



SeNSS ESRC-FUNDED COLLABORATIVE STUDENTSHIP OPPORTUNITY:

MINDFULNESS-BASED COGNITIVE THERAPY FOR EMOTION REGULATION (MBCT-ER) FOR PEOPLE DIAGNOSED WITH BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER: DEVELOPMENT AND PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

Primary supervisor: Dr Richard De Visser

Institution Details: School of Psychology, University of Sussex

SeNSS Pathway: Psychology

Collaborative partner: Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Degree structure: either a three-year PhD programme, or a one year Masters degree, followed by a three-year PhD programme

Research project

People diagnosed with 'Borderline Personality Disorder' (BPD) have severe, distressing, and hard to manage experiences. Difficulties with emotion regulation are core to the condition. The existing 'gold standard' treatment is Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT). This is costly, not implemented by many NHS trusts, not well tolerated and has modest outcomes and poorly understood mechanisms of action.

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) is a brief group intervention with a strong evidence base for depression and other mental health conditions. MBCT has potential to target emotion dysregulation, the core problem of BPD.

The research has four interlocking objectives:

1. To conduct a systematic review and meta-analysis examining the role of emotion regulation in BPD and exploring the effects of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) on emotion regulation outcomes.
2. To conduct a qualitative study exploring service user and therapist experiences of MBIs for people diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD).

Findings from objectives 1 and 2 will be used to refine the Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) therapy manual.

3. Assess the feasibility of a randomised controlled trial of MBCT-ER.
4. Exploring the acceptability of the trial and therapy using qualitative methods.

The project will be co-supervised by Dr Clara Strauss and Dr Helen Startup (Consultant Clinical Psychologists and Clinical Research Fellows, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)

Training Opportunities

A comprehensive package of training will be agreed in consultation with the supervisors. Elements of training will be provided by the supervisors, the University of Sussex, the Sussex Partnership Trust, and by other providers.

Applicants: essential and/or desirable attributes/skills

Applicants who have experience working in NHS mental health services would have an advantage.

Studentship Details:

- This studentship may be taken as either a 1+3 year award (a one-year MSc followed by a three-year PhD), or a +3 award (a three-year PhD)
- It may be taken full-time or part-time
- The studentship award covers your university fees, and provides you with a stipend of £14,553 per year. You will also be able to apply for small amounts of additional funding via the SeNSS Research Training Support Grant.

Residential eligibility

To be eligible for a **full award** you must be a Home or EU student who satisfies the criteria below:

- You must have settled status in the UK, meaning there are no restrictions on how long you can stay in the UK; **AND**
- You must have been 'ordinarily resident' in the UK for 3 years prior to 30 September 2018, when the Studentship starts. 'Ordinarily resident' means that you must have been normally residing in the UK (apart from any temporary or occasional absences); **AND**
- You must not have been residing in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of full-time education. However, this criterion does not apply to UK or EU nationals.

Students from EU countries other than the UK are generally eligible for a **fees-only award**. To be eligible for a fees-only award, you must be ordinarily resident in a member state of the EU, in the same way as UK students must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

How to apply for this studentship

In order to be considered for this SeNSS studentship, you must first apply for a place to study at the University of Sussex, noting that you are applying for the collaborative

studentship. Please go to [University of Sussex: apply for a PhD](#) for information on how to make your application.

You will then need to make a separate application to SeNSS for this collaborative studentship. Please read the SeNSS Collaborative Studentship Application Guidance Notes before completing our online application form. The Guidance Notes are available at the bottom of the following webpage: [Applying for a SeNSS collaborative studentship](#)

Deadline:

The deadline applying to the University of Sussex for a place is **23:59 GMT on 21 January 2018**. No extensions to this deadline will be permitted.

For further enquiries:

For enquiries related to the studentship topic, please email Dr Richard de Visser (rd48@sussex.ac.uk), Dr Clara Strauss (c.y.strauss@sussex.ac.uk) or Dr Helen Startup (helenst@sussex.ac.uk).

For enquiries related to your eligibility for this studentship, and the application process, please email esrcdt@sussex.ac.uk

About SeNSS

The South East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) is a consortium formed of 10 leading UK universities, all of which are engaged in cutting-edge social science research and training. The SeNSS consortium members are:

- City, University of London
- University of East Anglia
- University of Essex (the co-ordinating institution)
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- University of Kent
- University of Reading
- University of Roehampton, London
- Royal Holloway, University of London
- University of Surrey
- University of Sussex

SeNSS offers a world-class inter-disciplinary PhD research and training environment. It is committed to supporting its internationally recognised researchers and to producing the next generation of talented social scientists. SeNSS has been accredited as a prestigious Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the national body which funds research and training in economic and social issues.

We pride ourselves on our rigorous doctoral training programme, making the most of our members' diverse specialisms and offering our students a wide array of subject-specific as well as advanced training opportunities. SeNSS offers high-calibre supervision, driven by our members' emphasis on formal training and research culture.

For further information about SeNSS, please visit [the SeNSS website](#)