

## Communication by Email and Other Electronic Methods

**Because it is often useful to communicate by email and other electronic methods, it is important for you to be aware of risks so that you can make informed choices about communication.** There are several different forms of electronic communication that may be considered for communication with GC Counseling Services. If you and your counselor do choose to communicate via electronic methods, those messages should be limited to only administrative purposes, such as scheduling appointments. Discussion about counseling session content or other sensitive information should be avoided in email and other electronic communication.

**Standard email:** Communication by standard email is typically not confidential. Unencrypted email (e.g., Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.) presents a reasonable chance that a third party is able to intercept and eavesdrop on those messages. The kinds of parties that may intercept these messages include, but are not limited to server administrators and others who monitor Internet traffic, or your employer if you use your work email.

**Encrypted email:** Email on the gcsu.edu domain is protected by end to end encryption: thus when both the sender and recipient use the gcsu.edu domain, messages have a higher degree of security. While it cannot be guaranteed that any form of encryption will be 100% confidential, this system is designed with the intention of supporting the confidentiality of communications. Be aware that the security may be compromised if other individuals have access to your phone, computer or other devices you use for email.

**Text messaging (SMS):** Standard texting has no assurance of confidentiality. GC Counseling Services will rarely, if ever, communicate with you by this method except for in person appointment reminders.

**Phone:** Land line and cellular phones can reasonably be expected to be private. If you leave a voicemail message for us, it will not be heard by anyone other than Counseling Services personnel. If you give us permission to contact you by phone and to leave messages, be aware that the security may be compromised if other individuals have access to your phone.

**Social media:** Social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.) are not appropriate means of communication with your counselor as those media will compromise your confidentiality and privacy, and also blur the boundaries of the professional counseling relationship. Friend or contact requests sent to counselors by current clients and most former clients will not be accepted.

**Emergency communication:** Regardless of the form of technology used, urgent or emergency communications should not be sent via email or fax since timeliness of response cannot be guaranteed.

**Preferred communication:** Encrypted email (gcsu.edu domain) and telephone are the preferred forms of electronic communication used by GC Counseling Services.

**Your Options for Consent:** You will be given the opportunity to indicate your preferences for phone and email contact on a computer form during a computer data entry session at the GC Counseling Services office (usually a first appointment). You are not required to allow electronic communications, and you may change your preference at any time by discussing this with your counselor.