

## About counselling

Counselling is an opportunity for you to discuss any concerns or issues you may have in a supportive and safe environment. Your counsellor will work with you to help you understand what is going on for you and to find a positive way forward.

All counsellors are required to adhere to the university's usual regulations, including confidentiality and data protection policies.

The university counselling service offers short-term counselling – the number of sessions will be agreed between you and your counsellor. Students are offered (as appropriate) one set of counselling sessions in each academic year.

## What to expect

During your first appointment, the counsellor will answer any questions you may have about confidentiality, our record keeping, and other aspects of how the service works. You will also need to fill in a consent form and return this to us before the appointment goes ahead. We will go through your completed referral form and explore what it is that has brought you to counselling.

Sometimes the counsellor may direct you to other university support or external services instead of, or in addition to, counselling. Please note that information about you on your completed referral form, and information disclosed by you in your counselling appointments may be discussed by service staff and clinical supervisors.

A session lasts 50 minutes. If you are late, it is unlikely your session will be extended due to other appointment times.

We would appreciate it if you would switch off your mobile phone when you are attending counselling, providing this is not the device that you will be using for your appointment. We also ask that you find a quiet (and safe) space for your appointment, to minimise any background noise as much as possible.

### - We will make contact for the appointment by:

- Contacting you at the allotted appointment time
- If you do not answer, we will contact you twice at 5-minute intervals
- If you are not available, we will send you a follow-up email

### - We will maintain confidentiality by:

- Working from a safe, confidential place
- Offering a quiet space
- Using headphones to preserve confidentiality

### - Please could you:

- Answer the call at the agreed time

- Find a confidential space that works for you where you can speak freely; either a private room or perhaps in a (stationary) car, but specifically on your own
- Turn off all notification alerts on computer.
- Provide us with an up-to-date emergency contact number for next of kin at the start of each session
- Consider what you do immediately after your therapy session, by taking some quiet time for yourself.

**It is important to note that under no circumstances must the session be recorded via video or audio as this would be in breach of the University's Privacy Notice. Any session found to be recorded will be terminated immediately.**

## **Missed or cancelled appointments**

If you find you have no alternative but to cancel an appointment, we require as much notice as possible - a minimum of 24 hours. This allows us to offer the time to someone else.

If you miss your first appointment without cancelling, we will assume you no longer require counselling and will remove you from the waiting list, so it is important that you get in touch if you are unable to attend. If you have started counselling and do not attend without letting us know, your counsellor will email asking you to confirm within 2 days that you wish to continue. It is important that you respond otherwise we will assume that you no longer require counselling. **Please be aware that each missed session with no notice will count as one of your sessions.**

If you cancel with less than 24 hours' notice on two occasions during counselling, the second occasion will count as one of your sessions.

If you cancel and/or do not attend (DNA) on 3 occasions during the course of counselling then your counsellor will notify you that the counselling will end. You will be able to re-access counselling later should you feel more able to commit to the work.

If we must cancel an appointment with you, we will give you as much notice as possible and will offer you an alternative as soon as we can.

Once your counselling sessions have started and should you need to contact your counsellor, please do not use the messaging function of Microsoft Teams. Please send an email to [studenthub@soton.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@soton.ac.uk)

## **How the appointments will be held**

We will be offering support through Microsoft Teams (audio and video calls), depending on how comfortable you are with these approaches. We are slowly introducing in person appointments for those students who feel uncomfortable or unable to use Microsoft Teams. These appointments will take place in the Wellbeing Centre, 28 University Road.

If an appointment has been booked and you have chosen to have your sessions through Microsoft Teams, you will receive a separate confirmation email containing a link with guidance on how to use the software. If an in person appointment has been booked, you will receive a separate confirmation email on how to access the Wellbeing Centre.

If you are having any technical difficulties at the time of your appointment or have been waiting more than 10 minutes for contact from your counsellor, please alert staff by calling 02380 599 599. Alternatively, please email [studenthub@soton.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@soton.ac.uk) and a member of the wellbeing Team will investigate the issue for you.

## **Contacting Us**

Email: [studenthub@soton.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@soton.ac.uk)

Web: <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport>