**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

 UL STUDENT COUNSELLING AND WELLBEING SERVICE

**Welcome to UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service**

UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service provides psychological assistance in order to help students deal with personal issues that may be interfering with their life at University. We are a primary care mental health service offering short-term support and counselling. All counsellors are members of a professional organisation (i.e., PsSI[[1]](#footnote-1), IACP[[2]](#footnote-2), IAIHIP[[3]](#footnote-3), & PCHEI[[4]](#footnote-4)) and work in accordance with their relevant Code of Professional Ethics and Conduct.

The counselling service recognises and values the dignity and diversity of all students at the university and are committed to providing an inclusive service. We therefore strive to meet the needs of all regardless of age, gender, gender identity, disability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, ethnicity, or membership of the travelling community.

**Model of service and supports offered**

The counselling service runs a stepped care model of care. This means that support commences with the least intensive evidence-based intervention necessary to promote increased wellbeing. Step 1 offers a drop-in service, bibliotherapy, 1:1 support with a Psychologist Assistant, and occasional workshops. Step 2 offers short-term 1:1 counselling. Step 3 extends talk therapy in some circumstances following consultation with the Head/Deputy Head of Service. Step 4 is employed when a referral to specialist services is warranted.

**Confidentiality agreement**

UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service offers a **strictly confidential** service. We comply within the terms of confidentiality as laid down by PCHEI. This means that what you say stays within the service. Your personal details are not disclosed to anyone outside of the service without your permission. Where you give specific consent, we may liaise with other individuals or agencies to support your care. There are two circumstances in which UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service may need to break confidentiality and one circumstance where we are legally obliged to break confidentiality. We may break confidentiality if you disclose a risk of harm to yourself or harm to others. If the service believes that you or someone else is in danger of serious harm then we may take steps to minimise this danger and will discuss these steps with you where possible. We are legally obliged to break confidentiality if you disclose current child abuse (i.e., physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional abuse) or neglect. Such incidents must be reported to TUSLA (the Child and Family Agency). UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service will clearly articulate what this will mean for you should this happen.

**Consent to liaise with supports.**

Depending on your circumstances, it may be useful for members of the service to liaise with staff members of the university/campus to support you. Such staff members include but are not limited to: tutors; lecturers; placement co-ordinators; accommodation managers; student affairs; and student academic administration. The counselling service team will always discuss potential liaison with you in advance. Unless your safety is at risk, we will not liaise without your consent.

**Student data.**

UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service requires certain information from you in order to best provide you with our service. Required information is indicated on our intake form. Should you not provide this information, we will not be in a position to offer you a service. Required information includes:

**Personal information.**

This provides us with information about why you are attending. It also includes questions about your preferred name, pronouns, disability status, and any other services you might be using.

**Questionnaires (CORE[[5]](#footnote-5), CIAO[[6]](#footnote-6), CSI[[7]](#footnote-7) & Satisfaction Survey).**

Standardised questionnaires help us identify the symptoms you may be experiencing in relation to your difficulties. In addition, such questionnaires help the service identify the range and depth of difficulties specific to students.

* The CORE is an internationally-used measure for service users to rate aspects of their mental health. Items refer to wellbeing, issues faced, day-to-day functioning and risk to self or others. Your CORE answers help shape the conversations you have with us about what may best help you with your concerns.
* The CIAO is a set of questions designed to identify the impact of problems on academic achievement, university/course retention, and experience.
* The CSI is a set of questions designed to identify sources of stress academically, interpersonally, intrapersonally, or financially. An ‘other’ section permits the addition of a source of stress via freetext.
* The Satisfaction survey is a short questionnaire asking you to let us know what you think about the service.

The service conducts in-service audits. To achieve this, we utilise anonymised, numeric data provided by service users. We use this data for our own internal audits and annual reports. We also submit anonymised *aggregate* data to the PCHEI. This means that UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service strips data of all personally identifying information, collates it, and sends it to PCHEI to be combined with other third level anonymised numeric data for statistical analysis regarding third level mental health.

**Case-notes.**

The service maintains electronic case-notes on all clients. Doing so helps counsellors recall and think about each student’s personal situation. Access to this electronic database is provided only to authorised staff within the counselling service. Your personal data is collected and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and with the University's [Student Data Protection Privacy Notice](https://www.ul.ie/sites/default/files/corporatesecretary/Student%20Privacy%20Notice%20July%202020.pdf). Should you wish to access your file, you can formally request access to your personal data by making a [Data Protection Access request](https://www.ul.ie/sites/default/files/corporatesecretary/Data%20Protection%20Access%20Form.pdf) or a [Freedom of Information request.](https://www.ul.ie/corporatesecretary/information-and-compliance/freedom-information)

**Data retention.**

Personal data and case-notes are stored for 7 years in compliance with data regulations and the [UL records management policy](https://www.ul.ie/media/21262/download?inline). UL Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service currently holds data on a two-factor authenticated, password protected electronic database, on UL encrypted devices held within locked offices.

**Conditions of the Service**

**Accessing the Service.**

All students, new and returning, must initially attend one of the drop-in sessions to access the service. The service runs drop-in daily during term time, from 10am – 12pm. You do not need to register in advance, simply come along to CM073 during drop-in times. Online drop-in is reserved for students who are on placement, co-op, or studying in Europe. During drop-in, a Psychologist Assistant (PA) will meet with you in-person for approx. 10-15 minutes. The PA will briefly discuss your needs and what supports are available to you. Following this, and in consultation with the Head/Deputy Head of Counselling, you will be emailed an individualised support plan. This support plan may include self-help supports (e.g., Silvercloud online CBT programme), supported online Silvercloud CBT programmes, low level support with a PA, a once-off session, a further assessment session, ongoing one-to-one counselling, referral to internal/external supports, or information on external supports.

**Counselling Appointments.**

The service gets very busy, especially during term, and we often have a waiting list for counselling. Every effort will be made to see you as soon as possible. While waiting, you are welcome to avail of our online self-help Silvercloud programmes by simply going to https://ulselfhelp.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/ or Togetherall, an online peer support mental health platform, available at https://togetherall.com/en-gb/. As soon as an appointment becomes available, you will be called on the contact number you provided to us and offered an appointment. It is imperative that you inform us if your contact details change. You must be contactable by phone. We will make three attempts to contact you via the phone number you have provided. If you cannot be contacted on these three occasions, we will remove your name from the wait list. Please save our number, 061-202327, in your phone so you know it is us calling. However, you will be welcome to return to the drop-in service if you wish to access the service in the future.

Students will be allocated an appointment with the first available counsellor. Requests for specific counsellors cannot be accommodated. Prior to each session you will be sent a questionnaire. It is important to fill this out prior to every session.

**Cancellation Policy.**

Due to the demands on the service, cancelled appointments are counted towards your overall session allocation. If you wish to cancel your appointment you must you must give at least 24 hours notice by calling the main office on 061-202327 so that another waiting student can be offered a session. If you do not attend (without notice) two consecutive sessions, you will be discharged from the service and will have to return to drop-in should you wish to access the service again. This results in a return to a wait list during busy periods.

**Feedback and Complaints.**

We ask for feedback from all students who use the counselling service as it enables us to ensure a quality service. You will be sent an invitation to complete an online feedback questionnaire at the end of your engagement with the service.

In the event of a complaint regarding the counselling service, we encourage you to first bring it to the attention of your counsellor. If this is not possible or suitable, you can contact the Head of Counselling. Alternatively, you may express yourself via the [feedback link](https://unioflimerick.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eE96fyTzxBUJ9CR) on [Student Affairs website](https://www.ul.ie/student-affairs). Please check the [Student Complaints Policy and Procedure](https://www.ul.ie/provost/functions-processes/student-complaints) for further information.

1. PsSI: Psychological Society of Ireland [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. IACP: Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. IAHIP: Irish Association for Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. PCHEI: Psychological counselling in Higher Education Ireland [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. CORE: Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. CIAO: Counselling Impact on Academic Outcomes [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. CSI: College Stress Index [↑](#footnote-ref-7)