

UCA Counseling Center Tele-Mental Health Information about Distance Counseling Services

We are pleased to have the opportunity to serve you. The UCA Counseling Center provides voluntary confidential counseling support for currently enrolled students.

Distance Counseling

The UCA Counseling Center now offers distance counseling via telephone AND face-to-face video conferencing to currently enrolled UCA students who meet the eligibility criteria for distance counseling services. This service is available to clients assessed as being appropriate for this form of counseling.

Due to licensure laws for psychologists and counselors in Arkansas, we can only engage in distance counseling with students who are physically in the state of Arkansas. If you are currently residing outside the state, we will do our best to help you locate appropriate resources in your area.

Prior to beginning distance counseling: If you are a **new** client, you will have an initial video consultation with a UCA Counseling Center staff member in order to verify your identity by matching you with your picture ID. If you are a **current** client, your counselor will confirm your identity visually and/or vocally. This process protects you from another person posing as you. Video communication may lack some visual or audio cues that on occasion may result in misunderstanding. Should this ever happen, it is important to assume that your counselor has positive regard for you, and to check out your assumptions with your counselor. This will help reduce any unnecessary feelings of discomfort.

Video conferencing counseling sessions are held via Doxy.me, a HIPAA compliant video conferencing platform. It is recommended that you sign on to your account at least 5 minutes prior to your session start time. You are responsible for initiating the connection with the UCA Counseling Center via the provided link at the time of your session. Once you are connected, your counselor will initiate the video session.

Limitations of Distance Counseling

Distance counseling should not be viewed as a substitute for face-to-face counseling or medication by a physician. It is an alternative form of counseling with some differences from traditional counseling. For example:

- Due to the use of technology, video counseling may have disruptions in service and quality of service.
- If you are having a crisis, acute psychosis, or suicidal or homicidal thoughts, video counseling might not be appropriate for your needs.

Emergency Management for Distance Counseling

So that the UCA Counseling Center is able to get you help in the case of an emergency and for your safety, the following measures are important and necessary:

Your counselor will need to know the location/address in which you will consistently be during counseling sessions, and will need to know if this location changes.

- Your counselor will request that you identify someone, whom you trust, to give your counselor permission to contact should a situation occur that your counselor believes you to be at risk. You, and/or your counselor, will verify that this emergency contact person is able and willing to go to your location in the event of an emergency, and if your counselor deems necessary, call 911 and/or transport you to a hospital.

Backup Plan in Case of Technology Failure

- The most reliable backup is a phone. Therefore, it is recommended that you always have a phone available, and that you provide your counselor with your phone number.
- If you get disconnected from a video conferencing session, re-start the session. If you are unable to reconnect within five minutes, please call your counselor.

Scope of Service and Eligibility

The UCA Counseling Center provides services for all eligible students, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or veteran status. If it is determined by the clinical staff that an individual's needs exceed the scope of service or expertise available at the UCA Counseling Center or that your needs cannot be adequately met by participating in distance counseling, we will assist you to identify an appropriate referral to meet your needs. The UCA Counseling Center does not pay the costs of therapy or community resources/treatment services to which you may be referred.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential to your counseling progress. Our counselors are licensed master's level or higher mental health professionals who are ethically and legally bound to maintain your confidentiality. A written and/or electronic record (date, time, nature of meeting) of your contacts with the UCA Counseling Center will be maintained in a secure manner. Video conferencing sessions in our office are provided behind a closed door. All video conferencing correspondences will be done through Doxy.me, which is encrypted to the federal standard. To schedule a pre-screening consultation appointment or for questions give us a call at (501) 450-3138. For more information about our services and for additional resources, go to www.uca.edu/counseling.