

Important Information regarding Confidentiality

Objective: The Health Services Advocates first and foremost focus on “the needs and concerns of students to ensure compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner.” An advocate empowers students by collaborating and supporting them to make their own decisions whether and how they would like to proceed.

Confidentiality: A major component of empowerment is to provide education regarding your rights. We will talk about a number of rights, with the foundational right to all others being the right to confidentiality. Advocates are licensed professional counselors, allowing us to engage with you in a “privileged relationship” to safeguard your confidentiality in ways distinctly different from other UWG staff members. It is important for you to know counselors and advocates are the only two confidential sources on our campus. Other UWG staff members are mandated reporters/responsible employees, and as such must report sexual misconduct directly to the Title IX coordinator. What you choose to discuss with an advocate or counselor, however, will remain confidential with a few important exceptions. Here are the circumstances under which we *cannot* guarantee your confidentiality:

Imminent threat to self: If an advocate has good reason to believe that you are in *imminent* danger of suicide, we may legally break confidentiality to ensure your safety. However, we will always seek to gain your consent first and to engage you in the process of identifying and widening your support system.

Duty to warn: Counselors and advocates are bound by a duty to warn if there is reason enough to believe that you pose an *imminent* risk of harm to another. In these cases we may legally break confidentiality to ensure the safety of another.

Mandated reporting: If a child, an elderly person, or someone unable to care for themselves is at *imminent* risk of being harmed, counselors/advocates and clergy serve as mandated reporters, and by law we must report this information to authorities.

These three exceptions to your confidentiality are the most common limitations to a privileged relationship. However, there are a few additional aspects of confidentiality unique to the university setting and are important for you to know.

Clery Act: “The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act is a federal statute requiring colleges and universities participating in federal financial aid programs to maintain and disclose campus crime statistics and security information.” This law states that all employees of the university, regardless of their role, must report *anonymously* any crime of which they are made aware. No identifying information of the victim or perpetrator is given in this reporting format, and the advocate will allow the victim the option to complete this form to optimize your control regarding what is submitted.

Title IX: Title IX is a law to ensure universities thoroughly investigate all complaints of victimization within a reasonable amount of time and in a fair manner. Your campus confidential sources – counselors and advocates – are not required to report to the Title IX coordinator.

However, in rare cases where there is evidence to suggest a perpetrator has victimized multiple individuals, has caused severe life-threatening injuries, there are multiple perpetrators, or if a weapon was used during the course of violence, we may break confidentiality. We will always inform you first if we believe we must report and will work with great care to compassionately support you. We also want you to know that *you may choose whether to participate in a Title IX investigation.*

Campus Counseling Center collaboration: The Health Services Advocates do share limited, need-to-know only information with counselors in the UWG Counseling Center. These instances are the exception rather than the rule, serve in your best interest, and are carried out in a manner ensuring the upmost protection of your privacy.

The last thing we would like to request is your permission to include certain anonymous information in our data tracking about the services we provide. The data tracking process helps us to continuously improve services. We never include identifying information in our data, and you are always welcome to opt out of this process.

We want to encourage you to take your time in reviewing this information and to ask as many questions as needed. Remember, every question is a good question. We look forward to supporting you on the journey to regaining your strength and power.

Thank you for trusting us with your care.

Sincerely,

The Advocates

Health Services
24/7 Crisis Line: 470-215-9946
Office: 678-839-6452