

Mental health support at Goldsmiths

According to the Higher Education Policy Institute (Hepi) report, almost two-thirds of university students in the UK say their mental health is worse because of the Covid pandemic... and we're sure many of you will agree. The report found that the pandemic and changes to student life continued to have a significant impact on students' mental health.

At Goldsmiths SU we believe it's vital that you feel supported at *all* stages of your university life. We've put together a guide of the services available to students struggling with mental health difficulties within Goldsmiths, and further afield...

How does counselling work at Goldsmiths?

The Student Counselling Service offers free and confidential brief therapy for all Goldsmiths undergraduate and graduate students. The service is not an emergency crisis service. There is a waiting list for an initial assessment as well as for the first counselling appointment. Waiting times vary throughout the academic year.

Can you talk me through the stages?

The first stage involves an initial assessment during which a counsellor will discuss the best way in which the service can support you. The service at Goldsmiths offers short term one-to-one counselling and is also able to refer or signpost students to external services that offer longer term or specialist counselling. If a student is offered ongoing counselling, the counsellor will discuss the number of sessions that can be offered. Sessions are offered by both qualified and trainee counsellors.

How much counselling can you get?

Each counselling session will last 50 minutes and will normally take place at the same time each week. In mid April 2021, the service had received 451 self-referrals for counselling since 1 Sept 2020.

How long will you have to wait to get the support you need?

The waiting times fluctuate throughout the year. Their peak times are the end of term 1 and Term 2. Their current waiting times are 33 working days between receiving a referral and the initial counselling assessment.

The Wellbeing service: Who are they?

They're a friendly team of mental health professionals who are here to provide non-judgemental advice and support surrounding a variety of issues faced by

students throughout their time at university. If you've had depression, anxiety or any other mental-health related conditions which has had a substantial and ongoing impact on your studies (a year or more), you could be eligible for extra support and adjustments via the Disability Team. This could take the form of adjustments to teaching and learning and/or extra Assistive Technology, mentoring or study skills support. To find out more, please talk to the disability team. [ADD LINK](#).

How can they help you?

Lots of ways, including:

- Developing a Wellbeing Plan and/or a Staying Safe Plan
- With advice on managing workload when affected by mental health symptoms and traumatic experiences
- Advice on university processes including extenuating circumstances and taking a break from studies
- Linking in with a doctor or GP including urgent referrals
- Helping you navigate mental health services
- Support around gender based violence issues including domestic and sexual violence
- Referring and signposting to internal and external specialist services

What do they offer?

- Support and advice to all students who are experiencing personal or emotional difficulties, who may be struggling to cope at university or just need someone to talk to
- A confidential, safe space to talk
- Access to the University counselling service
- Self-help resources
- Information on wellbeing workshops and events
- Advice about Goldsmiths systems that aim to support students when their circumstances affect studies (such as extenuating circumstances)
- Advice about obtaining suitable medical evidence for extenuating circumstances or support from the Disability Team

What can't they offer?

They're not an emergency service, though they do respond to crisis situations where they can and where The Wellbeing Advisers will not be able to:

- Provide a medical diagnosis (students to go to their G.P for this)
- Provide medical evidence to your department (Unless you can provide a letter from your health practitioner that you consent to be shared)
- Provide medication advice
- Provide therapy

- Deal with enquiries for Disability (unless mental health related)
- Provide evidence for Extenuating Circumstances applications

And what about external support?

The NHS offers short-term [counselling](#) with a focus on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). In CBT you will be encouraged to look at thoughts and behavioural patterns that are distressing to you and/or hinder parts of your life, and how to implement techniques that change these patterns on a day to day basis.

NHS therapy can be as short as six weeks or as long as 20, but generally it lasts around 12 weeks. The waiting list for NHS counsellors can be very long as demand is high - a common time is three months, but due to mental health cuts and pressure on the NHS, waiting times of over a year are not unheard of.

You don't need a GP to refer you for NHS counselling - you can refer yourself, with the support of the Goldsmiths Wellbeing Adviser team if this would be helpful for you.