THE RAPE CRISIS CENTER
Informed Consent for Services

This informed consent will help you understand the counseling services that The Rape Crisis Center (RCC) provides and the policies and procedures we follow in providing these services.

Counseling Staff: The RCC is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit agency that provides counseling to victims of sexual assault and their families. The counselors may be graduate practicum interns, interns with the state, or licensed individuals. All counselors are supervised by a mental health professional. Supervisor Onsite: Carmen Vasquez, LPC.

Appointments & Cancellations: Sessions are by appointment only and usually run for approximately 50 minutes. We ask that you give us 24-hour notice to cancel or reschedule. _______ (Initial)

If at any time your therapy session must be canceled by your counselor due to travel, illness, or emergency, we will reschedule you for the next available appointment.

Benefits/Risks of Counseling: Counseling is helpful for some in reaching recovery goals and developing healthy coping skills after a trauma; however, there are some risks involved in counseling. These include intense and unwanted feelings (i.e. sadness, anger, fear, or anxiety), recalling unpleasant life events, facing unpleasant beliefs or thoughts, experiencing changes in relationships, and/or not experiencing desired changes. We encourage you to discuss any expectations, or possible negative side effects you may be experiencing in counseling. The counselor’s goal is to facilitate a therapeutic conversation, assist in setting goals, provide information and referrals, and keep you informed of progress towards your goals.

Emergencies & After Hours: Our office hours are Monday – Thursday, 9:00am - 8:00pm, Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm, and Saturday, 9:00am-1:00pm. In case of emergency during off hours, please contact our Hotline at (210) 349-7273, United Way Helpline (210) 227-4357, or University Hospital Emergency Room (210) 358-2133. If you are in immediate danger, please call 9-1-1.

Confidentiality: The RCC values the confidentiality of our clients and follows the legal and ethical guidelines proposed by both state and federal laws. We do not release any counseling records without your written consent. Limits of Confidentiality: Counselors are legally and ethically obligated to disclose confidential information when the following needs arise:

1.) To protect clients from harm to self or others;
2.) Disclosure or suspected report of abuse/neglect of children, elders, and adults with disabilities;
3.) Disclosure of abuse by a therapist;
4.) Subpoenas received by state and/or federal courts of law.

The Notice of Policies and Practice to Protect the Privacy of your Health Information with additional information will accompany this form. Our counseling department is equipped to handle all calls and messages in a confidential manner. Please keep in mind that electronic communication (emails) and cellular phones do not guarantee private or secure communication. Voice and/or handwritten messages are checked regularly and your counselor will respond as soon as possible.

Records: All records are kept confidential and the RCC follows HIPAA procedures and guidelines. Case Notes will not be disclosed without client’s authorization unless one of the four exceptions listed above occurs. If you would like a report sent to a physician, we require a signed release of records and we recommend you review and discuss the case notes with your counselor. The RCC occasionally reports outcomes to funders; however, all information is de-identified to protect your confidentiality.
**Fees & Billing:** The RCC does not charge for counseling sessions, as they are paid for by state and federal grants. If that were to change, we will notify you in advance so payment arrangements can be made. Currently, we do not bill insurance. The RCC welcomes all donations and greatly appreciates any contributions. _____ (Initials)

**The RCC Counseling Approaches:** The RCC counseling department uses a variety of therapeutic approaches including but not limited to, cognitive-behavioral, solution-focused brief therapy, client centered, narrative therapy, and bilateral stimulation. Typically, clients are seen for 8-10 sessions; however, this is determined by the client and counselor. At times we may consult with other mental health professionals regarding the management of your case to ensure appropriate and quality care. Every effort will be made to protect your identity. If at any time there is a value conflict between you and your counselor and you feel that the therapeutic sessions are not effective, we will be happy to provide you with a list of referrals. The important part of therapy is that you benefit from it. _____ (Initial).

**Terminations:** Termination of therapy is usually a collaborative decision between you and your counselor. However, either one can initiate the termination. When counseling is not helping you reach your goals, counselors have an ethical obligation to terminate and provide appropriate referrals to another professional for treatment. _____ (Initial).

If you as the client decide to terminate therapy, we do ask that you attend a final session to discuss the reasons for termination. The RCC values your input with regards to services received and occasionally may send a letter requesting your feedback regarding the services received if you give us permission to contact you once services are terminated for this purpose. _____ (Initial).

**Disputes/Complaint:** If you have a complaint or concern, we ask that you speak to your counselor or their supervisor first. If you are unable to resolve the problem you can file a consumer complaint with the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors on their complaint hotline at (800) 942-5540.

**Services to Children:** In order to give consent for services to children you must verify that you are the legal parent, legally authorized representative (LAR), managing conservator, or a person designated by the court to have the authority to consent to provide counseling/psychological services. The Texas Family Code allows minors to consent to counseling without parental consent for suicide prevention, chemical or drug addiction, sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, and/or pregnancy. Services to children are for the purpose of the child’s emotional well-being and do not yield recommendations about custody issues. _____ (Initial).

Minor’s Name - Print Date

**Authorization:** By signing below, I acknowledge that:

1. I have read and understand this informed consent;
2. All questions about this consent have been answered to my satisfaction;
3. I have received a copy of this consent for my records.

Client/Guardian Signature Date

Print Name Date

Counselor(s) Date