

UCD Student Counselling Service Information Sheet

This information is provided to help you to decide whether to register for the Student Counselling Service.

General Information about Counselling

Counselling provides an invitation to speak privately with a professional about problems that are worrying or upsetting. Talking to people who are trained in a special way to listen to problems can deepen a person's understanding of what is happening and can help develop alternative ways of dealing with the situation. It is often helpful to attend counselling when ways of coping with a difficulty have been tried and are not working so that new ways of understanding and managing the problem can be explored.

The Student Counselling Service is a confidential service available to all registered students, free of charge. The aim of the service is to provide easily accessible professional psychological support to assist students to deal with mental health challenges that affect their progress through university life. Some of the typical reasons for students seeking support from the University Counselling Service include difficulties in day-to-day coping, relationship difficulties, issues around sexuality, academic concerns, family difficulties, social anxieties, mood changes, stress or past or present traumatic events.

Confidentiality

The consultation between a student and a counsellor is confidential and is not disclosed to anyone outside the Student Counselling Service except in circumstances where a student gives consent for the counsellor to disclose information to a third party. The exceptions to confidentiality are outlined in detail in the *Counselling Registration Form*. The main exceptions to breaking confidentiality arise if the student is a danger to self or others, if a vulnerable person (e.g. a child) is at risk of harm, or in other limited circumstances required by law.

At the first appointment with a counsellor, you can clarify any questions that you have about confidentiality.

How the Service Works

One-to-one counselling and group counselling are the main forms of support provided. We will work with you to address challenges, based on your individual needs, and typically students attend 5 sessions.

The on-campus counselling service operates in line with the Universities' response to the guidelines for preventing the spread of Covid 19. Counselling via phone, or video call can be facilitated where possible. Face to face counselling appointments on campus are limited currently and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in the context of the level of restrictions the University is implementing at the time.

The first conversation with the counsellor will be by phone and the counsellor will be able to explain how the counselling service is working in relation to the restrictions and answer any questions that you have. You can discuss your attendance preferences with the counsellor who will also be able to advise you about what medium for counselling might best suit your needs. This can be reviewed in collaboration with your counsellor. The **on-campus** service operating hours are Monday to Friday 9-5.

During busy periods, UCD counselling service works in partnership with **off-campus** counselling services situated close to UCD (Stillorgan, Churchtown, Donnybrook and Harold's Cross), to try to ensure that counselling appointments are available when students need them. The current off-campus services are listed below:

- Mind & Body Works <https://www.mindandbodyworks.com>
- Connolly Counselling Centre <https://www.counsellor.ie>
- Zest Life Counselling Service <https://zestlife.ie>

These **off-campus** counselling services have experience of working with students. They may offer face to face, video and phone consultations and some may offer flexibility of appointment times e.g. evenings, and Saturdays.

Accessing the Student Counselling Services

Please read this Information Sheet and consult the Frequently Asked Questions on our website (<https://www.ucd.ie/studentcounselling/>) before deciding whether to register for counselling. If you then wish to proceed with your registration please refer to our 'Registering for Counselling' section at the end of this document.

The service is designed to avoid unnecessary waiting and it is best to register for the counselling service at the time when you are ready to start the counselling. You will receive an offer of either **on campus or off campus** counselling within 3 weeks of your registration. You need to respond to the offer by email to student.counselling@ucd.ie, and if we do not hear from you, we will assume that you are not interested in counselling at this time and your registration will be closed.

If you receive an offer of off- campus counselling:

The offer of counselling means that you can avail of up to 5 counselling sessions at no charge, in one of the services listed earlier in the document. **You must respond to the offer by email/phone, otherwise we will assume that you are no longer interested in counselling and your registration will be closed.**

Once you accept the offer of funded off campus counselling, the administrator at the UCD Health and Counselling Centre will provide you with a code and information about how you contact the off campus service, where counselling appointments will be arranged for you in a timely manner.

What if I need more than 5 sessions of counselling: If after you have attended 5 sessions, you and your counsellor agree that more sessions are required, there is a process where additional counselling can be facilitated. Your counsellor will advise you further.

Professional Referrals to the Student Counselling Service are not necessary as students can self-refer. However, at times referrals to counselling can be supported by GPs, Student Advisors, Academic Staff, Dean of Students, or other relevant staff members who may suggest that you consider attending the counselling service. **Please note**, your referral will not be processed until, in addition to the service receiving the professional referral, you have also completed and submitted the *Counselling Registration Form* as outlined above. ***The decision to access the counselling service rests with the student themselves and we will not make contact with a student who has not registered with the counselling service to indicate their interest in seeking counselling services.***

If you are feeling very distressed and need urgent mental health support, you need to contact your GP surgery to request an emergency appointment.

Urgent options: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/get-urgent-help.html>

How We Will Contact You

When options for appointments become available, you will be contacted by email.

At times, we may contact you by phone, for example if an appointment becomes available within the coming days, or if you ask us to call you, or if we need to clarify some information with you.

Important: If you do not respond to two email contacts informing you of counselling that is available either on or off campus, we will assume that you are no longer interested in seeking counselling at this time and your registration will be closed from the waiting list.

You are welcome to re-engage with the Counselling Service at any stage in the future.

Please note you will need to complete the Counselling Registration Form to re-register.

Cancelling a Counselling Appointment

Due to the high demand for counselling, we request that if you need to cancel an appointment that you contact the service by phone or email as soon as possible, and aim to give 48 hours' notice so that the appointment can be offered to a fellow student.

Missed 1st Counselling Appointment

If you miss the first scheduled counselling appointment/phone consultation, and you do not get in touch with the on or off campus service to explain and seek to rearrange, it will be assumed that you are no longer interested in seeking counselling at this time and your registration with the service will be closed off. You will be welcome to re-register at any stage in the future.

Data Protection

All information collected and stored by the UCD Student Counselling Service is subject to the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). Clinical Records are held for a period of seven years from the last contact with the service and then destroyed. A copy of the full UCD Student Counselling Service Policy on Data Protection can be made available on request. For more information on data protection please see <http://gdprandyou.ie/>

Registering for Counselling

If you have read the above information and wish to proceed with your registration, please complete the following brief [UCD Student Counselling Service Registration Form](#) by clicking on the embedded link, completing the form, and then clicking submit. When we receive this form you will be registered with the Service and we will be in contact with you to update you on options for appointments as soon as possible.

For more information about the Student Counselling Service please see our website: <http://www.ucd.ie/studentcounselling>