



## Policies on Electronic Communication

### **Electronic Mail (e-mail)**

At CAPS we take your confidentiality seriously. E-mail cannot be guaranteed to be a secure means of communication. For this reason, it is our policy to not use e-mail as a means to respond to any type of personal or confidential material, or to provide any type of therapeutic conversation. If an individual sends an e-mail communication to a CAPS staff person that contains confidential information, it is our policy to respond to such an e-mail by sending a brief explanation of this policy and indicating our limitations in using such a medium. This standard response has been created to protect the privacy of those who wish to use our services (including for consultations). If you choose to communicate with CAPS staff electronically, any communication you receive is for informational (not clinical) purposes. Information sent by CAPS staff is intended only for the person addressed. Any other use of e-mail communication (e.g., redistribution, dissemination, or clinical reliance) is strictly prohibited. Further, if you contact and/or provide CAPS with your e-mail address and give permission for us to use this e-mail address, it will be used for scheduling purposes only. Additionally, it will be your responsibility to keep your e-mail address updated.

Our staff cannot be guaranteed to respond in a timely manner to e-mail questions about services, providing programs, or rescheduling appointments. In order to ensure a timely response to scheduling issues, programming requests, consultation needs, or emergency situations we ask that you contact our front desk for assistance (828.227.7469). Furthermore, by communicating directly with the CAPS staff (via phone or in-person) you will have certainty that the communication has been received. Server malfunctions, power outages, and other technological impediments can occur and this issue can be avoided only by using direct communication.

If you are seeking information, would like to set up an appointment for personal counseling, or are interested in other services we provide, please contact our front desk. In any urgent or emergency situation contact our front desk, or come our office which is 225 Bird Building. If it is after 5:00 or on the weekend, you can still call CAPS at 828.227.7469 and speak with a licensed Mental Health Provider by pressing "0" when prompted.

### **Cell Phones**

Cellular phones cannot be a guaranteed secure means of communication. If you provide a cell phone number as a contact number, please be aware that confidentiality cannot be ensured. Additionally, during business hours, our staff generally makes phone calls via ground lines, which are reasonably secure. If you are concerned about security of connection via cell phones you may contact the community crisis line at 1-800-849-6127 and speak to one of the counselors there. Please clarify with any community resource about their electronic communications equipment and procedures if you have privacy concerns.

### **About our Internet Site (Web Pages)**

The CAPS website is available as a resource about our services and to provide limited educational material only; we do not provide online counseling and emergency assistance via our website. Although we provide some links to other internet sites which we hope will be helpful, we do not necessarily endorse all information provided by other sites. We do make an attempt to maintain updated quality internet addresses (links), we do not assume any responsibility for the reliability or the functioning of these sites. Please evaluate any information

you are presented with and do not use any internet site as a substitute for professional assistance or in lieu of obtaining full information. For personal assistance, or if you have mental health questions that we may be able to assist with, please contact CAPS at 227-7469. If you are concerned about yourself or someone else, please call us to set up a consultation or initial appointment.