

STUDENT SUPPORT & WELLBEING COUNSELLING SERVICE

Please note that counselling is **NOT a crisis service**. Should you need to speak to someone urgently, please contact the following services:

- Your doctor
- NHS Direct 111 (UK)
- The Samaritans 116 123 (UK), jo@samaritans.org
- Spectrum Life is the university's 24/7 mental health support service. You can call for free on 0800 0318227 and speak to a counsellor.

Who is this service for?

This service is for any registered students based in the UK who are registered with a UK based GP.

Please note that we work within the UK judicial system and as such we are unable to provide therapy to those who are living outside of the UK on Study Abroad courses. For students living outside of the UK we will arrange for counselling to take place with an appropriate external provider.

We are unable to offer counselling to students who are on intermission; if a student has already started counselling sessions and then intermits we will continue with their remaining sessions.

What happens after I have applied?

You will be sent our registration forms to complete. The purpose of this is to collect some basic details and to understand your history and circumstances. You are encouraged to answer the questions in the assessment form as fully as possible as any details may be relevant to the difficulties you are experiencing.

Once completed you will then receive an email letting you know what happens next.

What if I need to contact my therapist?

If it is for an administrative or appointment issue, you can contact us via counselling@kent.ac.uk (Canterbury campus) or medwaycounselling@kent.ac.uk (Medway campus).

What if I need to rearrange or cancel an appointment?

Whilst we appreciate that sometimes last minute changes to schedules or emergencies arise; we ask that you give 24 hours' notice if you know you are going to be unable to make an appointment (if your appointment is on a Monday we request you contact us on the Friday prior).

Due to a high demand for the service, if you do not attend an appointment without prior contact to our team, the missed session will count as one of your five sessions. This is so we can ensure we are able to fairly offer all students on our waiting list a appointment.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Student Support and Wellbeing is committed to practicing counselling ways that are inclusive, accessible, and affirming to students from all backgrounds, cultures, races, beliefs, sexualities, abilities, neurodivergent backgrounds and gender identities

We understand that in some cases you may have preferences relating to the counsellor you see and we will always try to accommodate this. If we cannot accommodate your preferences for any reasons, we will talk to you about alternative provisions or options. Please let us know here any preferences you have for your counsellor when completing the registration forms.

Will our communications be kept confidential?

- All email exchanges and records will be kept confidential within the Counselling Team, which includes the secretary and external supervisors.
- Video sessions are not recorded.
- On occasion counsellors may liaise with the Medical Centre staff if concerns are noted for shared clients. We normally do not disclose verbal or written information about you to others unless we have your permission to do so.
- In rare cases, disclosure may occur without your consent if there is good reason to believe that you or others are at risk, or that disclosure is required by the English judicial system.
- Computers used are password accessed and protected by anti-viral software. However, although every care is taken to ensure confidentiality, intrusions such as hacking means that total security cannot be guaranteed.
- We would also encourage you to protect your own privacy such as considering access to your computer by others, installing appropriate anti-viral software, and not conducting video/audio sessions in a public place, especially if sensitive issues are being discussed.

Do you keep copies of our communication?

- Basic registration and statistical information is recorded about each contact made and this general information is collated onto our database. This data is used for an Annual Report. We comply with the Data Protection Act (1998) which requires us to obtain your consent for such records to be kept at the point of registration.
- Video/Audio sessions are not recorded/kept. All records, and case notes are then destroyed after six years, as recommended by our professional body.

- Concession letters, references or other letters requested by you regarding contact with the Service are only provided after consultation with you.
- We ask that you also take responsibility for safe-keeping of any correspondence received. No information about the content of your sessions, either directly or re-told in your own words, are to be posted in the public domain, such as social networking sites.
- The relationship you and your counsellor share is of a professional nature, and therefore any communications outside of pre-arranged sessions or via social networking sites will not be accepted by your counsellor.

What can I do should I want to complain?

Should you have any complaint, we ask that you contact the Counselling Team Manager in the first instance via counselling@kent.ac.uk. Should the matter be unresolved, formal complaints may be made via BACP, details for which may be found at www.bacp.co.uk.

Please note that work is being undertaken in accordance with the laws of United Kingdom and any disputes will be subject to the English judicial system.