

# Frequently Asked Question about Counseling and The ABAC Counseling Center:

## **Who can use the counseling center?**

Counseling services are available to all currently enrolled ABAC students. Consultation and referral services are available to students, faculty, and staff.

## **When is the counseling center open?**

The Center is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and on Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Drop-in services are offered during the Fall and Spring semesters after regular business hours. Check the services menu for days and times of our Drop-in services.

## **Do I need an appointment to see a counselor?**

Individual counseling sessions are scheduled by appointment only. Students can stop by the Center, located in **Branch Hall - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**, or call the Center at **229-391-5135** or by clicking on the [Scheduling Web Portal](#) on the main Counseling Center webpage. Students do not need an appointment for Drop-in services.

## **What if I need to speak with a counselor NOW?**

Counselors are available to assist with mental health crises. If your concern is an *emergency* and you feel you need to be seen *immediately*, please contact the Counseling Center at **229-391-3135** to set up a crisis screening. Should you or someone you know be experiencing a mental health crisis *after* business hours, please contact your Community Assistant, Residence Hall Director, **ABAC Police at 229-391-5060**, or **dial 911**.

Students may also contact Christie Campus Health at **229-391-5135 option #2**.

## **What kinds of issues are appropriate for counseling?**

Students utilize counseling services for a number of issues such as anxiety, depression, OCD, trauma, relationship concerns, academic concerns, grief, etc. For more information about our services and the types of concerns we cover, see the Services tab on the Center's webpage.

## **Is there a fee or charge?**

There are no upfront or out-of-pocket fees associated with any of our counseling services.

## **Are my sessions confidential?**

Yes. All written and verbal information you give is confidential within the Center. Information will not be released outside the Center without your written consent except when required by law (i.e., reasonable suspicion of current child or elder abuse, imminent danger to self or others). Your Counseling Center records are NOT part of your academic or administrative records. Further, the identity of those who use the Counseling Center is also regarded as confidential.

## **Do I need to fill out forms to be seen at the Counseling Center?**

Yes. Students will be asked to complete consent forms and other necessary information for our counselors to know how best to help you. The forms are similar to what you would fill out to see your family doctor or other medical specialists.

### **What can I expect at my first appointment?**

During your first appointment (typically 45-60 minutes), you will be invited to discuss your concerns and goals. Together, you and the counselor will determine what services will be most effective for you. If the Center cannot provide the type of service you need, you will be referred to the appropriate outside agency.

### **What about follow-up appointments?**

Ongoing counseling appointments are typically 30-60 minutes in duration and are scheduled on a recurring basis as determined by you and your therapist (counselor). You will also need to work with your therapist to determine how often you should come to counseling (ex: weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly).

- **No Show/Cancellation Policy:** It is expected that students maintain and arrive on time for all scheduled appointments with their counselor. If you will be late for a scheduled appointment, you are asked to provide as much notification in advance as possible. Due to the high volume of requests for counseling services, if you cannot attend an appointment for any reason, you are asked to provide **at least 24-hour advanced notice** of any intent to cancel (or need to reschedule). This can be done by calling the office at 229-391-5135 or emailing [counseling@abac.edu](mailto:counseling@abac.edu).
  - Students who fail to attend **two consecutive appointments** without advanced notice will receive a warning via email from their counselor, and any future appointments the student has will be removed from the schedule. If the student fails to attend **four or more consecutive appointments, has sporadic attendance, or frequent late arrivals over a 30-day period**, the student will be notified via email. The student will not be offered future appointments until successful remediation can be achieved.

### **Does the Counseling Center offer virtual (online) appointments?**

Yes. When you call the office or schedule an appointment through the Scheduling Web Portal, please select the type of appointment you want (in-person or virtual).

### **Are virtual appointments confidential and secure?**

As with any online communication, there is always a risk that someone could receive your personal information, but the counseling center only uses secure platforms to conduct therapy sessions.

### **Can I switch my counselor to another counselor within the Center?**

Yes. Students should *first* speak with their current counselor and discuss any issues or concerns about the counseling process or their treatment. If it is determined that another counselor may be a better fit for you or can assist with your treatment in some other way, you can transition to another counselor within the Center once per calendar year.

### **What if I have concerns about my treatment?**

Because we are counseling professionals, we strive to uphold the highest ethical and professional standards. If you have questions or concerns about your treatment, bring these issues to the attention of your counselor or another staff member.