**Worthing and Haywards Heath Counselling Service information leaflet**

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**Counselling introduction**

You can make a self-referral by email to our free and confidential counselling service, which is for all students at Worthing and Haywards Heath College and all staff across all CCG colleges.

Counselling self-referral:

Worthing counselling@worthing.ac.uk

Haywards Heath counselling@haywardsheath.ac.uk

Counselling is a safe space to explore any difficult emotions, your worries, thoughts, anxieties, and feelings of distress and when facing any difficult decisions that you are trying to make sense of and seek some resolution for. Counselling can also help you gain an understanding of yourself in relation to others and that may then help you to form better relationships.

Counselling is provided 1-to-1 by a qualified and experienced counsellor. Our counselling service works to the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, [BACP ethical framework, 2018](https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions/)

The counselling service is available on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, term time only.

Appointments are traditionally 50 minutes in length, although for some younger clients, or clients with additional needs this can sometimes be too much. The counsellor will discuss with you your accessibility requirements during the initial assessment.

To provide consistency, predictability, and security the time and day of counselling appointments are kept the same each week. Therefore, it is important to consider whether you will be able to commit to this way of working.

If your timetable prevents you from attending counselling each week, please discuss this with the counsellor as there may be alternative solutions available.

**About counselling, what to expect**

Once you have self-referred you will be emailed by the counsellor an appointment for an initial appointment. During busy times there may be a waiting list for ongoing counselling appointments. However, you will be offered an initial appointment within a timely manner to discuss your needs.

You will also be emailed all the information about the service in advance so you can make an informed decision.

* How the service will be delivered
* Confidentiality and privacy
* The circumstances in which information might need to be shared to keep you or vulnerable children/adults safe.
* How information and data about you will be protected

**Initial appointment**

Your initial appointment with the counsellor will last 50 minutes. Meeting your counsellor and getting your questions answered will help you decide whether counselling is right for you. It is also a time for the counsellor to get to know you, your current difficulties you are facing and your goals for counselling.

Sometimes during the initial appointment, the problem may require specialist help and a referral to other support services may be more appropriate. If this is the case the counsellor will discuss this with you.

In this appointment you and your counsellor will also agree on the counselling agreement, so there are clear expectations on both sides, which includes how many appointments, frequency, times, boundaries and how to cancel or reschedule. The counselling agreement will include a signed confidentiality and record keeping agreement that you will receive a copy of.

For counselling to be effective, you will agree not to attend your counselling appointments under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

If online counselling is requested/required there will be a separate agreement on online etiquette.

In your initial appointment and subsequent appointments, you may be invited to complete a routine outcome measure questionnaire. More information on routine outcome measures is on page 5-6.

**Accessibility**

During your initial appointment you will also get the opportunity to discuss with the counsellor in detail any additional needs you may have to access the counselling service.

The counselling room is ground floor level access and is wheelchair accessible.

**Confidentiality**

Your counsellor has a duty to keep information about you confidential and private and won’t be shared outside of the counselling organisation unless you give express permission to do so. Under normal circumstances that means you are free to explore any experiences you are having, even if they seem frightening, embarrassing or taboo.

All counsellors are required to have supervision to expand their practice and to enhance client safety such as a difficulty that arises to ensure that we support you in the most professional way. Supervisors also keep information confidential and are subject to the same ethical criteria as counselling.

There are however specific circumstances when information cannot be kept confidential, which is around safety.

* You appear to be at imminent and serious risk to your own or others safety;
* Where a child or vulnerable adult appears to be at imminent and serious risk of harm;
* Or, we are made aware of serious illegal activities, which includes terrorism;
* Where we are required to disclose personal information as part of a court order.

Your counsellor will carefully consider if confidentiality needs to be breached. And, if safe to do so, and where possible, will obtain your consent first, and if actions need to be taken. Where possible the counsellor will involve you in this process.

During your initial appointment you will be reminded of the confidentiality agreement and you are welcome to ask any questions about it.

**Record Keeping**

The counsellor will ask for your permission to process your data during the initial appointment.

During the initial appointment, the counsellor will complete a counselling initial appointment form. This helps the counsellor to form a picture of what the problem is, the severity of the problem and goals for counselling.

The counsellor will keep all information of our communication with you and a record of each session that is used by the counselling service only. The counsellor will also keep your initial appointment form, confidentiality agreement and a record keeping agreement form. This information is also kept in a confidential file (either paper or electronic), in accordance with the Data Protection Act and only accessed by the counselling service.

Our counselling service will not share your data with anyone outside the counselling service unless

* You make a request for the counsellor to do so
* There is a serious and imminent risk to your own or others safety
* When the counsellor is legally obliged to do so
* The counsellor obtains your explicit consent.

**Cancellations and missed appointments**

Sometimes you will need to cancel or reschedule your counselling appointment. This is fine, but we ask that you give your counsellor 24 hours’ notice, as your appointment could be used as an initial appointment for somebody else.

What will happen if I don’t give 24 hours’ notice?

* If you forget to email your counsellor, they will send you a follow up email and ask whether everything is OK and check whether you will be attending the following week. If the counsellor does not get a response, they will assume that you no longer wish to continue with counselling.
* The missed appointment may count as one of your contracted counselling appointments.
* If you don't keep two consecutive appointments, the counsellor may decide that maybe now is not the time for you to commit to counselling. However, you would be welcomed to self-refer at a later date, if your situation has changed.

We do understand that in certain circumstances, you may be unable to let the counsellor know **24 hours** in advance. Please let your counsellor know as soon as possible if you are experiencing any difficulties keeping your appointments, as we may be able to adjust your times.

**Routine outcome measures**

Routine outcome measures can be a way for clients to raise issues that they may not know how to with their counsellor. They are also a way of routinely assessing your current wellbeing overtime, by tracking your progress or highlighting areas of difficulty. They are also useful to monitor the service effectiveness and play an important role in service development and quality.

The counselling service anonymises the data and stores this securely protecting your identity. The counselling service may use the anonymised data to gather statistics, such as informing commissioners of the benefits of a college counselling service.

You can withdraw your consent to use outcome monitoring measures at any time and this will not affect your counselling.

**Withdrawing your consent**

You can withdraw your consent for the counselling service to process your personal data. However, confidentiality agreement, record keeping agreement form and brief counselling notes are an essential requirement of the Counselling Service.

Therefore, if you do wish to withdraw your consent the counsellor will not be able to offer you further counselling at that time. If this is the case the counsellor will discuss with you alternative local counselling organisations or other support services, so you can get the support you need externally. Or, you may wish to self-refer at another time that feels right for you.

**Your feedback**

We value your positive and critical feedback and use this information to promote and help improve our services. Feedback also makes our service accountable for our clients. On your last counselling appointment, you will be asked to complete a feedback questionnaire.

Feedback is important to us to see what we are doing well and what we can improve on.

**Making a complaint**

Talk to your counsellor about your complaint where possible, if this feels too difficult you can contact the Counselling Coordinator Jean Park
Email jean.park@chichester.ac.uk who will take the complaint seriously. If we were unable to resolve your complaint you can contact the BACP ‘Ask Kathleen’ service which is available from Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 4pm. Tel: 07811 762114 or 07811 762256 email ask@bacp.co.uk

**Urgent Help**

If you found yourself in a major crisis and were considering serious self-harm it would be vital to get immediate help. This could include contacting your GP, or your nearest accident and emergency service (A & E).

For Samaritans helpline **out of hours** Telephone Support and Information please call **116 123.**

jo@samaritans.org **response 24 hours,**

<https://selfhelp.samaritans.org/>

For HOPELINEUK helpline for young people having thoughts of suicide you can contact, 0800 068 4141 Text: [07860039967](https://outlook.office.com/mail/options/mail/messageContent/signature) Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

**Further information**

For further information on [Chichester College Groups data protection policies](https://www.chigroup.ac.uk/docs/default-source/ccg-policies/general/ccg-data-protection-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=62a1438d_4)

For further information on [Chichester College Groups safeguarding polices](https://www.chigroup.ac.uk/docs/default-source/ccg-policies/general/safeguarding-students-and-adult-at-risk-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=6aa1438d_2)