



Information about CCSD Teletherapy Services

We are pleased to have the opportunity to serve you.

What is Tele-Mental Health (TMH)?

1. TMH refers to counseling sessions that occur via phone or videoconference using a variety of technologies. TMH is offered to improve ECU students' access to counseling services during major crises, such as COVID-19.
2. As with face-to-face counseling services, there are risks and benefits to TMH despite best efforts by clients and clinicians. Client conditions may not improve, and in some cases, may even get worse.
3. You have the right to withdraw or withhold consent from TMH services at any time without affecting your right to future care or treatment. You have the right to terminate treatment at any time.
4. State laws may require that the services delivered by a clinician take place within the state in which the clinician is licensed. The Center for Counseling and Student Development is in North Carolina and the counseling staff is licensed within North Carolina. If you are physically located outside of the state in which the clinician is licensed, you may be referred to other services that may be able to support you more appropriately. Your counselor will confirm your location at each session.
5. TMH services may not be appropriate, or the best choice of service for reasons including, but not limited to, heightened risk of harm to oneself or others; lack of access to, or difficulty with, communications technology; significant communications service disruptions; or need for more intensive services. In these cases, your counselor will help you determine appropriate referral options for needed services.

About our Teletherapy Services

CCSD offers teletherapy via telephone or face-to-face videoconferencing to currently enrolled ECU students who are assessed as being appropriate for this form of counseling.

If you are new to our Center or returning after an absence, prior to beginning teletherapy, you will have an initial phone screening to assess your needs and verify your identity. This process aims to connect you with the best resources for you and protects you from another person posing as you.

If you are a returning client who has already been meeting with a counselor for ongoing counseling, you can contact your primary counselor via email or by calling our office at 252-328-6661 and leaving a voicemail for the specific counselor. The counselor will get back to you to schedule a teletherapy appointment and will provide further instructions for how to get connected then.

Videoconferencing sessions are held via Webex, a HIPAA compliant platform. It is recommended that you sign on to your account at least 5 minutes prior to your session start time to address any technical issues. Your counselor will join you for the session at the appointment time.

Confidentiality

1. TMH services are conducted and documented in a confidential manner according to applicable laws in similar ways as in-person services. There are, however, additional risks including:

- Transmission of medical information could be disrupted or distorted by technical failure.
- Transmission of information could be intercepted by unauthorized persons.
- Electronic storage of medical information could be accessed by unauthorized persons.

2. The ECU Center for Counseling and Student Development works to reduce these risks by only using secure videoconferencing software and these policies and procedures:

- You and your counselor will engage in sessions only from a private location where you will not be overheard or interrupted.
- You will use your own computer or device, or one owned by ECU but that is not publicly accessible.
- You will ensure that the computer or device you use has updated operating and anti-virus software.
- You will not record any sessions, nor will the counseling center record your sessions without your written consent.
- You will not include others in the session or have others in the room unless agreed upon with the clinician.
- You will provide contact information for at least one emergency contact in your location who the counselor may contact if you are in crisis and your counselor is unable to reach you.

3. Email is not a confidential method of communication, and your counselor may not access or respond to emails quickly. If you choose to contact your counselor by email, do not include private information, and do not expect a prompt response. If you need to reach your counselor between sessions, you may call the Counseling Center during business hours. Client e-mail communications may be viewed by other staff at the Counseling Center. E-mail communications will be stored electronically as treatment records.

Limitations and Technical Problems of Teletherapy

Teletherapy should not be viewed as a substitute for face-to-face counseling. It is an alternative form of counseling with some differences from traditional counseling.

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 reduce any unnecessary feelings of discomfort.

Sessions could be disrupted, delayed, or communications distorted due to technical failures. Should there be technical difficulties with videoconferencing, the ECU Center for Counseling and Student Development will attempt to contact you by phone. The phone number on the online informed consent will be used unless an alternative number is provided. Please keep your phone nearby you during sessions for this purpose. Please remember that caller ID may show a blocked or private number. In the case of technical difficulties in which you have not received contact from your counselor by phone, please call the ECU Center for Counseling and Student Development at 252-328-6661 to leave a message for your counselor. Your counselor may stop TMH treatment at any time if your condition changes or TMH presents barriers to treatment.

In Case of Emergency

1. If we believe you are in crisis and we are unable to contact you, we may call your emergency contact or local emergency services providers to ensure your safety.
2. The ECU Center for Counseling and Student Development is open from 8:00 am-5:00 pm, M-F, on normal business days during the academic year. The ECU Center for Counseling and Student Development cannot provide 24-hour emergency management, particularly to those using services at a distance. If you are in crisis outside of normal hours, you agree to:
 - Call the ECU Center for Counseling and Student Development at 252-328-6661 and follow the prompts, OR
 - Call the ECU Police Department (252-328-6787), where you will be connected with a counselor to consult, OR
 - Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) to speak with a counselor, OR
 - Call 911, OR
 - Go to the nearest emergency room or crisis mental health agency.

For questions, give us a call at 252-328-6661. For more information about our services and for additional resources visit www.ecu.edu/counselingcenter.