How to prepare for a Virtual Counseling Session

Virtual Counseling provides a way for students to connect with a counselor via Zoom, Cranium Café and/or telephone. The Saddleback Counseling Division expects you (Saddleback College student) to prepare for and treat your virtual session, just as you would an in-person session on campus. You must be present for all counseling sessions, whether it be for a scheduled appointment or a same day, drop-in/callback session.

As you are aware, virtual counseling is new to many and this guide will give you an overview of appropriate etiquette when interacting in this virtual environment.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Please find a private location where you will be able to communicate with the counselor comfortably. It is recommended that you do not log in from a public setting and instead log in from a secure location.

The counselor may share confidential information that needs to remain private. Be sure that others are not around to listen to the conversation that is taking place online. If a private setting is not available, it is recommended that you use a headset.

Student Conduct

Please remember that the standards of student conduct also apply to all virtual campus environments. Students must adhere to both Saddleback College and SOCCCD policies, regulations, and procedures when utilizing online counseling services.

Preparing for the Virtual Session

- Prepare as you would for an in-person appointment
- Be ready to access your information in your MySite portal and your Saddleback College email
- Make sure there is little to no background noise (including TV)
- Try to have a headset with a microphone ready (your cell phone headset will work great!)
- Avoid interruptions – Do not answer phone calls, text, or surf the web during the appointment
- Inform people around you of the need for uninterrupted time during the counseling session. Additionally, be aware that without signed authorization received prior to the appointment or drop-in/callback session, parents/guardians or advocates cannot participate in the counseling session. Due to FERPA, counseling faculty and staff cannot speak with parent/guardians or advocates without the student present.
- Be respectful when communicating with your counselor

What to bring to your Counseling session

- A list of questions to ask the counselor
• Ensuring access to MySite, MAP, and/or your Saddleback e-mail
• A notepad or something to take notes on during your session

Safety
• Do not engage in your virtual counseling session while you are driving or participating in other activities.

Important Information
• A drop-in/callback session is available for quick questions and general information and is limited to 15 minutes.
• A student may be directed to make an appointment if the question or service cannot be provided in the drop-in/callback session.
• Counseling faculty and staff reserve the right to end the appointment or drop-in/callback session if a student engages in behavior deemed inappropriate, offensive and/or discriminatory.