

## **GCU London Counselling Service Scope of Care**

GCU Student Counselling Service provides a service for students who are experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties which are causing distress and may be hindering their personal and academic lives. The service aims to provide therapeutic support which will foster greater emotional wellbeing in students, enabling them to better meet their personal and academic aspirations.

The service has multiple roles:

1. Providing one to one therapeutic support for students.
2. Responding to referrals from the wider GCU community regarding students in high levels of distress or at risk.
3. Delivering psychoeducation to GCU staff and students to promote wellbeing and raise awareness of the range of support available within the GCU Wellbeing Service.

The therapeutic support is delivered through a brief therapy model of 6 sessions. This type of short-term therapy can help students work on addressing a particular issue they may be struggling with and find ways to resolve or effectively manage it, so that it has a lesser impact on their personal wellbeing and academic achievements. It may also provide a space for developing insights and expanding self-awareness more broadly, leading to a greater capacity for both personal growth and academic success.

Students who self-refer to the service will meet with a counsellor for an intake appointment to determine whether the available therapeutic support will be appropriate and sufficient for their needs. Students may be referred internally to other parts of the Student Wellbeing Service where it is deemed that these services can more effectively meet the needs and requirements of the student. Some students may require support which is beyond the scope of the Student Counselling Service and are signposted to external therapeutic services or crisis intervention support.

Students with the following clinical presentations and characteristics are more likely to require support and therapeutic interventions which are beyond the scope of the short-term therapy offered by the Student Counselling Service. The list provides examples of where this may be the case but is intended to be used as a guide rather than being a definitive list.

- Students who require more immediate practical help. Examples of this could be students who are:
  - Acting on suicidal thoughts and may need immediate support through emergency services instead (e.g. A&E services, or an emergency GP appointment).
  - Dealing with homelessness, or lack of physical safety (for example, if they are currently in an abusive relationship).
  - Distressed due to academic difficulties and require further academic support.
- Students who have needs which require longer-term psychotherapy, psychiatric, or specialised treatment. Examples of this could be:
  - Where a student's difficulties or concerns cannot be appropriately, safely or sufficiently addressed in six sessions.
  - An eating disorder which is currently at a level of severity which requires medical monitoring and/or inpatient treatment.

- Students who seek and/or require services which the Student Counselling Service does not provide. Examples of this could be:
  - Psychiatric inpatient or outpatient treatment.
  - Drug and alcohol de-toxification programmes and related therapeutic support.
  - Psychiatric or Disability assessments -the university does not provide these but can offer advice/referral to arrange externally. In the UK psychiatric care is provided through referral from your GP(doctor) who will assess whether this is appropriate. The GCU London wellbeing adviser can provide advice about whether a disability assessment referral is needed. Specialist services outside of the clinical expertise of the counselling staff, such as specialist trauma services.
  - Psychological assessments for selection, legal, or forensic purposes (e.g. litigation, employment purposes, care proceedings, etc.).
  
- Counselling also may not be the appropriate help for some students. Examples of this could be students who are:
  - Essentially seeking coping strategies or advice to help with management of symptoms – where support from a Mental Health Adviser may be more appropriate.
  - Seeking academic support – where contacting academic staff or may be more useful.
  - Seeking adjustments for disability needs – GCU London students with disability needs can discuss this with the GCU London wellbeing adviser or GCU London academic staff.
  - Struggling to engage with the counselling service (e.g., repeatedly missing appointments or multiple cancellations) and therefore may struggle to commit to attending all six sessions on a weekly basis.
  - Already attending therapy, as attending two forms of therapy simultaneously can be confusing and affect progress.
  - Seeking therapy only to acquire evidence to support other processes or applications (e.g. the Fit-to-Sit process, benefit claims, etc). The GCU London Wellbeing Advisor can provide support and advice in the first instance.

The GCU counselling service is also unable to work with students who are not currently residing in the UK, or who are not currently in the UK. All UK higher education providers are governed by UK law, but students living outwith the UK are subject to the laws in those countries. It is not feasible to expect knowledge of all the laws of each individual country/territory/state in order to be able to provide counselling ethically and lawfully.