Coventry University and University College Counselling & Mental Health Services
Aims & Objectives
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Counselling and Mental Health services aim to provide professional and effective support to all students registered at the Coventry University and University College.

The Counselling Service deals with problems of an emotional or psychological nature with the intention of enabling the student to take personal responsibility and learn to manage their difficulties so that they may continue with their individual educational goals. The Mental Health Advisers offer a specialist service to those students experiencing longer-term mental health difficulties.

The Counselling and Mental Health Service aims to ensure that:

- The service is provided offering a number of interventions. The service is based on a triaging system provided by Clinical Lead, Senior Counsellor or Mental Health Adviser, depending on who is on duty. It is based on the initial registration form completed by a student, and prioritises those who appear to be psychologically and/or academically at risk where possible. Students will be offered the intervention we feel is most appropriate to them. This could be offering to a student a telephone conversation, an online resource, attendance of a psycho-educational workshop, or inviting them to self-book an initial assessment appointment (up to 50 minutes long) and it will be either with a counsellor, CBT therapist or Mental Health Adviser; or to a group based intervention.

- There is prompt referral to and liaison with three linked support areas, particularly when there is a significant danger to health: the University’s medical team, the NHS psychiatric service and internal referral between the University’s mental health advisers, counsellors, CBT therapists and welfare adviser.

- The Mental Health Advisers offer assessments and sessions that are individually tailored to meet the current needs of the student.

- Priority assessments are normally provided by the Mental Health Advisers but in their absence this will be provided by the counsellors. The presenting issue will also determine the appropriate personnel to deliver the assessment.

- Some people find that a single intervention (whether that be an individual session, a workshop or a group) provides enough support for them to carry on with their lives without further help. Others can be signposted to sources of self-help or to other agencies.

- Limitations of access to the service: There can be times when counselling is not appropriate for students and it is best to signpost elsewhere. The nature of the University Counselling and Mental Health Service is a short-term limited therapy and counselling support and the Service is not able to offer an open-ended therapy and any client who expresses a desire to engage in longer term therapy is advised to see their GP in the first instance. A list of accredited private counsellors and psychotherapists provided by BACP/UKCP can be found at http://www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist/right_therapist.php.
There are times when in cases of erratic attendance, lack of embedded learning from the process or no improvement in functioning the Service may be limited to the individual. This may be most evident with clients who wish to have multiple episodes of counselling and use it only in the time of a new crisis, yet not engage in the proactive work on taking personal responsibility for the part they are playing in their crisis situations. In cases like these the Clinical Lead or Senior Counsellor will have a discussion with a student and then refer/advise another appropriate service.

- The lists of Internal Referrals and External Agencies and other useful Support Services can be found on our website, which can be accessed through the Student portal for students. It will lead you to the section called ‘Support at CU’ – ‘Student Services’ – and finally to ‘Counselling and Mental Health’ page (the webpage is in the process of re-development and will be improved over the summer 2016).

- Counsellors, CBT therapists and Mental Health Advisers constantly refine their knowledge and expertise via internal and external training, in order to deal safely and responsibly with the emotional, psychological and mental health problems commonly experienced by university students.

- Adherence is made to Coventry University’s Mission Statement and Student Charter, maintaining appropriate awareness of anti-discriminatory practice to ensure that our services are equally accessible to all students, irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnic origin or national origins, colour, marital status, sexual orientation, family responsibility, physical and sensory disability, and political or religious beliefs.

- All counselling is offered in accordance with the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy to whom the service is accredited. Particular care is taken to deal ethically with any complaints or conflicts of interest that arise.

- In accordance with the Ethical Framework and the idea of safe ethical practice all staff from the Counselling and Mental Health Service receive individual fortnight supervision from the independent approved supervisors.

- Regular meetings are held with both support and non-support staff to advise on the emotional and psychological problems faced by students, and to help staff in the University to act to minimise them.

- The service is confidential in accordance with the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, however with the express understanding that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if there are compelling legal reasons or serious risk of harm to self or others. The service has to abide by University policies such as Safeguarding, Data protection and all the Coventry Essential training. All members of staff have to agree individually to the University IT policies and strictly adhere to the Data Protection legal requirements of the University.

- Counsellors, CBT therapists and Mental Health Advisers participate in the appropriate regional and national forums so as to absorb and disseminate good practice in order to carry on developing their area of expertise.

- The service is open throughout the year, five days a week during term-time and more limited times out of term; save for one week during the Christmas vacation. Times of the service are placed on the CU Portal. The service is free to Coventry University and University College students and is carried out in
shared consulting rooms. Currently a service is not offered to organisations associated with the University such as Foundation Campus or London Campus.

- The service is regularly monitored to ensure that different groups within the university are aware of the service and able to access the support on offer and the action plan will consider how best to offer this liaison role of the service.

- The service offers bespoke training and consultancy to staff to deal with a range of emotional and mental health issues, the Human Resources Department is responsible for implementation of all staff training.