



## Centre for Wellbeing Counselling Team Offering

### Our Role as a University Counselling Team

The Counselling Team at the Centre for Wellbeing offers brief counselling. We see our role as primarily one of providing support for students to achieve their potential at university and to help them to meet the challenges of life they face here. With staff, we aim to support employees of the University to engage fully in their work and their lives.

We do not see ourselves as primarily providing treatment for diagnosable conditions (e.g. in the way that IAPT or CMHRS would do), though improvement in such conditions may well be facilitated through our counselling.

Rather, we are a service which is embedded in, contextualised by and with a unique understanding of the academic endeavour as it impacts the wellbeing of students and staff, and is impacted by their wellbeing. To this end we offer whatever support we can to enable staff and students to engage with this task, as well as their lives beyond. We are a generalist, not a specialist service, carrying out triage, signposting, referral, support and therapeutic intervention for a wide range of needs and severity of presentations, including at times supporting those at risk of harm from self or others.

### Our Offering

We aim to offer the most effective interventions to enable our clients to be moving in the direction of their best hopes for their lives. Our aim is to do this in a flexible, collaborative and client centred way, actively seeking feedback and corroboration from our client that we are on the right track together.

All the counsellors in our team have training in evidence-based therapeutic approaches which have been shown to be effective in a brief number of sessions, e.g. Solution Focused Brief Therapy. We are committed to an 'Integrative' way of working, drawing on different therapeutic modalities in a flexible way to best serve the individual needs of our client.

We may also encourage clients to learn to use resources which can help them to manage their lives and studies to their satisfaction and build their resilience. We may incorporate techniques from modalities such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy into our work with clients or offer clients self-help materials based on CBT. However, we are unable to provide CBT as a distinct offering, seeing this as the domain of IAPT 'Talking Therapies' Services.

The standard offering for clients seeking counselling support will be a One at a Time (OAAT) Focused Counselling session. Clients are able to book a session online. During this session the counsellor will assess whether this will be sufficient for the client, or whether referral or signposting to another service, internal or external, is required. All clients receiving a OAAT session are able to book another session. We recommend a 'purposeful pause' of 3 weeks to allow any changes made as a result of the session to unfold. However, if necessary (e.g. a crisis or worsening mental health) the client may book a session within this time.

Clients who are at low risk and could benefit from a series of sessions will be referred to one of our placement counsellors, via the waiting list. Criteria for this are set out in the 'How to Assess for the Counselling Waiting List' guidance.

There are some clients for whom a brief intervention may not be adequate. With these clients, we will endeavour to draw upon support from various resources to formulate a plan for their wellbeing,



such as from other colleagues within the Centre for Wellbeing (the Advice Team), other departments within the university and/or outside agencies.

We would want to ensure that the client was adequately supported when their counselling ends.

There may be rare occasions when we extend the number of consultations offered to a student beyond 6, if they would otherwise be left without adequate help. This will always be done in consultation with other CWB counselling colleagues: Senior Counsellor or the Counselling Team Meeting. In this case, a clear purpose for an extension of sessions should be established.

While issues of extending contracts may well be discussed in supervision to think through the best course of action, and external supervisors of counsellors may recommend such extensions, they are not considered eligible to authorise them. This is because external supervisors cannot be abreast of current resource levels, do not have the authority to dispense such resources and are not accountable to the university for the use of resources. In addition, counselling in Higher Education is a highly specialised field which external supervisors may not be fully conversant with.

Staff will not usually be supported beyond 6 sessions. If more support is needed, a plan will be formulated collaboratively with the member of staff for help going forwards. This may include counselling from NHS services including IAPT, voluntary agencies, private practitioners etc. For further details see our Staff Counselling Policy.

Counsellors retain the right to refuse a request for counselling, Extenuating Circumstances evidence or other forms of professional intervention if in their clinical judgement this can be reasonably justified, would be unethical or is in the client's best interest. If counselling is not deemed appropriate for a client, alternative forms of support will be discussed and a care plan formulated if at all possible. If a client is dissatisfied with a counsellor's decision, they can apply in the first instance to the Senior Counsellor to review the decision.