

## Counselling Service

### Code of Practice on Confidentiality and Data Protection

#### Confidentiality

Students who come to the Counselling Service often have concerns about the private information they may share with a counsellor.

The Counselling Service works to the British Association for Counselling 'Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy'. ([www.bacp.co.uk/ethical\\_framework](http://www.bacp.co.uk/ethical_framework)) Everything you put on your counselling form and the content of your counselling sessions is confidential to the Counselling Service and the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing.

In line with their professional requirements counsellors may discuss their work with a supervisor external to the service. The purpose of supervision is to help the counsellor reflect on their work.

A counsellor would only consider breaking confidentiality, in exceptional circumstances, where there appears to be a serious and imminent risk to your own or other's safety or where we are required to by law. Even in these circumstances, we would normally seek to speak with you first before contacting anyone else.

If you have any questions about confidentiality, please discuss this with your counsellor.

#### Liaison and correspondence

With your permission, it may be appropriate for the counsellor to liaise with or write to a third party, for example, member of university administration, Student Affairs staff, personal tutor or doctor.

#### Record Keeping and Data Protection

It is essential for counsellors to keep record information and keep session notes.

Counselling notes record background information and the issues raised and worked on in the sessions. These are stored for the sole use of the service staff and are kept securely.

In line with our Service policy, information and session notes are kept for **six** years after your last contact, unless there are any ongoing matters relating to the notes or information that mean we need to retain it for longer. After this time they are destroyed.

#### Access to notes

Under the Data Protection Act, students have a right of access to all counselling notes kept on them. If those notes contain references to other individuals these may not be available to you, as protection is also granted to third parties. If you wish to see your notes, you should contact your counsellor, giving two weeks notice.

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