



Department of Student & Library Services

The Counselling Service

Pre-therapy agreement & terms of conditions

Introduction

The Counselling Team at Teesside University are qualified practitioners who work with students to help them bring about effective change and enhance their wellbeing and lifestyle.

We are dedicated to providing you with quality counselling, and support through a number of different interventions. Our aim is to help you make the most of your student experience here at Teesside University and help you become more effective learners.

Our Pre-Therapy Brochure will give you the different options that are available in the Counselling Service. You will be able to discuss these with your Counsellor in your Assessment session.

Counselling is a service offered by Teesside University free of charge to all current full time, part time or distance learning students of the University, however, we cannot provide support to students who have finished their course and graduated. We are also unable to work online with international students who are not currently resident in the UK.

How We Work

Student Support Initial Assessment (Counselling)

- Counselling is offered within a short, time limited framework and will vary according to the needs of the individual. Your counsellor will discuss this with you in more detail during your assessment so that you are aware of these time limits and what can be achieved.
- Having submitted your completed 'counselling registration form' you will be offered a 30-minute Counselling Student Support Initial Assessment. This is usually over Microsoft Teams but can be in-person if you prefer.
- If you Do Not Attend (DNA) 2 consecutive assessment appointments with no clear reason, you will be discharged from the service and will need to re-apply if you would like to access the service again.
- Following assessment, you may be referred to one of the pathways offered within Student and Library Services such as Lifestyle Management, Grief and Loss or a number of related workshops like the Anxiety Workshop.
- You may also be referred to an external specialist service such as ARCH North East, Recovery Connections or NECA Gambling Services.





Counselling sessions

- Counselling appointments are usually 55 minutes long and will take place in person on campus in The Meeting House, 20, King Edwards Square. If accessibility is an issue for you, we can offer appointments in the Student Life Building. Online sessions will take place over Microsoft Teams, which is the secure online platform chosen by the University.
- We will arrange a mutually convenient appointment time with you, via your university e-mail account only.
- We will always try to give you as much notice as we can for any appointment offered. We may contact you by telephone to arrange this appointment so that a mutually agreeable time slot can be arranged. Otherwise, we will email your university account with an offer of the next available appointment slot.
- The counselling appointment can be in person, on video, audio, email, or instant messaging. Please let us know immediately if you have any problems downloading Teams, and you will need to contact the IT Help Desk to try and resolve these issues.
- Your counsellor will discuss the specifics of making contact via Teams at the agreed appointment times because arrangements will vary depending on which online medium you choose.
- If we lose connection during a video, audio, or instant messaging session, we will always attempt to re-establish connection via Teams. If this is not possible, we will attempt to call you on your preferred telephone number but if we are unable to speak to you, we will contact you by email following the session to 'check in' and reschedule your appointment.
- If you need to cancel and rearrange your appointment, we expect you to give the service 24 hours' notice, apart from in exceptional circumstance.
- If you cancel at short notice and/or DNA 2 consecutive appointments we will assume that you no longer wish to continue with counselling and you will be discharged from the service, however we do allow for exceptional circumstances.
- If you cancel your appointment on a regular basis, we will ask you whether the therapeutic work is appropriate for you at the moment.
- If you attend an appointment under the influence of alcohol or drugs, we will terminate the session and re-arrange it for another time.
- It is important that you feel at ease with your counsellor in-order for the therapy to be effective. If you feel this not to be the case, then you have the right to request a change of counsellor at any time. You can do this by discussing it with your current counsellor or alternatively, you can email counselling@tees.ac.uk with your request.

Guidelines to help maintain your privacy for online sessions

It is important that you consider privacy when engaging with counselling online.

- It is your responsibility to manage your personal technology and environment in order that the work you engage in with the counselling service remains confidential. If you have any concerns or are unsure how to work online safely, please discuss this with your counsellor in your Assessment session.





- Please ensure that you are in a place where you will not be disturbed, where others cannot view your phone or laptop screen, and you can't be overheard. If you have concerns about a family member/partner, etc. unexpectedly coming into the room while you are in an online session, we can agree a 'safe' word in advance so the session can temporarily be stopped.
- Always leave your device secured and password protected and do not share your password with others. We will only contact you on your secure university email account.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

(1) All counsellors in the Teesside University Counselling Service work to a high level of confidentiality. They work within BACP, BPS, BABCP and ACTO codes of ethics and practice. If you would like more details about these ethical frameworks, please ask your counsellor.

There are some exceptions when we are required by law to break this confidentiality agreement. They are:

- If you are at risk of harm to yourself or another person.
- If you reveal that a child is being abused or is in danger of abuse.
- If the counsellor is compelled to reveal information by a court order.
- We are obligated to tell you that under the Terrorism Act 2000, it is a criminal offence not to tell the police 'as soon as is reasonably practicable' if you become aware of information which you know or believe 'might be of material assistance' in: (a) preventing an act of terrorism and (b) securing the arrest, prosecution or conviction of someone involved in 'the commission, preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism'. This would be reported to the Police if disclosed to a counsellor.
- If you reveal to us that you are laundering money from the sale of drugs – this must be reported to the police.

(2) The Counselling Service works in partnership with the Mental Health Service within Student and Library Services when supporting students in crisis. This means very basic information may be seen by the Mental Health Team, such as your name, when appointments are being made between the two services. There may be circumstances during your counselling that we or you feel that you are at a **high level of risk to yourself or others**. If this is the case, and only if, we will look at maximising support for you through a **multi-disciplinary approach** which may involve talking or sharing information **only** with other health professionals inside or outside the University. We will usually try to seek your permission to do this, however if you are **in crisis** this may not always be possible. Sensitive and detailed information cannot be seen in these circumstances unless the sharing of this information is required to keep you safe as above.

(3) Please note that if you require the Counselling Service to release information regarding your case (e.g. case notes), or require us to contact a 3rd party, you must give us verbal or written consent which will be recorded in your case notes. Otherwise, the Counselling Service will not reveal any personal information held to your academic school, tutor, GP, family, partner, or anyone else. If a counsellor supplies evidence for a Mitigating Circumstances application or for extensions it will be attached to your School record, however your counsellor will always attempt





to discuss the content of this evidence with you before it is sent out. Otherwise, nothing will appear on your School Record if you decide to take up these counselling sessions.

(4) Under the **General Data Protection Regulations** we are obliged to tell you how we collect and use your personal data. So, please note that enquiries and referrals to the Counselling Service are tracked electronically and the personal data of your enquiry is stored in password protected files. We keep this data so that we can keep track of your enquiry and our response for future reference. The personal data that you provide is recorded in case management systems held by the University. This information will be retained for 6 years, after which it will be destroyed securely.

If you made an enquiry as regards counselling through Student Life, they have and hold a record of that enquiry through the University Enquiry Management System which is kept confidential. This is governed by a comprehensive series of data regulations designed to protect you. For further information, please go to: [Legal statements](#) | [About us](#) | [Teesside University](#)

(5) Teesside University Counselling Service works in partnership with Spectrum Psychological Therapies and their practitioners work with the Counselling Team. The service also offers placements to trainee Counsellors and Counselling Psychologists from the University and other training organisations in the area. You may be allocated to either a qualified counsellor from Spectrum, a trainee Counsellor/Counselling Psychologist or a permanent member of the Counselling team.

(6) We keep brief summaries of sessions and any appropriate 3rd Party information, e.g. GP referral letters. This enables us to keep track of discussions and communications that are only relevant to your case. All records electronic and paper are either deleted or destroyed after 6 years.

If you do not give us permission for your personal details and your case notes to be recorded and held by us, you need to let us know, as we will automatically record these details. Service evaluation and research is important to the Counselling Service, and we will use details recorded but anonymously to improve and enhance the Service.

Crisis Information

If you do feel in crisis or at risk of seriously harming yourself or another person, then the Counselling Service may not be appropriate support for you at the moment. If this is found to be the case either during your 'Counselling Student Support Initial Assessment', or during ongoing sessions, we will direct you to alternative support avenues to enable you to stay safe. Please note that for students who are in crisis, information about what to do in a crisis and emergency contact numbers are detailed by following this link on the University website:

<https://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/stud/emergency.cfm>





You will be required to confirm that you have read and agree to all of the above on the 'Counselling Registration Form'.

If you have any questions about this agreement, or take issue with any aspect of it, please contact counselling@tees.ac.uk and one of our counsellors will contact you directly.

***The Counselling Service
Teesside University***

