

Information for Clients

The following information will assist you with any immediate questions or concerns you may have about your appointment and about the Service in general. If necessary, please talk to your counsellor about any of the information here and anything you need to know which is not mentioned.

Will my counsellor be professionally qualified?

All counsellors are professionally qualified Psychologists and are registered with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA). All counsellors spend considerable time maintaining and updating their professional skills in order to ensure a service of a high professional standard is maintained.

How long are appointments?

Counselling appointments last up to 50 minutes and usually start on the hour.

How many times will I need to come?

Given the counselling service operates from a brief therapy model, a student can be seen 3-4 sessions a trimester. The counsellors work predominantly from a Solution Focused Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Mindfulness and ACT backgrounds.

What if I can't keep my appointment?

If you are unable to keep an appointment please give as much notice as possible. Our phone number is 02 6773 2897 or email studentcounselling@une.edu.au. Normal reception hours are 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday.

My appointment is over Zoom, what if there is a problem with my computer?

For online and phone sessions, technology is not perfect and hence technical difficulties and delays can occur, eg sessions drop out. In that case, we will email you at your UNE email address or call you to determine the problem. If a connection is not possible on the day we will postpone to another suitable time.

Will my counselling session be confidential?

The counsellors are bound by a professional code of confidentiality. It is only under very extreme circumstances (e.g. to protect the personal safety of someone) that counsellors may be required to break confidentiality. This would be necessary in order to conform with certain legal/ethical requirements. As far as possible the counsellor would seek approval from you before doing this.

If you need your counsellor to consult with someone outside the service about your situation then your counsellor will ask you to sign a Release of Information form. Any letter written on your behalf will be emailed to you and you then take responsibility for who sees it. At times it may be necessary for your counsellor to discuss information about you with another UNE counsellor so that the best possible service can be provided.

All staff of the service are bound by a Confidentiality Undertaking which also covers them when they leave their position. Our staff give the utmost respect to your privacy at all times. If you have a particular concern about this, please discuss it with your counsellor.

What if the purpose of my visit is to ask for support for special exams, special consideration or special extension of time?

If you wish to be assessed for 'specials' please tell your counsellor early in your session. Counsellors assess each request on merit. You could be asked to seek support elsewhere.

Does my counsellor keep notes on me?

Yes, the counsellors make brief notes on each session which is kept in secure storage. Apart from helping to clearly remember your last session, the notes are a necessary reference if you ask your counsellor to write a letter on your behalf. These notes are only available to counselling staff and you may have access to notes kept about you.

The Health Records and Privacy Act 2002 (NSW) regulates the fair and responsible handling of health information and gives you the right to access your personal information (subject to some exceptions). If you need to access your file please speak with your counsellor. UNE is legally required to retain your information for 7 years or if you are under 18 years of age, until you attain the age of 25.

What happens if I need to see a counsellor urgently?

The counsellors will endeavour to see clients in distress on the same day, but this is not always possible as the Service is not a crisis-service. That said, the Service will respond to UNE critical incidents. If the matter is life threatening, please call 000. Please note that your regular counsellor might not be available for urgent or crisis appointments.

How is my relationship with a counsellor different from my relationship with a friend?

Within the counselling session there may be a high level of friendliness and closeness. However, counsellors do not have a friendships with clients outside the sessions as this may interfere with the counselling process and counsellors follow certain ethical principals.

Clients should not feel coerced by their counsellor into taking any particular action. Counsellors are non-judgmental and are prepared for you to discuss any issue, including concerns you may have about the counselling relationship.

Counsellors are not permitted to have romantic or sexual relationships with their clients.

What happens if I am not making progress?

Counselling is meant to be a positive experience and collaborative in nature. We encourage you to discuss the process, your progress and any concerns you may have with your counsellor. For example, if you are not happy with your progress there could be several reasons for this. If you think there is a mismatch of counsellor and client it is possible to change counsellors.

What if I need an assessment for legal purposes?

The Service does not provide "assessments" for legal purposes, but can provide a record of your contact with this Service.

In Conclusion

We hope the time spent with your counsellor will be beneficial.

We welcome your feedback or comments to improve our service to clients.

