

Release of information

Should you wish for another individual or agency to access your information kept at Student Mental Health Services, you will need to complete a release of information form specifying the type of record we can release to them. If you need your counsellor to write a letter on your behalf, you will have an opportunity to review the letter and may request a copy for your own records.

Accessing your information

You have the right to view the information that Student Mental Health Services holds about you. We will also help you understand any information you find unclear (short forms, technical language, diagnoses, etc.).

There may be situations where we are unable to provide you with access to some or all of your record. For example, you may not obtain a copy of your record if:

- The personal health information relates to another individual, law enforcement, legal proceedings, or is subject to legal privilege
- When personal health information could reasonably be expected to result in a risk of serious harm to the treatment or recovery of yourself or a risk of serious bodily harm to yourself or another person

We will follow requirements for access in accordance with Ontario Tech's guidelines and policies and applicable laws.

Duality of roles

Your counsellor can not engage in a “dual relationship” with you other than that of client and counsellor.



Your counsellor is prohibited from:

- Being your counsellor if they are related to you or if they are your friend
- Giving legal, medical, financial, or any other type of professional advice
- Having any kind of romantic, friendship, or sexual relationship with you at anytime, or with any people close to you
- Giving or receiving gifts from you except tokens with personal meaning to the therapy process
- Being your supervisor or teacher while engaged in counselling with you
- Attending your personal parties/events even if you invite them
- Having any other kind of business relationship with you besides the treatment itself

When you are in counselling, it's important that you feel safe and comfortable with your counsellor. Sometimes, even though counsellors might be a great fit for a friend, they may not be a good fit for you. If you realize you're not comfortable with your counsellor, you have a right to request a referral to work with a different counsellor.

Student Mental Health Services

Privacy Guide For Students



Our commitment to privacy

Student Mental Health Services at Ontario Tech is committed to protecting your privacy and maintaining the confidentiality and security of your health and personal information. We would like to reassure you that your privacy is treated with respect and sensitivity. We protect your information in accordance with all applicable laws.

How does student mental health services protect your health and personal information?

Your information is protected in the following ways:

- Only members of the student mental health counselling team and our immediate supervisor have access to your records
- Your records are kept in secured and controlled areas with limited access
- Security measures such as user names and passwords are used to protect electronic data like emails and referrals
- Each staff member with access to records is trained to collect, use and disclose personal information as necessary to fulfill their duties and in accordance with privacy legislation including FIPPA and PHIPA
- Each staff member with access to records is trained and sensitive to privacy awareness, and are bound by their respective professional codes of ethics to keep your information in confidence



Exceptions to confidentiality

Psychotherapy/counselling may require discussing your personal problems and vulnerabilities with a counsellor. Your counsellor is required by law and a professional code of ethics to keep all your information in the strictest confidence. When appropriate, and only with your written permission, information may be exchanged with other professionals who provide or assist in providing health care to you.

Your counsellor **very rarely** may be required to disclose information, without your consent, to authorities in or outside the University:

- If it is considered necessary for the purpose of eliminating, or reduce, a significant risk of serious harm to yourself or others;
- You reveal a case of apparent, or suspected, child abuse or neglect;
- You report sexual abuse by a health care professional regulated under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, S.O. 1991, c. 18 (e.g. physicians, psychologists, dentists, etc.);
- When required to comply with a summons, subpoena, court order or in order for the University to meet its obligations in the context of a legal proceeding;

To respect your confidentiality, the counsellors will not approach you in the hallway or community. This is not meant to be impolite, but rather to protect your privacy. Should you choose to engage us, we will gladly reciprocate.

Your file

Student Mental Health Services will maintain a file when you start to receive services. This file may include:

- Referral form
- Intake form
- Confidentiality statement
- Consent form to release information
- Copies of any letters written on your behalf
- Copies of correspondence between you and members of the student mental health team
- Session notes
- Case file from your previous counselling contact should you be a returning client



Retention and destruction of your information

Student Mental Health Services needs to retain your personal health information for 10 years after graduation or 10 years after last contact to ensure that we can answer any questions you might have about the services provided and for our own accountability to external regulatory bodies. However, in order to protect your privacy, your personal health information is not retained beyond the applicable retention requirements. These requirements are set out by Ontario Tech according to the Information and Privacy Commissioner Ontario guidelines.

