

Student Name: _____

A#: _____

**Informed Consent for Treatment with Therapy Assistance Online (TAO)
University Counseling Center – TAMUCC**

The following information provides details about treatment through Therapy Assistance Online (TAO), a program used by the University Counseling Center (UCC) to support students on their path to emotional wellness. Please read this material and initial/sign at the bottom to acknowledge that you have read and understand the information.

TAO Services:

TAO is a 6 to 10 week, interactive, web-based program for common problems. TAO provides you with the skills and tools to help overcome your difficulties, with some on-going support and help. While research shows that TAO is very effective and well-liked by most users, some people do not feel comfortable with technology or with remote treatment. If you find that TAO is not working for you, please talk with your counselor and we will help you to transfer to another mode of support.

Client Responsibilities:

- TAO is an interactive program that requires participants to be active in their treatment in order to achieve the most benefit. Plan to spend approximately **1 hour per week** watching videos and completing exercises in TAO using an internet browser on a smart phone, computer or tablet.
- You will also complete daily homework on a smart phone, tablet, computer or on paper. These assignments generally take about 1-2 minutes each. The treatment is most effective if you make two or more entries per day. It is recommended you do the homework on a device and in a location that affords you privacy.
- You may also meet with your counselor, either in person or via electronic means (such as videoconference or phone). These meetings are generally scheduled on a weekly or biweekly basis.
- To participate in TAO videoconferencing, you must have a smart phone/tablet/computer/laptop with webcam or camera, a good internet connection, and speaker or headphones. In case of a technology related disruption, your counselor will attempt to contact you at your listed phone number to try and resolve the issue.
- It is your responsibility to keep your device updated with the latest anti-virus software, security patches and personal firewall. TAO uses a HIPAA compliant, fully encrypted software program to protect your privacy. Still, there are risks in transmitting information over technology that include, but are not limited to: security breaches, theft of personal information, and disruption of service due to technical difficulties.
- To comply with state law, you must be in Texas for the duration of all videoconferencing sessions.
- You should videoconference in a private location.
- You should dress for videoconferences as you would dress for an in-person meeting.
- Before each videoconference session with your counselor, you must complete a brief 20-item questionnaire (BHM-20) asking about your experience that week. Your counselor will review your responses, track your progress, and may discuss these with you.
- It is your responsibility to keep ALL scheduled appointments including online video conference appointments. If you miss an appointment or if you cancel an appointment with less than 24 hours notice, you will be charged a \$25 no show/late cancellation fee which will be automatically billed to your student account. The fee will be listed as "Student Services appointment no show fee" on your student account bill.

Eligibility:

TAO videoconferencing sessions will only be provided to currently enrolled students who are physically located in Texas at the time of service

Identifying Information:

TAO will collect basic identifying information while you are in treatment so that we can provide technical support and facilitate interaction with your counselor. Identifying information includes your name, e-mail address, and phone number. Once you have completed the program, your identifying information will be deleted from TAO. Please note, TAO will keep most of your entries and feedback. This information allows TAO to continue evaluating and improving their services.

Crisis Procedures:

Your health and welfare is paramount. If you experience a crisis at any time during the course of your TAO treatment, you must reach out for crisis support.

The UCC has 24/7 crisis services available by phone. During regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00am-noon, 1:00pm-5:00pm), call and ask to speak with the Counselor on Duty. Outside of regular business hours (over the noon hour or after 5pm on weekdays, weekends, holidays, university closures), call 361-825-2703 and press “2” to be connected to the after-hours crisis counselor. You can find more information about crisis services on your TAO Dashboard. These include the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and the Crisis Text Line (text “TALK” to 741741). Additionally, if you need to speak with a counselor in person, the UCC has walk-in counselors available Monday-Friday, 9:00am-11:30am and 1:00pm-4:00pm.

While engaged in treatment, we may contact you by phone, Patient Portal, or email to check on your well-being. We may also contact others, as deemed necessary, if your health or safety becomes a concern. Your consent is essential. Consistent with national standards, we require three levels of contacts to be identified in order to participate in TAO online services.

- 1. **Client Support Person (CSP)** - This is someone close to you, who is aware you are in counseling, and can promptly respond to assist you in a matter of minutes in case of an emergency. We may ask them to assess the nature of your emergency, initiate 911 from your location, or assist you in traveling to a nearby hospital for further evaluation.

Name: **Relationship:** **Phone:**

- 2. **Client Support Person or Professional Contact** (Medical Professional, Work Supervisor, Clergy etc.)

Name: **Relationship:** **Phone:**

- 3. If you require immediate evaluation due to risk of harm to self or others, your preferred local hospital is:

Hospital: **Address:**

City: **Phone:**

Please initial below:

_____ If I show signs of distress indicating I may be in danger, I understand UCC staff may contact me by phone.

_____ If I show signs of distress indicating I may be in danger, and I fail to respond to phone messages, I understand UCC staff may contact my CSP and Professional Contact listed above to verify my well-being.

_____ If I show signs indicating I may be a serious and immediate danger to myself or others, I understand UCC staff may contact emergency response personnel to ensure my safety.

I have been informed about the purpose, collection of data, possible benefits, client responsibilities, risks, and crisis procedures, and I agree to participate in TAO (including on-line treatment and video conferencing). I understand that this consent supplements the University Counseling Center Informed Consent Agreement.

Signature of Person Consenting to Treatment **Date**