



## Everything you need to know about our counseling service

It is never easy to speak about personal issues or to confide in another person. It requires not only trust, but also the knowledge that your personal data is carefully protected. Thus, we feel it is important that you are well-informed about the regulations that dictate how we handle data privacy.

### **Confidentiality:**

All organisational and practical aspects of our counseling service are handled by a team of psychotherapists and secretarial employees. They are strictly bound by law to respect patient confidentiality. No one is allowed access to information pertaining to your coming here, nor information conveyed during a session, without your express written consent. This confidentiality applies to your family, friends, your partner or spouse, university employees, doctors and therapists, as well as government officials, for example.

It is, of course, possible for you to absolve us of this obligation by giving us your permission in writing. This is necessary in the event of e.g. our providing you with a certificate, or, should the need arise, to confer with a doctor, another therapist, or a professor on your behalf.

Conversely, there are certain conditions under which we are **required** to set aside our confidentiality agreement:

- in the event that your or somebody else's life and/or well-being is threatened, and there is no other way to prevent this from happening.

### **Session documentation:**

The psychotherapeutic professional code obligates us to document our work in writing and to keep these protocols archived for ten years. One major advantage of this is that it allows us to quickly recollect our prior work with you, should you decide to revisit the counseling center after a longer period of time.

The protocols are archived in locked steel containers; only PBS employees have access to these. Once the requisite ten years have passed, they are destroyed in such a way as to make reconstruction impossible.

### **Questionnaires:**

Most new clients fill out a psychological questionnaire, either in writing or electronically. The data helps us to assess your current situation and is a valuable diagnostic tool. As with the documentation (see above), we are required to archive these questionnaires for ten years, after which time the data is fully deleted.

Furthermore, the questionnaires are rendered anonymous. We perform statistical analyses using the collected data from all students who visit us. This has been a very valuable aid in our public relations with schools and universities, as it allows us to evaluate our work and to make definite statements about the predominant problem areas within our clientele. We can also track changes in the university landscape in this way, and adapt accordingly. As mentioned, all collected data flows into these analyses, and there is no possible way to identify an individual from this.

### **Team intervision and external supervision:**

We hold a team meeting once a week for all psychological counselors. Aside from day-to-day, organisational topics, we also use the time to discuss problems that may arise in our work as counselors. This form of intervision, or "counseling for counselors" is performed entirely for your benefit: our team offers a multitude of different personalities, abilities and psychotherapeutical methods, all of which are extremely beneficial for the finding of new perspectives and the generating of fresh ideas.

To this same extent, we also periodically utilize the help of an external supervisor. He/she is legally bound by the same therapist-patient confidentiality as dictated by our professional code.

**You may contact us in the following manner:**

**If you have any questions or messages:** Please call or come by in person during our office hours, which are 9:00 to 12:00 A.M., Mondays to Fridays.

**Communication via e-mail:** E-mails are handled confidentially as required by law. They will never be passed on to any third party. Due to the nature of the internet, however, there is no guarantee that your mails will not be intercepted and read by others. **We are not permitted to communicate with you using non-encrypted mails.** We may only respond to you if you contact us first using end-to-end encryption (PGP – “pretty good privacy”). You can find our individual PGP keys on our website, as well as more information and instructions on how to use PGP.

**Scheduling appointments:** For organisational reasons, please be aware that it is not possible to schedule appointments by e-mail. Please call or come by in person during our office hours.

**How you can help us:**

Currently, our conseling service is very much in demand. It is our main goal to help students quickly and efficiently; in order to do that, we have to plan our schedules accordingly. Should you ever have to cancel an appointment, please do call us as soon as possible. That way, other students can take advantage of the open slot. If you have missed an appointment, it is a good idea to call us (even if after the fact) so we can sort things out with you.

As mentioned, please be advised that, due to organisational reasons, appointments can only be made in person or by phone.

Please don't hesitate to ask us, should you have any further questions regarding these policies.

**The data protection declaration is posted for viewing in our waiting area. You can also find it here: [www.sw-ka.de/en/datenschutz/](http://www.sw-ka.de/en/datenschutz/).**

I have read and understood the information in this document. I have been given the data protection declaration. I fully comply with the above and with the described usage of my personal information. My compliance extends to specialized information such as data on health issues. I can withdraw my compliance at any time, with immediate effect for the future.

Karlsruhe/Pforzheim,

(Date)

(Signature)