DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING

The Department of Counseling’s mission is to foster a learning environment where personal awareness and professional identity are paramount. We train students to be reflective and practice with integrity. Our graduates develop holistic and developmentally informed understandings of the people they serve and empower them in ways that instill hope, embrace diversity, and create optimal wellness.

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WHAT IS TELE-COUNSELING?
Tele-counseling is the process of providing counseling remotely, typically utilizing HIPPA compliant video conferencing. Tele-counseling is another option for schools to use in order to meet students’ mental health and school counseling needs. It can be used as a preventative measure or to supplement traditional counseling. Tele-counseling has steadily progressed over the last decade to meet the mental health and school counseling needs of students in rural schools with increased barriers and lack of access to mental health care.

THE CLINIC
The clinic is a partnership between the University of Montana’s Safe Schools Center (MSSC) and the Department of Counseling both housed in the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education. This collaboration was made possible through the Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP Violence Technology and Threat Assessment Solutions for Safer Schools Program grant. The mission of the clinic is to provide high quality, accessible tele-mental health services to children in rural communities across Montana. We aim to meet the diverse needs of students in Montana through mental health tele-counseling which focuses on supporting students with mental health concerns and school tele-counseling which focuses on supporting students with social, emotional, academic, and career concerns.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?
Researchers have found that tele-mental health services are just as effective as comparable in-person mental health care across many populations and settings (Hilty et al., 2013; Langarizade et al., 2017). Tele-mental health has been utilized to successfully support children with ADHD (Myers 2015), depression (Nelson, Bernard, & Cain, 2003), and anxiety (Carpenter et al., 2018). Potential benefits include the convenience of counseling in a familiar space and reducing barriers to counseling including, time, convenience, and affordability.

WHAT SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED?
Mental health and school counseling services will be provided to students by Counselors-in-Training in the Department of Counseling at the University of Montana. Counselors-in-Training are supervised by counseling faculty members who are certified tele-mental health providers.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA TO PARTICIPATE?
For schools to participate and to be in compliance with HIPPA regulations criteria need to be in place to provide a safe and private tele-counseling environment. Schools will be responsible for providing a licensed school counselor on site, secure device(s) for student use, private space(s) for student use, emergency contact information for on-site school counselor or school administrator and community referral sources. Counselors-in-Training will provide tele-counseling in the Intimate Relationships Lab (IR Lab) which is located in the Department of Counseling at the University of Montana. For tele-counseling to be most successful for the participating student parent permission is required, as well as authorization to exchange information, videotape sessions, and participate in a study by the UM team.

HOW MUCH DO SERVICES COST?
UM’s Tele-counseling Clinic accepts most major health insurance plans offered in Montana. In addition, the clinic contracts with school districts to provide school counseling. Please contact the clinic for more details.

The University of Montana Tele-counseling Center complies with all applicable rules and guidelines outlined in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA).