



University Counselling Service

General information for Tutors



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Introduction

Many personal decisions are made and problems solved through discussions with friends or family, a College Tutor or Director of Studies, a Nurse, Chaplain, colleague, line manager or a GP. However, at times it is right to seek help away from one's familiar daily environment. The University Counselling Service exists to meet such a need. Seeking counselling is about making a positive choice to get help by talking confidentially with a professionally trained listener who has no other role in your life.

Who are the Counsellors?

The Service is staffed by a team of trained and accredited counsellors and therapists. The counsellors are all experienced in helping people from many different backgrounds and cultures, and with a wide range of personal and work issues.

Some of the counsellors who work in the Service are Associates, in the late stages of their counselling training. Their work is carefully supervised within the Service. Please let us know if you would prefer not to be seen by an Associate.

Contact us

University Counselling Service
Student Services Centre
Bene't Street
Cambridge
CB2 3PT

Tel: 01223 332865
Fax: 01223 760990
Email: counsellingreception@admin.cam.ac.uk
Web: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk

Opening times

Mondays: 9:00 - 5:30
Tuesdays: 9:00 - 7:30
Wednesdays: 9:00 - 5:30
Thursdays: 9:00 - 7:30
Fridays: 9:00 - 5:00

The Counselling Service:

General information for Tutors

Every year over 2000 students contact us to request help and support during their time at Cambridge and we see over 10% of the student population. The University Counselling Service (UCS) offers a wide range of free, confidential help and support. Through providing psychological and therapeutic help, we aim to help students make the most of the educational and social opportunities that the University of Cambridge affords. This leaflet attempts to answer the most common questions about the work of the University Counselling Service (UCS), with the particular needs of College Tutors and others with a welfare role in mind.

The Role Of The UCS

Students make most personal decisions and solve many problems through discussions with friends or family, or with the support of college welfare staff. However, there are times when it is right to seek confidential and professional help in an environment which is both separate from those mentioned above, and yet where student life and the University are understood: the Counselling Service was set up in

1969 to meet such a need.

We are interested in supporting the whole person, in order that students will be better able to make the most of the academic, social and leisure opportunities that Cambridge University affords and offer a range of services both to students and staff for this purpose.

Who can be seen at the UCS?

All undergraduate and graduate students of Cambridge University may use the Service, including students at the Theological Colleges who have matriculated, as well as part-time students who are members of a College. Students who are intermitting from their studies may be referred to their GPs or be offered a limited service with a view to referral.

Can staff be seen?

College staff can be seen for a single consultation at UCS to discuss their situation in confidence. This may lead to a referral into private counselling, NHS provision or to other suitable support.

Members of staff who are working under contract to the University are able to use the Staff Counselling Service (as well as some college staff - please refer to the website for eligibility): <https://staff.counselling.cam.ac.uk/>

What counselling approaches are available in the UCS?

All the permanent staff of the UCS are qualified, experienced and accredited counsellors, psychotherapists or cognitive behavioural therapists. In addition to dealing with general counselling issues, our team have specialist expertise in other areas such as work-related issues, stress, anxiety, depression, bereavement, eating distress, obsessive-compulsive disorders, or abuse.

Self-help information

The UCS website has carefully selected information on a range of problems that are common to students with suggestions on self-help information including books and online resources, together with an extensive collection of in-house leaflets on topics particularly relevant to students (please see below).

Mindfulness@Cam

Mindfulness often proves helpful to students, supporting their wellbeing and ability to study. Students affiliated to a Cambridge University College can learn mindfulness by attending our mindfulness classes. Links to book onto the classes are circulated termly by Senior Tutors. More information can be found on our website:

www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/welfare-and-wellbeing/mindfulness-cam

Individual counselling

Most of our work comprises individual short-term focused counselling and CBT. The combined experience within our team means we are usually able to offer the most appropriate form of help. If not, we can advise on possible referral options when specialist input or longer-term therapy is needed.

Groups and workshops

We offer several groups throughout the year including counselling groups for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and for students who have experienced the loss of a parent or carer. Each term we offer several short-term focused groups, running over 4-5 weeks, on topics such as

managing low mood, self-esteem, perfectionism, assertiveness, and self-compassion, together with a wide range of individual workshops ranging from improving the relationship with your supervisor to exam preparation. Each term's programme can be found on the UCS website: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/studentcouns/studentgroups.

How do I refer a student to the UCS?

Most students seeking counselling self-refer, but we are happy to talk to welfare staff who are worried about a particular student. We recognise that those based in Colleges and Departments are often the 'first port of call', and it may well be that the first sign of personal distress is that a student's work is suffering. Consequently, tutors and others are often in a very good position to notice when a student is in need of help and suggest that they arrange a counselling appointment at the UCS via our website, particularly if the issues are outside their own areas of expertise. If a student is hesitant, giving more information about the Service, or offering to help by making the initial approach might make the difference.

What kinds of problems can the UCS help with?

Many personal, emotional and psychological problems can be helped through counselling - this includes anxiety, stress and depression, family and/or relationship difficulties, sexual problems or identity issues - though counselling may not suit every student. It can also include adjusting to a new culture, or dealing with dilemmas or difficult decisions, as well as more specific problems such as bereavement or sexual assault.

We deal with all levels of severity. Some of those who come to the UCS have serious levels of disturbance; some feel suicidal. Most have problems that are causing difficulty or distress in some area of their life, although many are coping well in other areas. However, we always prefer to see people early in the development of any problem and before matters have become very serious, so no-one should be put off coming because they feel they would be wasting our time.

How long will someone have to wait to be seen?

Waiting times vary depending on the demand on the Service. Longer waits can occur if the student's availability is severely limited, if they do not confirm appointments, repeatedly decline or cancel appointments, so we would ask Tutors to encourage students to prioritise attending UCS appointments as they would a GP appointment.

Students can request to see a counsellor by completing a 'Pre-counselling form' on our secure website, giving us an indication of the support they want. These forms are read every working day and enable us to arrange counselling with an appropriate member of our team. We take the urgency of the situation into account in allocating appointments.

Information about current waiting times for counselling can be found on our website.

Does the UCS provide an emergency service?

No. In an emergency, where a person needs help immediately, it is more appropriate to contact a GP, NHS First Response (Tel: 111 and select option 2), the emergency services, or to attend the A&E Department at Addenbrooke's (Tel: 01223 217118). In these circumstances counselling is not going to be the first support needed, though it may well be appropriate later.

The Service is aware that some students need to be seen very quickly. If you are aware that a particular student needs a very quick response, it helps for you to let us know this, as sometimes those who are most vulnerable do not always say so themselves. Please contact UCS Reception: 01223 332865 (available during usual office hours and until 7.30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays) or email: counsellingreception@admin.cam.ac.uk

Mental Health Advisors

The Counselling Service has Mental Health Advisors (MHAs) who offer a range of interventions to students who are in crisis or who are experiencing moderate to severe mental health difficulties. This

includes:

- Mental health assessments, including suicide risk assessment
- Fitness to study assessments
- Crisis intervention and crisis management
- Ongoing support for students
- Liaison with tutors and academic departments
- Liaison with GPs and Mental Health Services
- Referral to other services
- Drug and alcohol screening
- Advice to College and University staff about student mental health problems
- Support assessments for students returning from intermitting
- Supporting evidence for the Applications Committee

MHA's confidentiality policy

At the first appointment a student will be asked for their written consent for information to be shared on a 'need to know' basis. If a student chooses not to give their consent the MHA's support will be limited. Confidentiality may be extended without consent when there are serious grounds for concern about

a student's health, their safety or the wellbeing of others, or for legal requirements.

Contacting the MHAs

If you are a member of College or University staff and you wish to refer a student for MHA support, or you would like to discuss a student mental health issue, please contact UCS Reception: 01223 332865. Alternatively, up-to-date contact information is available on our website: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/studentcouns/mha. The MHAs also take some student referrals from GPs and the Mental Health Services. Students cannot refer themselves to the MHAs.

Is the UCS a route to a psychiatric assessment?

A psychiatrist with extensive mental health experience visits the Service each week in term time and we can arrange a consultation for students whose mental health is a serious concern. This is not part of the normal NHS provision and UCS cannot provide an emergency route to psychiatric referral. Routine referrals for psychiatric assessment should be arranged via a student's GP, with urgent psychiatric assessments being arranged by their GP or

through the A&E Department at Addenbrooke's.

Sexual Assault & Harassment Advisor

The Service's Sexual Assault & Harassment Advisor (SAHA) is able to provide emotional and practical support to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted, or harassed, whether recently or in the past. Students can be supported to explore reporting options as well as being supported through the process itself, if they decide to report an incident. Help can also be provided to access other available support services.

If a student is unsure about something that has happened and thinks it might be sexual assault or harassment then they are welcome to access the service to explore this with the SAHA.

Students can arrange an appointment to meet with the SAHA by completing a pre-SAHA form: <https://forms.counselling.cam.ac.uk/titanium/wcmenu.aspx> or can contact the SAHA by email: sexual.assault.advisor@admin.cam.ac.uk

What are the boundaries between tutoring and counselling?

Cambridge is justifiably proud of the many sources of support that are open to students. It is appropriate that there are overlaps in this network of support, and this is almost certainly going to be the case in the roles of tutor and counsellor. The point at which a referral into counselling may be made will depend on an individual's personal skills, interest and available time.

Does confidentiality preclude liaison between tutor and counsellor?

We know that counselling only works in the context of assured confidentiality; we are also bound by the BACP Ethical Framework to maintain confidentiality except in the rare circumstances where clients are a risk to themselves, to someone else, or when legally required.

However, in our experience students often realise that it is helpful to liaise with their tutor or Director of Studies over matters that they are talking about in counselling. We routinely suggest that students speak to the relevant people in their College or Department, and sometimes ask whether it would be helpful to make such a contact ourselves. Many

students agree, and consequently we may get in touch with academics and tutors. With the student's consent we can discuss measures which might be helpful and supportive to the student without necessarily revealing more specific and confidential information.

Can I phone up for advice about a student?

Yes. We are quite happy to talk with you about the support of a student within the College or Department environment. Staff in the UCS are allocated as liaison counsellors to each College for just such a purpose and duty counsellors are also available to speak to. However, because our staff spend most of their time counselling, it may be that we would need to phone you back within a short time.

Other support available to colleges

Liaison counsellor

A member of the counselling team is allocated to each College as a liaison counsellor. The liaison counsellor will not necessarily see students from the specific college but they are able to support the work of college welfare teams by providing information about the work of the service and discussing any concerns you may

have. While client confidentiality is maintained, it can be helpful to discuss issues on a consultation basis. If you do not know which member of our team is allocated to your College, please contact the Service.

We are happy to meet with tutors or other staff groups to talk about the role of the Service, or about the management of any issues in College where our areas of expertise may be relevant. If you would find it helpful to meet with the Head of Service or your liaison counsellor, we would be happy to respond to such a request.

College-based counselling

In addition to the centralised UCS, College-based Counselling is provided in Colleges taking part in this scheme, which currently includes: Downing, Girton, Lucy Cavendish, Magdalene, Peterhouse and Wolfson (please check our website for up-to-date information about the participating Colleges). College-based counsellors are part of the wider UCS and governed by the same confidentiality policies, procedures and professional standards. Other Colleges may also have independent counselling available as part of their welfare provision.

Harassment

The Service is one of the possible referral points for students who are being harassed.

Work with student groups

Counsellors are willing to contribute to or lead workshops for student groups within College, particularly if these may help to prevent problems arising later.

UCS leaflets

We have written a series of leaflets for students on common problems, each containing a brief description of the problem area followed by some self-help strategies. They also give guidance about when it may make sense to seek further help, with some suggestions of where this might be found. These leaflets are available to Colleges or Departments at a cost which covers printing, or via the UCS website.

Further information about the UCS

The UCS website (www.counselling.cam.ac.uk) contains general information about the Service, and also includes copies of all our leaflets for students, as well as links to other counselling-related agencies in the Cambridge area.

Contacting UCS

The Counselling Service is open throughout the year except for closures at Christmas and the Easter weekend. Opening times are:

Monday	9.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.
Tuesday	9.00 a.m. – 7.30 p.m.
Wednesday	9.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.
Thursday	9.00 a.m. – 7.30 p.m.
Friday	9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Contact details

Telephone: 01223 332865

Email: counsellingreception@admin.cam.ac.uk

Website: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk

Available Self Help Leaflets 2019

Anger Management
Anxiety and Panic
Asserting Yourself
Bereavement
Concentration - a CBT guide
Coping with Exams
Depression
Eating Disorders
Effective Communication and Managing Conflict
General Information for Students
General Information for Tutors
Homesickness
How to be Mindful
Insomnia
Intermitting
Loneliness
Managing Alcohol Consumption
Parental Separation and Divorce
Perfectionism - a CBT approach
Phobias - a CBT approach
Post-Traumatic Stress
Procrastination
Self-Esteem
Self-Harm
Sexual Assault and Harassment Advisor
Sexual Assault and Rape
Simple Relaxation
Transition to University
What Is Mindfulness
Worry - a CBT Approach

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