

Statement of Service

All students enrolled with Birmingham City University can request support from the Wellbeing Team which may include, where appropriate, the Counselling Service. The Service is professional, confidential and free of charge, and is available to enrolled BCU students 51 weeks of the year. A maximum of 6 sessions of counselling may be provided to a student in any one academic year.

The Counselling Service is available during the hours of 9am-5pm on weekdays only and does not provide a service at weekends, Bank Holidays, during the Christmas close-down or during the hours of 5pm – 9am.

Counselling by BCU Counsellors will always take place on University premises. Our counsellors do not make home visits.

Information about services outside the University can be found here on the [BCU website](#) and, for current students, on [iCity](#).

Counselling is a way of addressing problems by talking them through with someone who can be supportive, but who is not directly involved in the situation.

The Service offers the following types of counselling:

- Integrative
- Person-centred
- Psychodynamic
- Psychoanalytic psychotherapy

The Counselling Service at BCU is accredited by the British Association of [Counselling and Psychotherapy \(BACP\)](#) and adheres to the [BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions](#).

A counsellor will:

- give you an opportunity to talk in confidence about whatever is troubling you
- enable you to express your feelings
- help you to explore and understand your difficulties
- help you to find ways of managing these more effectively
- Although it might sometimes be appropriate to offer advice or guidance, the emphasis is very much on enabling you to make changes rather than on telling you what to do.

Counselling can help you deal with all kinds of issues, for example: anxiety, feeling depressed, low self-esteem, coming-out, grief and loss, trauma, and relationship difficulties whatever your background or sexual orientation.

If you might benefit from specialist interventions or advice, you'll be signposted to resources within the NHS or the wider community. This could involve an initial referral to our Mental Health Advisers within the Health and Wellbeing Service. Where we agree with you that we need to formally refer you to statutory mental health services we will use this link www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk/make-a-referral.

Confidentiality

A fundamental principle of counselling is that it is confidential. There are some exceptional situations when confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, and these are explained at the outset of counselling. Apart from these exceptions, counselling sessions are confidential and nothing you discuss is disclosed to anyone without your permission.

When using the Counselling Service, all students are asked to sign an agreement consenting to our confidentiality policy.

The electronic diary used by the Counsellors to arrange counselling sessions stores a record of your attendance for appointments and this is accessible to all Student Affairs staff. All Student Affairs staff have undertaken Data Protection Act training and are required to complete this training every 3 years.

As we are committed to monitoring and assessing the quality of our work, from time to time, clients may be asked to contribute to this process by completing a confidential evaluation questionnaire.

If you need copies of the records of your counselling sessions either whilst you are a student or after you leave BCU, please contact informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk to make a Data Protection Act subject access request. We keep records of students' counselling records for four years after their final appointment. Once this time has passed, the records are securely destroyed.

Our confidentiality policy can be found here on [iCity](#).

If you would like this information in a different format, please email sa.wellbeing@bcu.ac.uk or call 0121 331 7777.