

Information for Virginia Cancer Specialists Counseling Clients

We at Virginia Cancer Specialists (VCS) strive to provide you with the highest level of professional services to help you and your family cope with cancer. Counseling services are provided by our staff of social workers who specialize in working with people with cancer. The duration of counseling depends on many factors, including the type of cancer treatment, the nature of your cancer and your needs. We generally restrict visits to 6-8 sessions; however, your individual therapy plan will be decided by you and your counselor. Services are provided to you free of charge to the patient; insurance will be billed.

The information listed below is important for you to know as you participate in our counseling program.

Client/Counselor Relationship:

1. A plan for therapy will be developed between you and your social worker.
2. If at any time you have treatment concerns, discomfort, or questions regarding your therapy, please discuss them with your social worker.
3. You have the right to refuse treatment at any time, and/or request a referral to another counselor.

Risks and Benefits:

1. Some possible benefits from counseling can include improved personal relationships, reduced feelings of emotional distress, and specific problem solving.
2. Counseling is beneficial, but as with any treatment, there are inherent risks. During counseling you will have discussions about personal issues which may bring to the surface uncomfortable emotions. You may experience an increase in undesirable behaviors, emotional discomfort, or temporary worsening of symptoms.
3. While it is important to expect benefits from treatment, please understand due to factors beyond our control, such benefits and desired outcomes cannot be guaranteed.

Confidentiality:

All records and information obtained during your course of counseling will be kept confidential. Your written consent is required to release information except in extreme circumstances. Social workers, like many healthcare professionals, are mandatory reporters.

Exceptions to confidentiality are:

1. If you disclose to us that you have harmed a child or elder by neglect and/or abuse or someone you know has harmed a child/elder, Virginia law requires that your social worker/counselor notify the property authorities.
2. If evidence exists that you are in danger of hurting yourself or another person, the law requires your social worker/counselor to report this information to the appropriate authorities, including disclosure to a family member, friend, and/or authorities (police).
3. Legal cases when disclosure is required by court order or when required by Virginia law.
4. Medical emergency.
5. In this clinical setting, counseling notes are documented in the medical chart and can be viewed by staff who have access to the chart.

Canceling Appointments

As professionals, we understand that situations come up that require you to cancel an appointment. If you need to cancel your appointment, please let us know 24 hours in advance so that we may allow someone else to use your time slot. Please contact your social worker/counselor directly to cancel the appointment time and let us know if you would like to reschedule.

Voicemail and Emergency Coverage

Your social workers/counselors have confidential voicemail available for you to leave a message at any time. If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please call the confidential Concern Hotline for this area dial **9-1-1**, or go to your local hospital emergency room. Please utilize these numbers for after-hours care, including evenings and weekends. During the workday it is not always possible for your social worker/counselor to be available to you as we see many patients. If you believe you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please call one of the crisis line numbers and notify your social worker of your situation.

I have read, understand, and agree to the patient confidentiality, rights, and policies, as well as their meaning and ramifications provided to me in the VCS document for new counseling patients.

Client Printed Name

DOB

Client Signature

Date

Tracy Tierney, LCSW

Date