



Mental Health Services

Policy & Procedure Manual

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It is the policy of Mountwest Community and Technical College to provide equal opportunities to all prospective and current members of the student body, faculty and staff on the basis of individual qualifications and merit without regard to race, gender, color, religion, sex, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or any other protected status.

MOUNTWEST STATEMENTS

Mission Statement

Mountwest Community and Technical College empowers students to learn and lead in the community and in the workforce.

Vision Statement

Mountwest Community and Technical College makes a positive impact on the lives of our students while providing them with the education and tools to prepare for their future. We inspire, support, and develop students to achieve goals, build positive relationships, and succeed in the workforce.

Mountwest Institutional Values Statement

Quality Education - We value affordable, high-quality programs that are respected, transferable, and prepare students for careers that meet labor market demands.

Learning Environment - We value an educational environment that place learners' needs first, fosters critical thinking and individual responsibility.

Continuous Improvement - We value fair and clearly defined policies which are established through sound planning, resulting in continuous improvement, excellence in customer service, professional development, and creativity.

Environment - We value effective communication, consistency, teamwork, transparency, streamlined decision making, and mutual respect.

Community - We value a positive community reputation by promoting community involvement, developing partnerships, responding to community needs, and fostering internal and external collaboration.

Guiding Principles - In order to operationalize and support the continuous improvement and environmental values statements of the college, the college has established a set of guiding principles. The intent of these principles is to guide daily behavior and personal interactions.

Goals of Mental Health Services

- Provide quality, professionally delivered, individual sessions and guidance to Mountwest students.
- Promote adjustment to college and, consequently, contribute to student retention.
- Be available to students and the Mountwest campus community in the time of a crisis.
- Collaborate with faculty to promote student well-being through outreach, prevention, and educational efforts.
- Promote an environment of personal safety and respect.

Program Accessibility

The goal of Mountwest mental health services is to provide helpful and effective sessions to currently enrolled students. The Wellness Center works collaboratively with students, academic divisions, departments, faculty members, enrollment services, and other pertinent departments of the institution to enhance academic, personal, and career success. Mental health services are free of charge to Mountwest students and should be utilized on a short-term basis. If it is determined that long-term mental health services or more specialized services are more appropriate to address your need(s), the Mountwest mental health staff will provide a list of community resources to better assist you. Mental health appointments are generally made in one-hour increments.

The actual length of time for a mental health appointment is 45 minutes. This allows the mental health staff to have time for documentation of the previous appointment, and for centering before the next appointment.

Mental health services are available to all students at Mountwest. Enrolled students also have access to BetterMynd, a virtual counseling program that offers one-on-one sessions and mental health workshops. Students can make an account with their student email at: <https://www.bettermynd.com/>

Making Mental Health Appointments

Mountwest students may make appointments to see mental health staff by emailing the Director of Accessibility & Wellness at flanagana@mctc.edu. Students are required to give a name, contact phone number, and contact email address.

Alternatively, students may request an appointment here: <https://calendly.com/accessandwellness>

Hours of Operation

Generally, mental health are available Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the main campus. Hours may be limited during breaks such as fall, winter, and spring break.

Walk-ins are welcome, however; mental health staff may or may not be able to see students depending on availability and the nature of the visit (i.e. students in crisis). Appointments are recommended for all wellness sessions to ensure that staff are available. Students with appointments take precedence over walk-in clients. If it is your first time receiving mental health services at Mountwest, you should expect your first visit to consist of an intake, including a standard suicide risk screening.

For after hours or weekend services, students should seek virtual services through BetterMynd.com.

Mental Health Emergencies

Mental health staff at Mountwest are equipped to assist students in crisis and connect to crisis and emergency services during operating hours. If you experience a mental health crisis outside of operating hours you may contact:

For 24/7 support, students can contact a BetterMynd counselor here: 844-287-6963

Prestera Health Services Crisis Services: 1-800-642-3434

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 (call or text)

Help 4 WV: 1-844-HELP4WV (435-7498)

REACH, The Counseling Connection 24HR Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Huntington Police Department Crisis Intervention Team (CIT): 911

Ethical Standards and Confidentiality

Mountwest Community and Technical College mental health staff adhere to the ethical standards set forth by the professionals' licensing body. As professionals, we are trained to help individuals with academic, emotional, psychological, social, and behavioral issues. It is Mountwest mental health staffs' role to assist the student in clarifying the nature of the concern, offer support, encourage a deeper understanding of the issue at hand, and provide guidance to help students cope with, or resolve problems that create distress in daily living and are interfering with academic success at Mountwest. The information discussed is confidential between the student and the Mountwest mental health staff member. We will not release any information to any party without the student's written consent, within the limits of the law. There are some exceptions to confidentiality, these include: suspected abuse or neglect, situations involving potential threat to harm self, others, or the campus community.

Psychiatric Referrals in the Community and Students in Crisis

Students who need more intense services: Students who need more intense services will be assisted by mental health staff in finding the appropriate community mental health provider or will be referred to virtual services. Mental health staff will make every effort to match the student with an appropriate provider and will provide any assistance needed to set up an initial appointment, although students are encouraged to make the initial contact. Students who secure services in the community are responsible for paying for those services. A list of community mental health providers is available from the Mountwest Director of Accessibility and Wellness. Students may use these lists to self-refer if they prefer not to see Mountwest mental health personnel for a referral.

Students who are in crisis: Students typically will be transported to the local hospital emergency room by local ambulance for safety and liability reasons. At this time, care is transferred to emergency room staff and this staff will work with the student on next steps.

Termination of Services

Mental health services are completely voluntary, and services may be terminated at any point by the student. In some instances, services may be terminated by mental health staff when it is appropriate to do so. Instances in which mental health staff may terminate sessions with a student may include the following: a student's lack of commitment to their treatment, adherence to ethical standards of practice, or other reasons which the staff sees fit.

Mental health services may be terminated when the student has:

- A) Achieved stated goals
- B) Left Mountwest (graduated, transfer, withdrawal)
- C) Been referred to another provider
- D) Repeatedly misses appointments or makes several cancellations

Evaluation of Services

In an effort to assess the effectiveness of mental health services, a Satisfaction Survey will be distributed to the students who have received wellness services at Mountwest. This survey will be emailed to students who have sought mental health services at least once per semester. Students are asked to complete the survey via an online survey engine. The surveys will be reviewed by Wellness Center Staff & the Director of Advising. Areas of improvement will be noted, and a plan of action will be developed to ensure students receive optimal care. The survey will be confidential.

Documentation of Services and Files

- All mental health services provided to Mountwest students will be documented in student mental health files.
- All paper documentation of services and other confidential information will be kept in a locked file location and electronic documentation of services will be stored in a secure electronic medical record system. No student files will be removed from the premises, unless required by a court or some other extraordinary circumstance.
- Students will complete the a student intake at the time of their first session each academic year. This intake will include a standard suicide risk screening.
- Students will read the Client Rights and Office Information form and if in agreement, will sign and date the form at the time of their first session.
- Progress notes will be completed within 24 hours of services. Progress notes will include subjective and objective observations, assessment of need, and plan for future services or referrals.
- Missed, canceled or rescheduled appointments require a brief note by mental health staff indicating what occurred. If mental health staff sends a student a letter or e-mail relating to the appointment, a copy of the correspondence may substitute for the note documenting the missed, canceled or rescheduled appointment.
- Copies of any significant correspondence (including e-mail messages with or about the clients) will be included in the student's file.
- Paper documentation of services will be shredded approximately seven years after the student in question graduates or otherwise leaves Mountwest.

Maintenance of Records

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides an exception for mental health records. If a student has a session with mental health staff, records that would be created by Mountwest mental health staff would be created and maintained by mental health services. Mental health records are not included in the definition of education records and are not subject to the same rules and regulations as education records. Mental health records should only be shared with those providing the service or “other appropriate professionals of the student’s choice.” A student has the right to request to view mental health records.

**MOUNTWEST COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE
CAMPUS REGULATION**

| Effective Date | Subject |
|----------------|---|
| May 1, 2024 | Campus Suicide: Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention |

STATEMENT

Suicide is the second leading cause of death of college students. The college will treat all threats or attempts of suicides as serious. When a student threatens or attempts suicide, the college will take the steps necessary to ensure the safety of that student and any other individuals in the college setting. Suicide, attempted suicide, and suicidal gestures have detrimental effects on both the involved student and others connected to the campus in the community.

DEFINITION

Suicide is defined as, a death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. A suicide attempt is attempt is when someone harms themselves with any intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions.

GUIDELINES

The following processes/procedures are to be followed for suicide prevention, intervention and postvention:

Prevention

Students will receive information on mental health and suicide prevention via activities, events, student email listserv, and other various campus communication methods. New students will be provided information during new student orientation and as part of their new student seminar course. The goal of the educational/communication plan offered by Student Services is to promote understanding of suicide and to recognize behaviors that may signal suicidal intent. Information will be provided regarding depression, general principles about mental health, stress, related topics to student's concerns, and where students can find relevant services and programs, including the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Information will be made available to all faculty and staff regarding mental health and suicide prevention information and services. Staff will know how to recognize behaviors, phrases, and situations that may signal suicidal intent. Guidelines on intervention via education and this policy will be shared with staff to provide them with the necessary information in relation to intervention.

It is also understood that suicide prevention occurs through campus culture and connectivity. To encourage student wellness, Mountwest maintains a commitment to support and acceptance of all students. Students are encouraged to engage with the campus community through engagement events, student organizations, clubs, and other campus resources. Students are encouraged to communicate needs with instructors, connect with advisors, and seek guidance and mental health aid from the Director of Accessibility and Wellness and all Student Services staff.

Intervention

The following are guidelines for immediate and non-immediate intervention in the case of a suicide threat or attempt. It is recognized that special circumstances may arise which require deviation from these guidelines, and that administrative discretion must be exercised in these circumstances.

1. The Director of Accessibility and Wellness (or designee) will be notified immediately. If the Director of Accessibility and Wellness is not available, the Vice President of Student Services (or designee) should be contacted immediately.
2. The Director of Accessibility and Wellness (or designee) or Vice President of Student Services (or designee) will notify the other as well as:
 - a. Medical emergency personnel (as needed)
 - b. Mountwest Chief Operations Officer
3. Medical emergency personnel will transport the student to the hospital for medical evaluation and mental health assessment upon arrival on campus.
4. The Vice President of Student Services (or designee) will contact the family of the student (once the situation is stable i.e. the student is no longer in danger) who threatened or attempted suicide, when appropriate, and Mountwest will render support to family members and significant others as needed.

When the threat is not immediate, but suggested, the student will be referred to mental health services that same day. The Director of Accessibility and Wellness will assess risk level at this time and will attempt to make a written safety plan with the student using the standard Stanley-Brown Safety Plan. If it is determined that the student cannot be kept safe, the former procedure will be followed.

Postvention/Clearance to return to school

Students who have experienced a mental health or suicide crisis are encouraged to take care of themselves first, and seek support and treatment. Students should only return to campus when fully prepared and ready. The student services team at Mountwest is equipped to assist students in adjusting program schedules and planning to be best suited to the student's situation.

1. The student must provide documentation supporting the need for an excused absence the day prior to or day of their return to campus.
2. The student may be asked to fill out a release of information to the profession who is currently treating the student if they desire additional mental health services via the school, or integrated support from mental health services at the school.
3. The same waiver of absence policy that is addressed in the Disability Services Handbook will be applied.

Postvention and Communication plan for students, staff and parents after the loss of a student to suicide.

Postvention following a death by suicide is incredibly important to minimize harm and provide support to those affected. Communication must follow best practices for safe reporting and maintain upmost respect for those affected. All communication will include contact information for crisis services.

1. In the event of loss of a student to suicide, Mountwest Community and Technical College will provide an email notification to Students, Staff and Faculty.
2. The Vice President of Student Services and Director of Accessibility and Wellness will notify the Registrar and Financial Affairs in order to cease mailings that may go to the student's permanent residence.
3. The Vice President of Student Services and Director of Accessibility and Wellness will identify the instructors of the student who passed and work with Human Resources to provide a debriefing to faculty as well as provide information on counseling resources available.
4. The Vice President of Student Services and the Director of Accessibility and Wellness will reach out to all students reminding them of mental health services offered at Mountwest, local services, and the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. The Vice President of Student Services and Director of Accessibility and Wellness will work with instructors to allow time for the students, staff, and faculty with direct contact to grieve.
5. The Vice President of Student Services and Director of Accessibility and Wellness will work together in determining if it is pertinent to work with a community agency in order to bring in additional mental health support.
6. The Director of Accessibility and Wellness and Vice President of Student Services will always evaluate campus responses to suicide to determine if further information or education needs to be implemented when appropriate.

Intervening with a Suicide Threat: General Employee Procedure Checklist

If a student has threatened suicide, the following procedures are to be followed. Take all suicide threats seriously. If a student has threatened suicide indirectly, employees are to follow best practices to ask the student directly about suicide intent. A suicide threat is to be handled as a crisis intervention and potential medical emergency.

1. Remain calm and compassionate through the intervention process.
2. Stay with the student or designate another Mountwest employee to supervise the student constantly and without exception until help arrives.
3. Under no circumstances should you allow the student to leave the school alone or with non-family members.
4. Do not agree to keep a student's suicidal intentions a secret.
5. If the student has the means to carry out the threatened suicide on his or her person, determine if he/she/they will voluntarily relinquish it. Do not force the student to do so as this can escalate the situation. Do not place yourself in danger.
6. Lead the suicidal student to an area away from others.
7. Notify the Director of Accessibility and Wellness and Vice President of Student Services immediately. If neither of these people are available, the Mountwest Executive Director of Environmental Health, Safety, and Facilities (or designee) should be contacted immediately.
8. Inform the student that has threatened suicide that outside help has been called and describe what the next steps will be. Do not shame, threaten, or blame the student. Let the student know that the intervention response is done with their safety as the priority.
9. Following the intervention, staff, faculty, and students involved will be offered a debriefing session and provided with support from the Vice President of Student Services and Director of Accessibility and Wellness.
10. The Director of Accessibility and Wellness and Vice President of Student Services will always evaluate campus responses to suicide threats and interventions to determine if further information or education needs to be implemented when appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix A: Client Rights and Office Information

Appendix B: Progress Note Form

Appendix A

Client Rights and Office Information

Mountwest Community and Technical College is pleased to provide currently enrolled students with short-term mental health and referral services while enrolled at the college. Mental health services are free of charge to Mountwest students. If it is determined that long-term mental health services are more appropriate, or more specialized services are needed to address your need(s), Mountwest mental health staff will work with you to provide a referral to a qualified mental health professional in the community. If you are referred to a qualified mental health professional in the community, you may be charged for services by the agency you choose to go to for services. The counseling process is voluntary. It provides students an opportunity to explore solutions to personal, educational and career concerns impacting their educational experience and personal development. As a student receiving mental health services, it is important that we provide you with information about services, confidentiality and our office procedures.

As professionals, we are trained to help individuals with academic, emotional, psychological, social and behavioral issues. It is the Mountwest mental health staff's role to assist the student in clarifying the nature of the concern, offer support, encourage a deeper understanding of the issue at hand, and provide guidance to help students cope with, or resolve problems that create distress in daily living and are interfering with academic success at Mountwest. The information you discuss is confidential between you and the Mountwest mental health staff member. We will not release any information to any party without your written consent, within the limits of the law. There are some exceptions to confidentiality of which you need to be aware. These includes suspected abuse or neglect, situations involving potential threat to harm yourself or others.

All phases of the mental health service process are important. During the mental health service process, you may discuss your progress and review your goals. If you have questions or concerns, you are encouraged to discuss these with mental health staff. Staff may also provide useful information through administration of career and self-assessment tests. In order for mental health services to be effective, it is important for students to take an active role in the process by discussing any concerns openly and honestly. It is your right to discontinue treatment any time you feel it is in your best interest to do so. It is Mountwest mental health staff's ethical responsibility to end the relationship when it is clear that the student is not benefiting from services. In that situation you will then be asked if you would like to have assistance for a referral elsewhere for continued services. If you decide to end services, we request that you first discuss this important issue with mental health staff at Mountwest.

All mental health records remain the property of Mountwest Community and Technical College. Clients (i.e. Student) may request access to their own records in writing, to the Director of Accessibility and Wellness or the appropriate supervisor. Mental health records are kept in the Wellness Office or in an electronic medical record for seven years and are then destroyed per college policy.

We want to provide the best possible services to our students. It is the established policy of Mountwest Community and Technical College not to discriminate against any individual or group of individuals for reason of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or Veterans status. Please feel free to ask the Mountwest Director of Accessibility and Wellness about any questions you may have regarding your involvement in mental health services at Mountwest.

***YOUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.** To indicate that you have read this Informed Consent Statement in its entirety and you understand the criteria for eligibility of service, limitations of services, and exceptions to confidentiality, please sign and date in the spaces provided below.

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

Appendix B

Student Name: _____ Date: _____ ID#: _____

