

Student Counselling Service - information for students

The information on this sheet answers the most frequently asked questions. It's important that you read all the information as this will serve as a working agreement. We hope you'll find it helpful.

Assessment appointment

This appointment is used to establish:

- What your concerns are
- If counselling with us will help and if you're able to commit to it
- If you'd be better supported by another service

We'll discuss the range of support we offer and which option might suit your particular needs. This could include individual counselling, signposting to online information and resources or SilverCloud. We may establish that your needs should be met by another service, for example, via our internal and external partnership support services. If this is the case, we can support you to access the most appropriate service.

Sometimes the assessment appointment can resolve the current concern and you may not need any further support.

What happens next?

If we're best placed to support you, you'll be offered one of the following therapeutic interventions:

Counselling sessions

Counselling is about enabling you to explore your experiences, feelings, behaviours and relationships in order to gain a more confident perspective and make choices that will improve your wellbeing.

We currently provide up to six sessions of counselling over the telephone or via video/audio using Microsoft Teams or Zoom. *This may not be with the therapist who conducted your assessment appointment.* As part of our therapy team, appointments may be provided by our trainee placement counsellors or psychological wellbeing practitioner trainees. Sessions last up to 50 minutes and will usually be on the same day and time each week. It's important to attend on time as we work to an appointment system. If you attend late for an appointment, your session may not take place.

Please note that counselling appointments must not be recorded.

During very busy times there may be a wait between your assessment appointment and first counselling appointment. During this period you can access online information/resources by visiting <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/wellbeing/mentalandphysicalwellbeing/mentalwellbeing/#self-helpresources>

Online CBT (SilverCloud)

An online CBT platform called SilverCloud may be recommended to best meet your needs. This can be used as a self-help programme or you may be allocated to a member of the therapy team who'll be your Supporter during your time on SilverCloud. An online review date will be arranged, usually at the same time each week for up to six sessions.

Excluding self-help SilverCloud (which may be accessed by any of our students without a referral from an assessment appointment), students may be eligible to access one of the above therapeutic interventions per 12 months.

Non-attendance and cancellations

If you miss a counselling session or cancel without giving us at least 24 hours' notice, or do not engage in SilverCloud between review dates, that session will count as one of the six we can offer.

If within the duration of your counselling you miss two counselling sessions or cancel two sessions without 24 hours' notice or more, or miss one session and cancel one with late notice, we will take that to mean that you no longer need counselling and won't schedule further appointments.

(PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF)

If you need to cancel an appointment, please contact us on the telephone number below. Outside the phone-line opening times, please email sws.therapyappointments@newcastle.ac.uk

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an essential part of the therapeutic process. No personal information, either verbal or written, will be disclosed to anyone outside of Student and Academic Services without your consent except in exceptional circumstances.

For example, we would have a duty to inform a third party if:

- We were concerned that there was a serious risk of harm to yourself or others
- If there were concerns with the detection or prevention of serious crime or child protection

Disclosures will normally take place in close collaboration with you, unless to do so increases risk for you or someone else.

All therapists are required to have a clinical supervisor who monitors the quality of their work. The process of supervision is conducted in a way that maintains your confidentiality.

Records

We keep brief records about your contact with us, your notes will be stored securely.

Evaluation

We want to provide you with the very best service possible and will ask you a small number of questions at the start and end of your counselling, this helps us to ensure we are supporting you effectively and makes positive changes to the services we provide.

PEC evidence

Assessment appointments should not be booked solely for PEC evidence. We're only able to provide PEC evidence for students who are currently accessing the service, or have historically accessed the service. Visit the Student Progress webpage 'If Things Go Wrong' (where to find help) at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/help for further details about the PEC process.

Concerns or complaints

If you have a concern or a complaint about the service we ask that you talk with your therapist in the first instance and follow the University's complaints process at <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/Procedures/complaints.htm>

Emergencies/out of hours

The Student Counselling Service is not an emergency service. We do not operate an out-of-hours service.

If you're concerned about keeping yourself safe, or need immediate help and support, you should contact your GP. If you feel your life is in imminent danger, you should call 999 or go to Accident and Emergency at the nearest hospital. Visit www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing for more information.

Contact

You can contact us by telephoning + 44 (0) 191 208 3333 or by completing an enquiry form at my.ncl.ac.uk/students/contact. The phone line is open 10:00 to 16:00 on weekdays.

We'll only use your University email address (rather than a personal one) so do please check your inbox and junk folder regularly. We may also contact you by telephone so it's important you also check your voicemail regularly if you've given us a phone number.

We may contact you from time to time with information which we think you'd find helpful. If you'd prefer not to receive any communications from us, please let us know.