on campus. Referrals will be guided by our Scope of Practice Statement and related referral practices.

Counseling services include:

- Screening/early outreach, triage, assessment, and referral services
- Short-term individual, couples (if both parties are SOU students), and group counseling
- Crisis intervention and urgent risk assessment
- Consultation to providers, staff/faculty, and family members
- Case management and coordination of services as needed

Common issues addressed in counseling include:

- Personal Issues: stress and anxiety, depression, anger, loneliness, guilt, low self-esteem, grief & loss, alcohol/drug abuse
- Relationship Issues: romantic relationship difficulties, sexual concerns, roommate problems, family issues.
- Developmental Issues: identity development, adjustment to college, life transitions, sexual orientation/gender issues
- Academic Concerns: performance anxiety, perfectionism, underachievement, low motivation

- Other Issues: effects of trauma, sexual assault, abuse, or discrimination; concerns from childhood or adolescence, spiritual concerns, body image, food preoccupation, healthy lifestyle choices, etc.

Other counseling activities: Outreach, education, mental health promotion, and training

In order to help build a healthy campus environment, counselors conduct multiple “out-of-office” services and programming to students, staff, and academic departments. Students, faculty and staff are informed about what constitutes good mental health, about the signs of mental health concerns, and what to do when concerning issues arise. Besides our clinical services, SHWC counseling staff collaborate with our colleagues to provide:

- Psycho-educational and support groups
- Workshops on various topics, outreach, tabling, facilitating and supporting campus events
- Suicide prevention gatekeeper trainings for students, staff, and faculty
- Mental health prevention/promotion activities such as the Mind Spa, the Relaxation Extravaganza, and other initiatives
- Mental health-related presentations and trainings to student groups, faculty and staff

Resource Utilization and Referral Practices

Consistent with the national data from university and college counseling centers (Association of University and College Counseling Center Directors, 2015), the SHWC counseling and mental health services have also been experiencing an increase in the frequency and volume of students seeking counseling and an increase in the severity of student mental health issues. For the reasons stated below, we cannot fully accommodate all of the mental health needs of our student population which therefore necessitates the regular practice of referring eligible students to off-campus providers.

1. Demand and resource limitation- we operate from a short-term/brief therapy model seeing students sometimes weekly but most often every other week (or less) and for 5-7 counseling sessions at a time. We cannot accommodate those students who want or need longer-term therapy due to staffing and caseload constraints.
2. Expertise and setting- there are many mental health issues that require more intense or in-depth psychotherapy that is best delivered by an expert in that particular modality (e.g. EMDR, psychoanalysis, in-depth trauma treatment, etc.) and/or in a setting with more intensive services (e.g. DBT or intensive outpatient therapy).
3. Students who have usable health insurance need to access those benefits for ongoing mental health treatment, if more counseling is needed. More and more students have viable insurance with mental health benefits and it makes sense for students to use their health insurance to receive ongoing treatment.

We will continue to provide high-quality, short-term care to the majority of the students we see. Additionally, when lack of insurance, lack of finances and/or inability to utilize insurance is a barrier, we will strive to be flexible and student-centered and will endeavor to support those students as best as we can and as our resources allow.

Following the rationale and scope of practice spelled out above, the following are some issues that will be referred out to the appropriate off-campus providers or services, at our discretion:

- A need or desire to be seen weekly or more often and/or a need for long-term therapy
- Intense, recurrent, and/or entrenched mental health issues that require specialized care or more intensive treatment
- Clinical presentations, such as some personality disorders, that indicate short-term therapy may be ineffective and/or detrimental.
- Indication that short-term therapy is not working well for the client.
- Excessive utilization of SHWC crisis intervention services may be an indication that standard session frequency is inadequate or more intensive treatment is needed.
- Substance dependence and addiction issues requiring primary treatment whether in an inpatient or outpatient setting.
- A long-standing and/or untreated eating disorder with medical safety risks.
- Active symptoms of psychosis at risk for progressive deterioration.
- Court-mandated or attorney-directed treatment to satisfy a legal requirement such as mandated substance abuse treatment, alcohol education, anger management, parenting education, or domestic violence treatment.
- Learning disability, ADHD, or neuropsychological testing.
- Forensic evaluation, custody evaluation or fitness for employment.
- To fulfill academic requirements for counseling (an SOU CMHC student may expect to receive 5 out of 10 sessions at the SHWC and then will be given referral options).
- Lastly, a SHWC counseling staff has the right to refer any client displaying problematic behaviors such as: posing a safety risk to SHWC staff, lack of motivation or engagement in treatment, inconsistent attendance, poor compliance or noncompliance with treatment; or at the discretion of the SHWC staff and Director of Counseling.

Every attempt will be made to provide multiple appropriate referrals to the kind of help that a presenting student might need. SHWC counselors can help coordinate the steps in the referral process. If you have any questions about counseling services at the SHWC or referral, please ask your counselor or contact the Director of Counseling.