

Tufts University
Counseling and Mental Health Service

Clients Rights and Responsibilities

We want you to be aware of your rights as a client of our service. The following is a summary of your rights based on the Massachusetts law called the Patient's Bill of Rights. We have outlined these below, and invite you to ask your counselor if you have any questions about these rights. Following that, there is a list of your responsibilities to help us give you the best care we can.

I. Your Rights

1. Confidentiality: In the usual course of events, you have the right to keep your counseling here completely private. This means that, without your written permission, no information about your contact with CMHS is available to anyone outside of Health Services, including university personnel, parents, family members, friends, or outside agencies. However, there are certain *exceptions, noted below, with which you should be aware before you enter into a counseling relationship*. Please read carefully through these exceptions, and be sure to ask your counselor if you have any questions.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

- If appropriate, your counselor may consult with your treating physician or other healthcare provider at the Tufts University Health Service to coordinate your care;
- If you pose a threat of harm to yourself, to another person, or to the University community, we will take whatever steps are required by law, or permitted by law, to help prevent the potential harm from happening. This may include contacting your family and/or Tufts University officials;
- In the event of a psychiatric hospitalization;
- If you report information indicating that a child, disabled, or elderly person is suffering abuse or neglect;
- A court order, issued by a judge, could require us to release information contained in your records, or could require a therapist to testify;
- If you have been mandated by a Tufts University administrator to seek an evaluation.

2. Release of Information: You have the right to discuss with your counselor what information is in your record, and if you sign a release of information authorizing the CMHS to share information with outside sources, you have a right to discuss specifically what information will be released.

3. You have the right to end your counseling at any time.

4. You have the right to request a different counselor to the extent possible if you are dissatisfied with the initial assignment. Reassignment will depend upon availability of alternate counseling staff.
5. You have the right to obtain an evaluation for the issue that brings you here. If we are unable to be of help, we will make every effort to refer you to appropriate outside treatment.
6. You have the right to be informed about the services available to you here, and, unless it is an emergency, to participate in the process of deciding whether or not to utilize these services.
7. You always maintain the right to question the focus of your sessions;
8. You have the right to know the credentials of your therapist;
9. You have the right or to ask for a second opinion.
10. You have the right to present a complaint, knowing that your care will not be compromised in any way. If you have a problem concerning your care, that you cannot solve with your counselor, call Julie Ross, Director of the Counseling and Mental Health Service, at (617) 627-3360.

II. Your Responsibilities

1. Keep your scheduled appointments and let us know as soon as possible if you cannot keep one.
2. Be as honest and open as possible with your counselor.
3. Between sessions, think through the concerns you are addressing in counseling.
4. Follow through on treatment recommendations and complete your counseling homework assignments.
5. We ask that you end your work with us in a termination session, rather than not keeping your appointment. This way you can share and discuss with your counselor what was useful and what could have been improved.
6. If you feel that you might harm yourself or others, contact the CMHS immediately at 617-627-3360 during business hours (9am – 5pm), or after hours contact the Tufts University Police at 617-627-3030 and ask to have the on-call counselor paged.