

## Confidentiality

All our counsellors are professionally trained. The Service is an Organisational Member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and as such works within its Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy. Staff in the Counselling Service do not pass on personal information about clients (including information about attendance) to anyone outside the service except in the following situations.

- Where the counsellor has your express permission to disclose information, or
- Where the counsellor believes that there is a risk of serious harm to the student client or a third party, or
- Where the counsellor would be liable to civil or criminal court procedure if the information was not disclosed

In these circumstances, counsellors would not normally break confidentiality without a client's consent, if at all possible, and only to the extent necessary in the circumstances. These circumstances occur extremely rarely.

**Please note that due to the COVID 19 pandemic, when you attend in-person sessions the service may be obliged to pass on your contact details if asked to do so for 'Test, Trace and Protect'. We will endeavour to do this in a way that does not identify you as a client of the service**

The Counselling Service offers an opportunity to think and talk, in confidence. However, counsellors may need to consult with colleagues within the service about our work, and we are professionally required to have our work supervised by a consultant external to the Service and the University. In supervision we DO NOT reveal any identifying details about clients.

Confidentiality is as important in the working practice of Administrative and Reception staff as it is for Counsellors. No identifying information about clients is passed on to anyone outside the Counselling Service unless there has been a clear agreement between the client and the Service to share information

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, you have certain rights to access records held about you. If you wish to see your counselling records your counsellor will be able to give you information about the University Policy on access to records.

Your personal details (contact details, demographic data etc.) are stored on a password protected database on a secure University virtual server. Access to records is limited to staff within the Counselling service.

Your personal data will only be used to facilitate administrative processes, such as contacting you to arrange an appointment etc., and in an aggregated and anonymous way to produce statistics about the profile of Counselling Service clients.

A limited number of IT Services staff have access to the server on which the database is stored but they have this for the sole purpose of system administration. IT Services ensure that the server is maintained in line with best security practice.

We also keep notes about our counselling work with clients on this protected database, the sole purpose of which is to help counsellors in their work. These notes are ONLY seen by counsellors working in the Service, and they are not accessible to other staff. We keep records in line with the advice from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, which is six years. After the recommended storage periods, records are then confidentially destroyed. The same applies to paper-based records that we keep securely within the Counselling Service

Any client of the Service, past or present, is entitled to ask to see their records. We have procedures to deal with such requests. You would need to make a formal request; this is done via the University's Head of Governance and Compliance. You would need to ask for a Request Form for Access to Personal Data (Subject Access Request).

Gender re-assignment is a protected characteristic under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010. Any information we receive from you concerning gender status and transition history may be shared internally within the counselling service. However, we will not disclose such information to external parties without your express permission.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Act 2018 requires us to obtain your consent for this record keeping, and we ask you to indicate your agreement to our practices when you register with us.