



SIMS FOUNDATION

Mental health services for Austin musicians.

Volunteer General Information

General Requirements

- Volunteers must be of age 18 and older, unless accompanied by parent/guardian
- Completion of Volunteer Application and Confidentiality Agreement
- Complete all additional volunteer training if necessary

Volunteer Policies

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all appropriate or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as volunteers, whether this information involves staff, volunteers, other persons, or involves overall business of the organization. Failure to maintain confidentiality could result in ending the volunteer's relationship with SIMS.

Dress Code

Volunteers serving as SIMS representatives in the community are encouraged to wear SIMS T-Shirts, which will be provided at your first event.

Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to report for all scheduled duties. If expecting to be absent, volunteers should inform Caitlin, Outreach & Communications Specialist either by phone or [email](#) as far in advance as possible so that alternate arrangements can be made.

Harassment

The SIMS Foundation believes that every staff member and volunteer has the right to work in an environment free from general harassment and sexual harassment. If a volunteer feels harassed or offended by a staff member, volunteer, or other, the volunteer should notify the Outreach & Communications Specialist as soon as possible.

Alcohol & Tobacco Use

Volunteers participating at community events are asked not to consume alcohol during their shift. Alcohol is permitted at events after one's shift as long as it does not interfere with assigned tasks. Volunteers that appear intoxicated will be asked to step away from the SIMS information table and leave. Smoking is not allowed at the SIMS table, in an effort to create a more approachable environment for potential clients and partners.

Political and Civic Activities

The SIMS Foundation recognizes the right of every staff member and volunteer to participate in political and civic activity. However, all such activities must be conducted on the volunteer's own time, without the use of the SIMS name, unless specific approval has been granted. A volunteer may not display or distribute political materials at the SIMS office or while representing SIMS at a community event.

Professional Service

Volunteers shall not perform professional services for which certification or licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so, with approval from the SIMS Governing Board. A copy of such certificate or license is to be provided to the appropriate SIMS staff person.

Contacting your Volunteer Coordinator

Caitlin Quinn
Outreach & Communications Specialist
caitlin@simsfoundation.org
Office: 512-472-1008
Cell: 615-715-8068

SIMS Foundation office
44 East Ave., Suite 202
Austin, TX 78702



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SIMS 101

WHAT IS THE SIMS FOUNDATION?

SIMS is a nonprofit 501c3 organization that provides mental health and addiction recovery services for Austin-area musicians and their families. SIMS serves hundreds of clients annually and provides more than 10,000 units of service. We define one unit of service as a counseling session, a psychiatric session, or a day in treatment.

SIMS SERVICES:

- Counseling services: **individual, family, group, band, and couples counseling**
- Psychiatric services: **evaluation, diagnosis, and medication management**
- Addiction recovery services: **medical detoxification, inpatient treatment, and sober living**

HOW DOES SIMS WORK?

- To be eligible for services, clients must be professional musicians or their immediate family members, live within a 50-mile radius of Austin, and earn less than 250% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (roughly \$27,000 for single-income homes in 2010).
- Potential clients call the SIMS Confidential Client Line and speak to a professional counselor. SIMS has two licensed clinicians on staff who do an initial assessment with clients to determine a treatment plan and provide short-term counseling and case management.
- Based on a client's specific needs- which range from couples counseling to medical detoxification to anxiety to serious mental illnesses- SIMS staff refer them to one of the 60 providers in our Provider Network.
- The SIMS Provider Network is comprised of licensed LCSWs, LPCs, psychologists, psychiatrists, and psych nurses, as well as two treatment centers. Our providers have a broad range of specialties and serve people in all geographic areas.
- Our generous providers apply to be added into the network and agree to serve SIMS clients at less than half the market rate, resulting in more than \$500,000 of in-kind services leveraged by SIMS annually.

SIMS and HAAM

People often confuse the SIMS Foundation with the Health Alliance for Austin Musicians (HAAM). Though we often share the same clientele and partner closely with HAAM, our organizations are not the same.



- SIMS is a mental health and addiction treatment service provider
- SIMS is the mental health provider for HAAM
- Clients can access SIMS directly without going through HAAM
- SIMS serves uninsured and underinsured musicians, as well as their partners and children
- 50-60% of SIMS clients are HAAM members; SIMS requires that all eligible clients become HAAM members
- 700 SIMS clients, 30% of them partners or children of musicians



- HAAM provides access to affordable health care for uninsured musicians
- HAAM supports SIMS financially through an annual contract
- HAAM has contracts with 5 affiliate service providers for primary medical care, basic dental care, vision, hearing and mental health
- HAAM serves uninsured musicians and provides referral services to partners and children
- 20% of HAAM clients utilize SIMS' mental health services
- 1500 HAAM clients, all musicians (2,400 total unique in six years)



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SIMS Foundation Confidentiality Agreement

Introduction/General Principles

In order to ensure the safety and privacy of clients accessing counseling, psychiatric, and addiction recovery services, it is the policy of the SIMS Foundation to protect the confidentiality and privacy of those who seek services and to hold confidential all personally identifying or individual information, communications, observations, and information made by, between, or about clients, including the identity of clients. The Board and all agents, employees, consultants, and volunteers are charged with maintaining the confidentiality of clients as outlined in the SIMS Foundation policies and in federal and state law. The SIMS Foundation shall not disclose any personally identifying information or individual information collected in connection with services requested, utilized, or denied through its programs or reveal any individual client information without the informed, written, reasonably time-limited consent of the person about whom information is sought. The SIMS Foundation will avoid any inadvertent release of personally identifying information or individual information about any client. The obligation to maintain confidentiality does not end when the service to a client is concluded. Confidentiality extends to all current and former clients, including those who were denied services.

Staff, volunteers, providers, consultants, board members, and student interns must understand that their employment or volunteer position is contingent on adherence to confidentiality. Clients who interact with other clients must understand that their receipt of services is contingent on rigid adherence to confidentiality.

Confidential information can be released only in accordance with the guidelines set out below and in accordance with federal and state law.

Written Agreement to Maintain Confidentiality

All clients, staff, volunteers, providers, consultants, board members, and student interns must sign a written agreement to maintain confidentiality. This agreement will be placed in the personnel files of the staff and in the individual files of clients, volunteers, providers, board members, and student interns.

Personally identifying or individual information will be shared within the SIMS Foundation on a need-to-know basis. Generally, only the clinical staff and designated providers will have access to personally identifying or individual information. However, clients, staff, volunteers, providers, consultants, board members, and student interns may meet clients or come across personally identifying or individual information through the course of their participation or duties, and so will be bound by the standards outlined in this policy.

Definitions

Confidential information includes any written or spoken information shared in confidence between a client and staff in the course of that relationship, which includes any information that might identify the identity of someone who has sought services. Confidential communication includes all information received by the client and any advice, report, or information given or made by the staff. Any and all knowledge, advice, records, logs, client and organizational records, or information (including electronically maintained records relating to a client) are confidential and are not to be shared with a third party. Communications are confidential even if the client shares the information with third parties, who are working to further the interest of the client, in the presence of the staff. Confidential documents received from other

agencies (for which a client had to execute a written release) are confidential and part of the scope of confidential communications.

'Personally identifying information' or 'personal information' is individually identifying information about an individual. This information can include—

- a. First and last name.
- b. Home or other physical address.
- c. Contact information (including a postal, e-mail, or Internet protocol address or telephone or facsimile number).
- d. Social security number.
- e. Any other information (including date of birth, racial or ethnic background, or religious affiliation) that, in combination with (a) through (d), would serve to identify an individual.

Client is any person, including any adult, youth, child, or family who contacts the SIMS Foundation or receives any services from the SIMS Foundation, whether those services are received by telephone, fax, electronically, or in person and whether those services are sought for themselves or for someone else.

Staff includes all paid and unpaid staff, volunteers, providers, consultants, board members, and student interns of the SIMS Foundation.

Prohibition of Release of Information to Anyone Outside the Agency

Staff information: The personal information, including home address, personal telephone numbers, etc., of staff, volunteers, providers, board members, consultants, and student interns are absolutely confidential and shall not be disclosed to any source outside the SIMS Foundation.

Client information: Staff must not disclose any information about a client to anyone outside of the SIMS Foundation without an informed, written, reasonably time-limited consent of the client.

1. This includes the following:
 - a. Staff should not disclose any personally identifying information or personal information of any person who is receiving or has received services. This includes information that, by itself or in addition to other information, could identify a client. Similarly, disclosing the identity of any person who contacted or was referred to the agency, but did NOT receive services is also a breach of confidentiality. An appropriate response to an inquiry would be, "I cannot confirm nor deny a client by that name."
 - b. Staff should not disclose whether or not a person has sought, has received, or is receiving services.
 - c. Staff should never acknowledge that someone is receiving services without a specific, informed, time-limited release by the client.
 - d. Staff should not disclose information when ordered to do so by a court mandate without consulting the Clinical Director.
 - e. Staff should not disclose information when required to do so by a statutory mandate without consulting the Clinical Director.If (d) or (e) occurs, staff must immediately contact the Clinical Director.
2. Clinical staff shall ensure that records remain confidential. To avoid the inadvertent disclosure of confidential communication, staff should contact the Clinical Director when they receive a request for information regarding a client.

3. Clients should not be identified in any materials used for teaching, public announcements, community education, or in written or verbal reports given to someone outside the SIMS Foundation. The only exception to this is when the client asks the SIMS Foundation to identify her/him and gives permission in writing.
4. Funders or auditors who must monitor service records must sign a confidentiality agreement before viewing any records that may contain protected information. Personally identifying information will be covered, redacted, or removed from records before they are viewed by auditors/funders.

Releases of Information

Staff may disclose personally identifying information or individual information if the client gives them explicit, informed, written, reasonably time-limited consent to do so. Clients must be clearly advised of the possible consequences of any release of confidential information by the SIMS Foundation.

1. Before clients authorize the release or disclosure of their information by the SIMS Foundation, the client should review the information to be released and evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of releasing that information. The SIMS Foundation will ensure that the client is informed of the scope of the information to be disclosed, the purpose for which the information is to be released, the duration for which the release is valid, and the ramifications of disclosure, including whether a partial disclosure of information might legally require full disclosure of all confidential information.
2. Releases must be in writing, signed, and dated in ink. The written release must
 - a. Be specific as to the information being released.
 - b. Include the purpose for the information being released.
 - c. Designate the individual or agency the information is going to.
 - d. Specify a time limit for the release (which typically should not exceed 15-30 days).

If needed, a release can be extended if the staff person reaffirms with the client that the release is still valid.

The release form shall state that it is revocable at any time by the client. After the release is signed, written authorizations will be placed in the client's file.

3. The SIMS Foundation does not require a client to provide a release of information in order to receive services. Services will never be denied because a client chooses not to sign a release of information.
4. Limited releases: If the client gives informed, written, reasonably time-limited consent for release of confidential information, a staff member shall release the specific, limited information per the client's request. Under no circumstances should a staff member release more information than authorized by the client in the limited release.
5. Broad releases: If a client indicates that she/he is interested in signing a broad release to release a large amount of information (for example, her/his entire case file), staff should exercise care to ensure that the client fully understands the implications of this release. In addition, staff should try to ensure that the client has not been coerced into signing a release. The release shall be reviewed by the Clinical Director before any information is disclosed. In the absence of a Clinical Director, the Managing Director shall review it before any information is disclosed.
6. Outside requests for records (subpoenas/court orders): Any response to outside requests for client information will be responded to by the Clinical Director. In the absence of a Clinical Director, the Managing Director will respond. No other staff member is authorized to release information or respond to outside requests for records.

7. If a client verbally revokes an authorization to release information or records, staff should attempt to get that revocation in writing. However, even without written revocation, staff must honor the verbal revocation immediately and not release any information.
8. In cases involving unemancipated minors, the minor's parent or legal guardian must sign the release as well as the minor.
9. If a client has been legally adjudicated as unable to sign legal documents and a legal guardian has been court appointed, then the guardian has the right to consent to disclosure of confidential information maintained by the SIMS Foundation. The legal guardian must provide a certified copy of her/his order of appointment. The client shall still be advised that disclosure is anticipated.

Possible Exceptions

1. Emergencies which are life threatening or could result in serious bodily harm.

To the extent possible, emergency services should be contacted without revealing any confidential information about any client. In many cases, the client should be conscious and able to speak with Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT). It is important to remember that even if it is appropriate to call 911, it is never appropriate to share a client's whole case history or file. In addition, it is not appropriate to specifically comment on why s/he was receiving assistance from the organization.

Staff may disclose confidential information when there is a clear and imminent danger that is life threatening or could result in serious bodily harm to an individual. When appropriate and possible, this determination should be made by the Clinical Director. If time is of the essence, staff should first call 911 and notify the Clinical Director as soon as is reasonable.

2. Mandatory reports to Children's Protective Services or Adult Protective Services in cases of child or elderly abuse and neglect. Any report shall only be made according to the child or elderly abuse and neglect reporting law.
3. Other exceptions particular to federal and state law. Staff will adhere to the provisions of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 611, and to the privacy requirements of HIPAA.

I have received and read a copy of the SIMS Foundation's policy on confidentiality and understand that as a staff person I am bound by this policy.

Signature

Print name

Date

Return signed document to caitlin@simsfoundation.org



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SIMS Photo Release Form

I, _____ consent and authorize the SIMS Foundation to copyright, use, and publish any of the images in any format taken of me as a SIMS Volunteer. I understand these images may be used in subsequent years for a variety of purposes and may appear on the website, social media channels, promotional materials, or any other media now known or to be invented. I also understand that the SIMS Foundation will use the images exclusively for SIMS-related purposes and not for any commercial gain.

By signing below, I acknowledge I have read and understand this release.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Return signed document to caitlin@simsfoundation.org