



The Counselling and Mental Health Service

Annual Report 2019/20

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Counselling Service Team

Head of Student Life and Wellbeing

Dan Green (temporary post)

Permanent staff (core team)

Gill Barlow, lead counsellor (1.0 fte)

Yvonne Messenger, senior counsellor (0.6 fte)

Stuart Yates, counsellor (0.5 fte)

Ann Trusson (0.6 fte)

Lauren Howard (0.4 tfe)

Jennie Dayes (0.6 fte with Disability Service until Dec 2019, left February 2020)

Sarah Hickling-Knott, mental health advisor (0.6 fte started January 2020)

Rebecca Charlton, mental health advisor (1.0 fte started March 2020)

Administrative and Reception Staff

Jayne Gray- Disability Officer – CMHS admin

Rebecca Firth Disability Officer – CMHS admin

Joanne Clayton Disability Officer – CMHS admin

MyBradford Service – CMHS reception

Sessional Counsellors (casual hours)

Agnes Ndebele

Emma Shaw

Rich Gaunt

Susannah Barnes

Associates and trainees

In addition to paid permanent counsellors, we use a team of associates and trainees to deliver the service. Associates are qualified counsellors who work on a voluntary basis in order to gain more experience and accrue the necessary hours in order to be eligible for BACP accreditation (or equivalent). Trainees are counsellors in training who, as an essential part of their training, need to be on a placement in order to gain the necessary experience as a course requirement. Both associates and trainees are provided with appropriate extensive supervision, training, mentoring and support in order to ensure that they provide the best service for our clients. In 2019/20 we had three associates and three trainees in the team.

About the Service

The Counselling and Mental Health Service is a BACP accredited service which provides counselling and psycho-educational training for the students and staff of the University of Bradford and counselling for students at Bradford College. Since January 2020 we also provide mental health advice, information and support to students at the University. We are a busy service, and in order to accommodate the numbers of clients and minimise waiting times for counselling, we usually offer a brief therapy model of up to four sessions for students and 6 for staff in the first instance, after a 25-minute intake interview to assess need and/or offer immediate help. We will always endeavour to extend this contract when appropriate, in cases of risk, for example, or where the work cannot be usefully or ethically contained in four sessions. Most counselling and mental health advice takes place at our premises in Student Central although due to COVID-19 we adapted to Service to offer telephone / video conference appointments only up to July 2020 when we returned to campus. We offer psycho educational workshops to students and staff at the university. Service users can access the service through an on-line registration form; they will then be offered an Intake appointment.

Year review:

- A year of lots of change and adaptation! The Service became part of **Student Life and Wellbeing** in August 2019, along with Disability, MyBradford, and Student Life services under Dan Green (temporary post). An opportunity for increased liaison with these teams and closer collaboration.
- Our two-frontline reception / administration roles were made redundant as part of the BEP programme (18/19) and we were very sorry to see Gilly Butcher and Helen Trevasani leave in August 2019. **Reception and administration** roles were divided between MyBradford (reception) and the Disability Admin team (admin). Both roles were located in other parts of the University, apart from a brief number of months when the admin team were in the Service. Training was offered to both teams. Another adaptation for the Service which was ongoing throughout 19/20.
- The Counselling Service was extended to become the **Counselling and Mental Health Service** in January 2020 when the mental health advisor (Jennie Dayes) joined the team from Disability Services in December 2019. In January 2020 Sarah Hickling Knott was recruited and in March Rebecca Charlton. Adapting the Service to include MH advice - new processes, procedures, team collaboration - was ongoing throughout the rest of 19/20 and into 20/21.
- **COVID-19 response.** The Service was lifted from campus and located in kitchens / dining rooms etc from March 2020. The core team and sessional counsellors were equipped with laptops to be able to offer the service remotely. The whole Service was adapted to continue to offer an accessible, safe, confidential, professional service in compliance with university values and the BACP Ethical Framework. This included offering telephone and video conference appointments, adapting feedback mechanisms and procedures for dealing with risk, offering de-brief sessions to students on placement from the Faculty of Health for example. Two staff trained in May 20 to be able to offer email counselling in response to the alarming increase in domestic violence statistics. BACP offered free training events on online counselling and the whole team were encouraged to attend. New documents were created to support the team with the online / telephone aspect of counselling / mental health advice. We increased the number of articles we provided for newsletters for staff and students to support wellbeing and address issues such as isolation, anxiety and self-care. A skeleton

team returned to campus from mid-July 20 to offer support to students remaining in halls of residence on campus.

- **International Student Barometer.** We were delighted to find that our service had come 2nd in the UK and 6th globally for our counselling support for international students! 180k students responded to the survey from 215 universities in 19 countries.
- **Calm Room** – along with Dr Lia Edwards from the Faculty of Health we launched a new initiative in Oct 19. The mobile sensory room ‘Calm Room’ was set up in the Service - software installed to create a relaxing, soothing space for students and staff to use. It was initially on loan from Tim Lees of MyQoI Software, who then decided to gift the university the equipment in exchange for a report which they could use to advertise to other HE institutions. We asked each user to fill out a short questionnaire and rate their experience. Separate report available.
- **NHS MyWellBeing College** – new partnership with the mental health service arm of the local NHS Trust and the University. Broadening and adapting our service by referring students and staff to a MyWBC practitioner who was on campus in the Service one day a week offering appointments with a CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy), self-help focused approach. This began September 2019 but was paused December 19 to July 20 due to staff sickness and the pandemic.
- **Bradford College** underwent a restructure, and it was decided they no longer required counselling for their staff. The contract with the College was re-negotiated from August 2019 it was agreed the counselling service would solely offer one to one appointments to students.
- Gill Barlow and other core team staff were involved in various **cross University projects**: PGR Connect, Step Up to HE, Online Transition Module, Peer Assisted Learning, Care Experienced Student working group, Mental Health First Aid training for staff. Dan Green replaced Gill Barlow on the following steering groups: Safety Steering Group and Wellbeing Steering Group.
- The team offered **workshops for students** which included, mindfulness, panic free exams, taking care of self and other, giving confident presentations, procrastination for post grads. Some of these were offered in collaboration with colleagues in Academic Skills during Activity Weeks, with SU staff on Stress Awareness Day and with Unique Gym for example.
- Our POD offer - **workshops for staff** - included Space to Breathe monthly sessions and 2 x 8-week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction courses, sessions on ‘Let’s talk about mindfulness’, getting through anxious times, procrastination, introduction to assertiveness.
- To enable students to have easier and more personalised (if required) access to the gym for the benefit of their mental health and wellbeing, we revived our relationship with **Unique Gym and Fitness**. In collaboration with their team we offered a number of workshops themed around self-care in Feb 20.
- **Mental Health First Aid.** Along with Angela North from the Disability Service, Gill Barlow began her training as a MHFA trainer in January 2020. This was paused due to the pandemic.
- The core team were involved in **promoting the service** and wellbeing themes through student and staff Induction events and at Open Days, Wellbeing Fairs, Stress Awareness Day, World MH Day and Freshers events at the University.
- We also wrote 8 **articles / blogs** for Team Talk and Campus Connect with titles such as ‘Tips for Living with Uncertainty’ and ‘Taking Care of your MH in Challenging Times’.
- The core team were involved in supporting students with their own MH campaigns and events, for example **‘Living in a Sustainable Society’** was a project created by a group of Social Science students

and they interviewed Gill Barlow about the impact of increasing mental health distress. Another group of Life Sciences students did a **MH awareness raising event for the BPSA** (British Pharmaceutical Students Association) in Feb 20.

- We had 7 **Freedom of Information** (FOI) requests this year.
- The team were involved in offering support to other teams via **monthly supervision** sessions. Gill Barlow supervised the mental health study coaches from the Disability Service. Ann Trusson, offered supervision to Dan Batchelor (SU) and his team.
- The team offered **consultative support** with regards to complex student cases to all staff at the University.

Service Satisfaction headlines

- **95%** Very happy or happy about their experience of the Counselling Service
- **70%** said counselling helped them do better in their academic work/work
- **75%** said coming to counselling improved their overall experience of University/ College/ Work
- **73%** said that counselling helped them develop skills that might be useful for future employment (eg building resilience, increased confidence etc)
- **46%** found counselling was the most significant factor or an important factor in helping them stay at University/College/work

Service Use

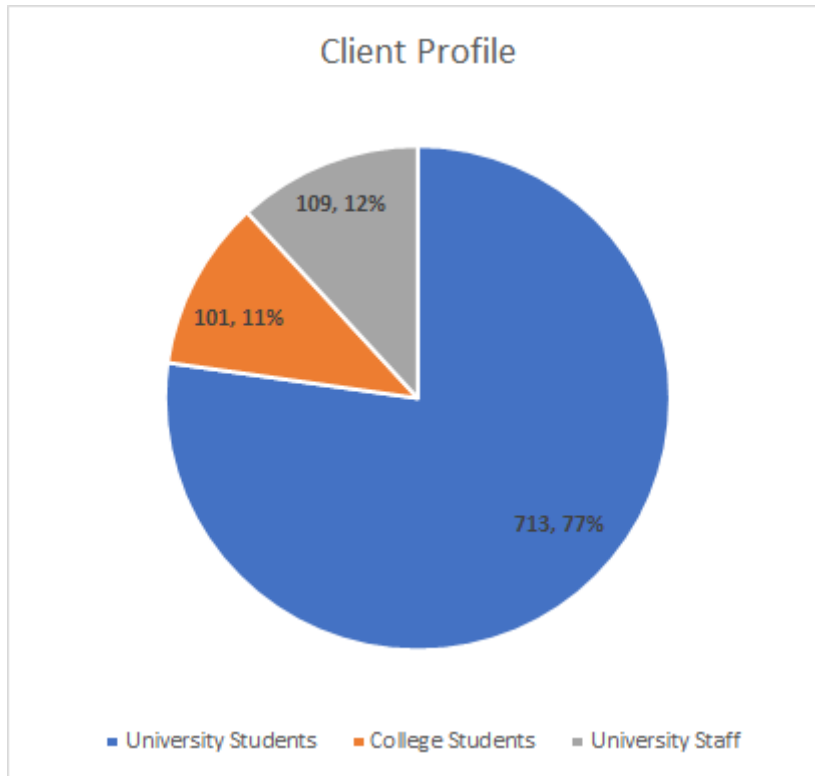
Headline Statistics

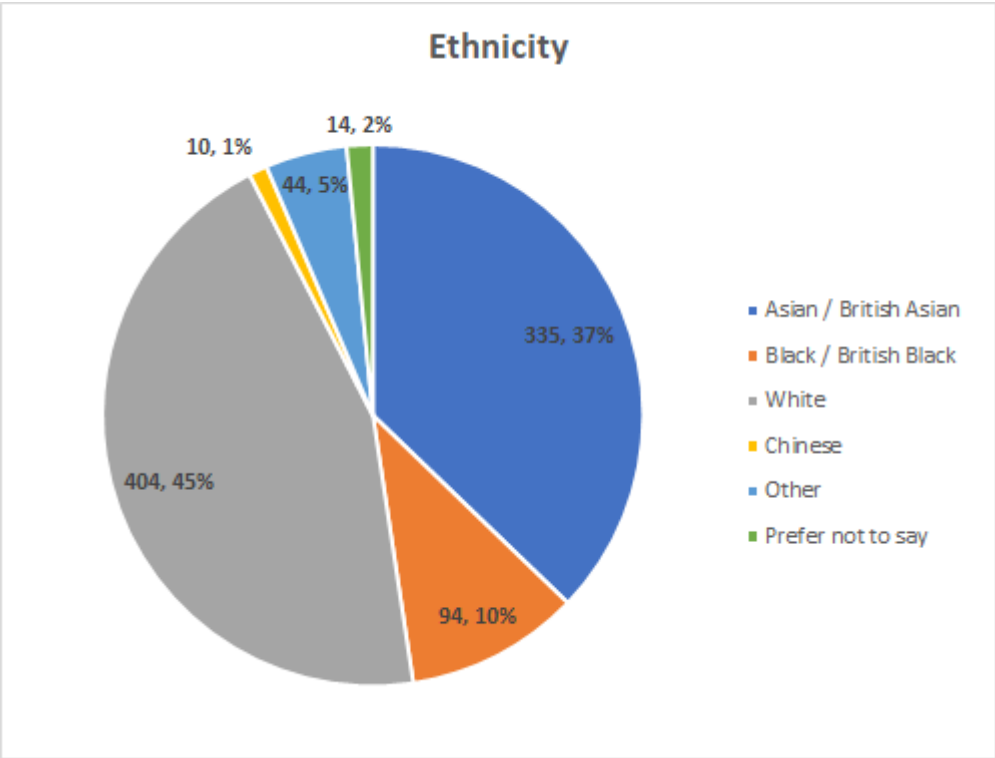
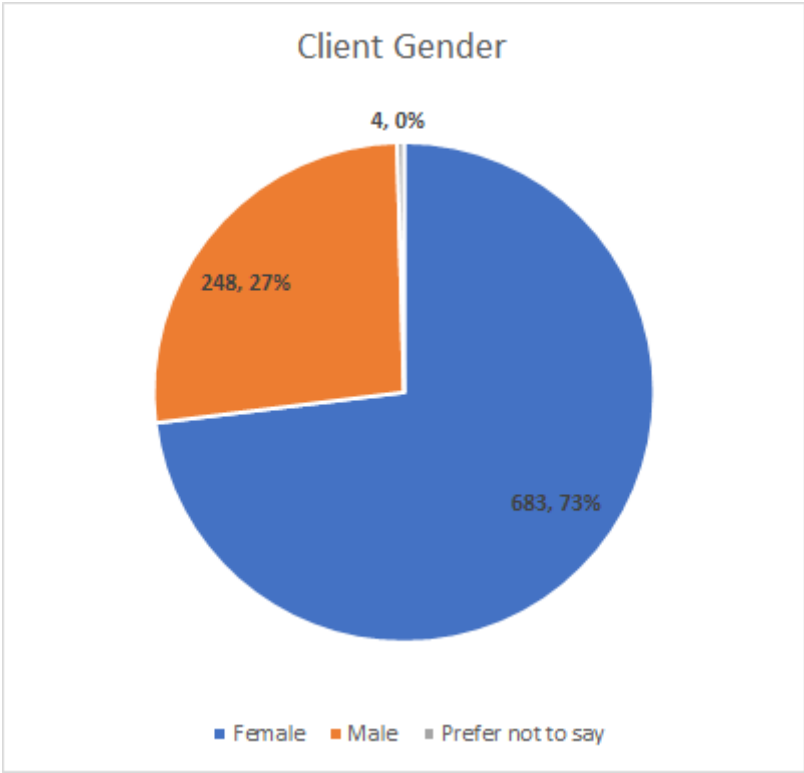
2019/20

Individual Clients registered	923
University students (Counselling 626 Mental Health 87)	713
College students	101
University staff	109
Appointments provided	3917
Appointments attended	2422
Appointments unconfirmed (offered but not confirmed by client)	707
Appointments cancelled	441

Workshop attendees	276
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Client profile





Presenting Issues

'Presenting issue' is what is identified by the counsellor at Intake as being the primary initial problem.

1) Anxiety	28%
2) Depression	26%
3) Relationships	11%
4) Loss	7.5%
5) Abuse	7.5%
6) Academic	6.5%

Risk

22% of all clients seen at Intake were assessed to be at risk in the following categories:

1) Suicide	60% (of 22%)
2) Self-harm	29%
3) Academic	10.5%
4) Risk to others	4%
5) Risk from others	0.5%

Waiting times

- Average waiting time for an Intake (first) appointment was 4 days.
- The average waiting time for an ongoing counselling appointment following Intake was 7 days (this also depends on client availability).

Staff Counselling

- Staff client numbers: 109

Referrals by:

- Department 35%
- Website 30%
- Self 23%
- HR 17%
- Occupational Health 13%

Job type:

- Academic 35%
- Administrative 33%
- Other 20%

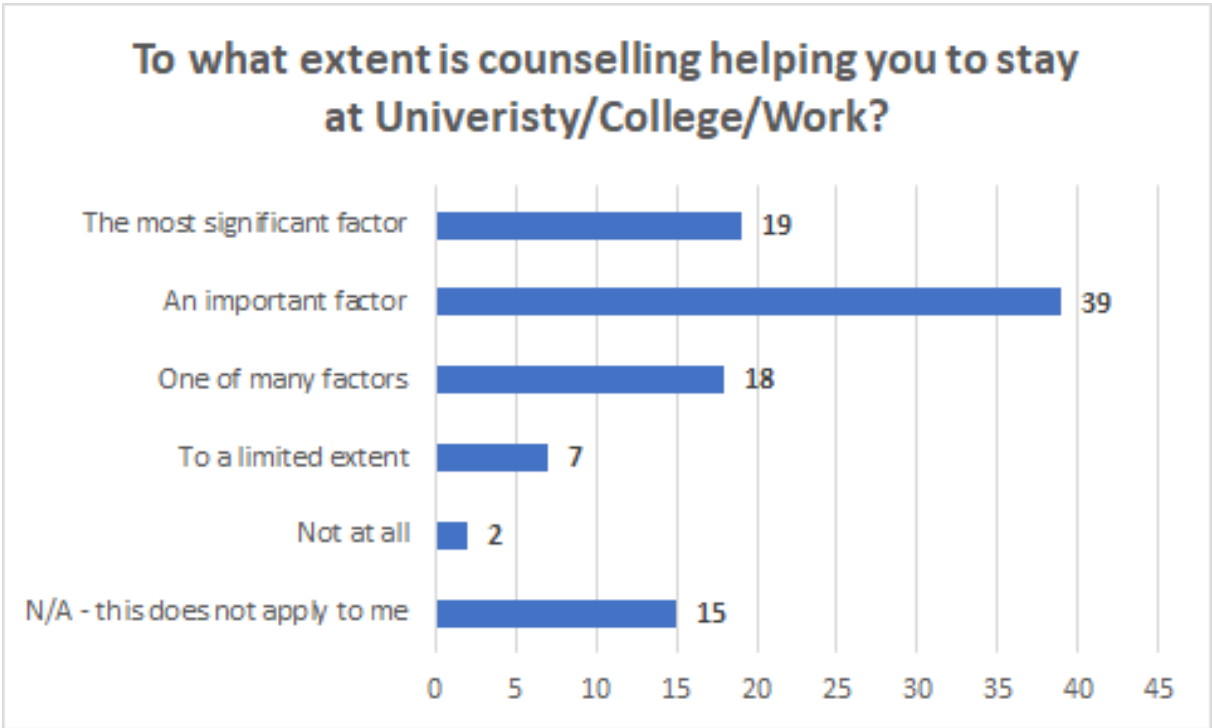
Bradford College

The University continues to work in partnership with the College to provide a counselling service for its students.

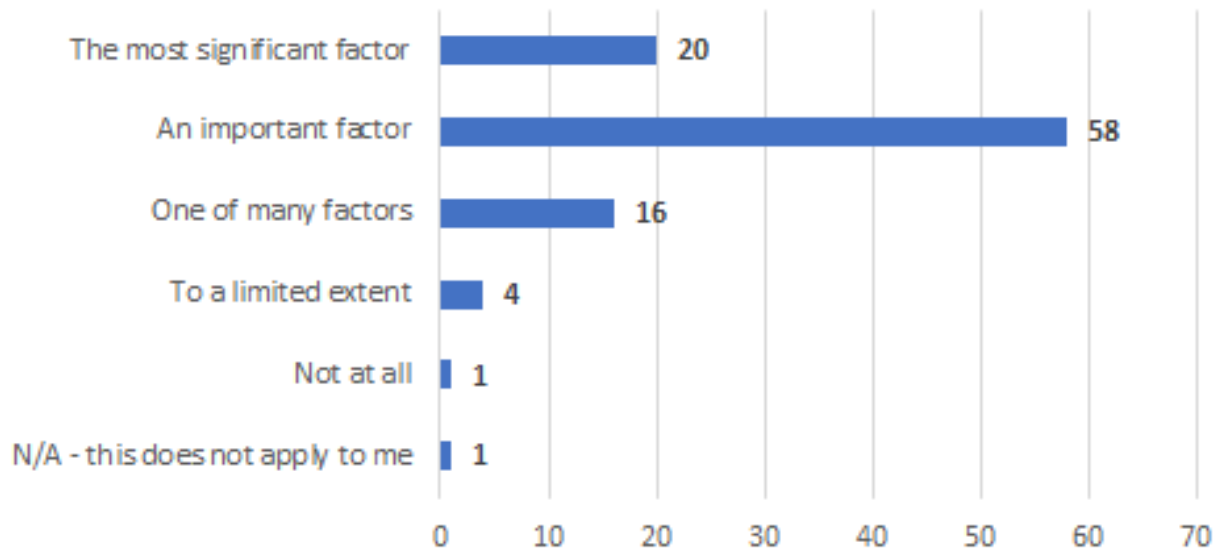
College student numbers: 101 students - 356 appointments offered:

Evaluation

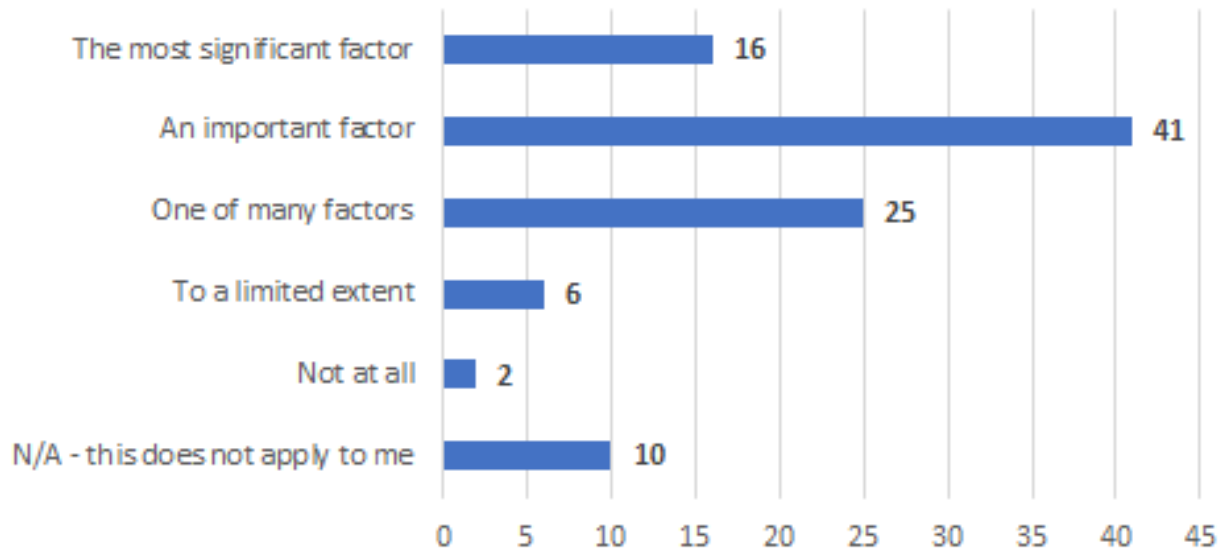
We continue to use the highly successful feedback postcards which are given to each client at the end of each contract. We also do a 'Snapshot' week twice a year where every client who uses the service that week is given a more extensive feedback form to complete. Attendees at all our workshops also complete a feedback post card.

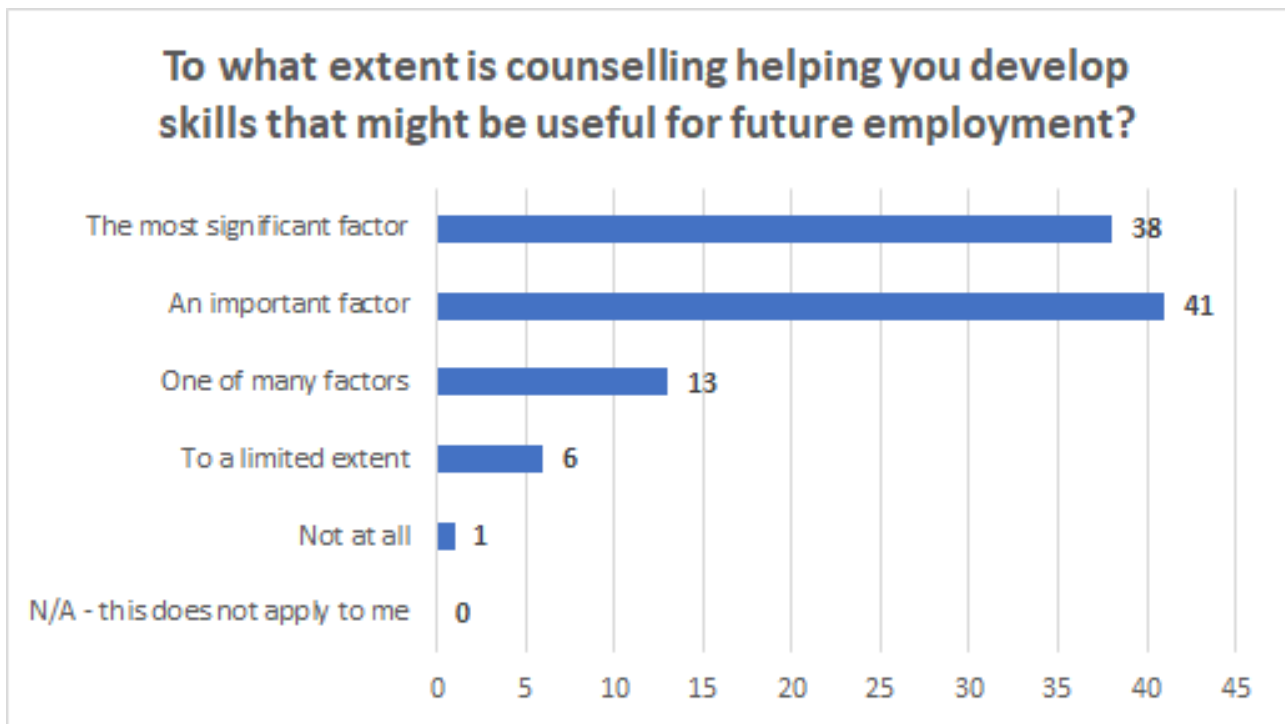


To what extent is counselling improving your overall experience of University/College/Work?



To what extent is counselling helping you do better in academic work/work?





Feedback comments

The comments we get on both the feedback postcards and snapshot week forms are overwhelmingly positive. Here are just few:

Excellent service provided by the University. Lauren was a great help in shining further light on my issues and was always understanding and approachable. Cannot recommend the service enough. Would like to continue work on this in the future.

Extremely helpful service, easy to access and lovely one to one. This has been greatly beneficial to keeping up with my studies and home life, as the support has been outstanding.

Safe environment to talk through anything, supportive and comfortable. Felt able to open up when I've not before

The sessions I had were really helpful, they have helped me to start making changes in my life to improve my mood and attitude towards myself and my academics. I have really felt like I have been heard in these sessions and things were well explained, this helped to get through my issues. I would just like to say a massive thank you for everything!

Gill has been superb. Listening and discussing any issues has been extremely useful. The change and improvement in my self has been huge and I have realised I have more emotional intelligence than before. In a weird way I have enjoyed my time and the sessions. The smell of the room was also very comforting.

Rich was very understanding and helped me with a more objective view of my problems. He has helped me progress and improve my way of thinking.

She made me feel like someone cared about me for the first time in a very long time. I know I am a shit person to talk to but she actually cared (or seemed to) I felt like I could trust her which is the first time I've trusted anyone in years. Thank you for everything.

A fantastic counsellor. I would recommend this service to anyone in need. Agnes has helped me in more ways than I could imagine!

Gosh! I think coming to the counselling centre was by far my greatest decision. My counsellor created a safe heaven and a trustworthy environment for me to open my inner battles and she was able to listen to my ugly cries of deep wound but also enlighten my thought process to better ways of handling situations, discomforts and achievements without shame. Thank you so much for these reasons.

The most useful service at UoB. Yvonne was an amazing guide for me and she provided me with indispensable tools to manage my anxiety and live a more balance life

The ability to re-engage with the counselling service whenever necessary has been truly invaluable and has meant I've been able to travel through what has been the most difficult period of my life to date. To be able to re-engage with a counsellor familiar to me was vitally helpful too (she really is at least one in a million)

Katy made me feel very at ease and comfortable, so I felt it was easy to share my worries and struggles. Found the text service very helpful.

Best service I've been to. Each session felt very reflective. Rich was very good at picking things up and a way of noticing the things not said and asked the right questions 10/10.

Phenomenal experience. In 3 sessions I have learned about myself. Also how to be mindful of others without silencing my voice.