

## Job Description

<b>Job title</b>	University Counsellor
<b>School / department</b>	Student Services
<b>Grade</b>	6
<b>Line manager</b>	Senior Counsellor
<b>Responsible for</b>	Temporary staff

### Main purpose of the job

This is a key role within the Wellbeing team to support and contribute to a professional and specialist counselling service to students. Responsibilities will include:

- Offering a pro-active, responsive, specialist counselling and referral service to all University students experiencing a wide range and degree of emotional and psychological difficulty thus supporting student retention, widening participation, academic achievement, academic participation and progression.
- Providing front-line assessment, support and referral for students with acute and chronic serious mental health difficulties, including students at credible risk of suicide and harm to self or others thus supporting and ensuring the University fulfils its duty of care and related legal obligations.
- To communicate and proactively work with the student community, academic schools and professional departments to foster engagement and an understanding of services provided within Student Services.

### Key areas of responsibility

#### Provision of support, referral and liaison

- Provide a responsive, confidential and specialist counselling service to students and make clinical decisions by assessing all relevant factors with a range of difficulties including: depression, anxiety, stress, exam panic, suicidal ideation, self-harm, transition issues, eating disorders, relationship issues, addictions, identity conflicts, bereavement and other difficulties and refer to external specialist services as and when necessary to support the individual needs.
- Assess student referral forms, complete initial assessments and use specialist knowledge and judgement to agree the most appropriate intervention and agreed amount of therapeutic sessions.
- Manage an on-going caseload of clients using a range of contracts including; brief solution-focused counselling, longer-term, intermittent and crisis counselling.
- Provide counselling using a wide range of therapeutic modalities such as person-centred therapy, psychodynamic therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, solution focused brief therapy and motivational interviewing.
- Respond to emergencies and consultation requests from other members of the service and the wider institution, regarding students who are experiencing mental health crises and liaise with the Senior Mental Health Adviser who may need immediate referral/intervention.
- Provide front-line assessment, support and referral for students with acute and chronic serious mental health issues; including students at credible risk of suicide and harm to self or others.
- Undertake and deliver group work and student workshops as appropriate, according to service need and specialist skills in this area.

- Understand and implement the Counselling Service's Code of Confidentiality and make appropriate and timely decisions about whether to breach this code in cases where the individual may be at risk of serious harm, where there might be criminal implications, or where the department and University may become legally liable.
- Keep accurate, systematic records of counselling sessions and ensure compliance with the Service's code of confidentiality, professional standards and the Data Protection Act and the GDPR.
- Maintain and keep accurate statistical information for the purposes of annual service reports and service development.
- Liaise as appropriate with external referral agencies, internal referral points, the University's senior management, solicitors, courts of law and tribunal. To liaise with GPs and other external mental health teams – for example community psychiatric services, social workers and psychotherapy organisations, regarding referral and treatment plans of shared clients.
- Where appropriate, to refer students to other areas within Student Services, to other University support services, or to external agencies/Support Workers.
- Liaise with appropriate academic and other relevant staff to support widening participation and access, academic progress and student retention.
- Participate in recruitment events as required.

## **CLINICAL**

- Provide a systematic time-limited assessment and counselling / psychological therapy service to students with defined common mental health difficulties within the University Counselling Service.
- Exercise autonomous professional responsibility for the assessment, treatment and endings of counselling clients whose problems are managed by psychologically based care plans or external therapeutic support.
- When necessary, arrange onward referral of clients to other therapeutic services or support agencies (GP, Specialist Therapeutic Services, Charities, etc.)
- When necessary, liaise with voluntary organisations, external support agencies and mental health agencies over service user care, on-going support and progression
- Use analytical and judgement skills across complex presenting facts or situations in devising an appropriate response and therapeutic intervention.
- Attend regular line management meetings with the Senior Counsellor and Wellbeing Team Meetings, in addition to attending external clinical supervision
- Provide appropriate counselling/psychological interventions and undertake Risk Assessment and Management in accordance with UWL's Counselling Service and Risk Monitoring Policies.
- Communicate in a skilled and sensitive manner information concerning the assessment, formulation and treatment plans of clients under your care and to monitor and evaluate progress; share all information such as therapeutic care plans with service users at all times in line with UWL's Counselling Service Policy.

- Be flexible about working between University sites when necessary and be responsible for the provision of administrative and personal resources when undertaking therapeutic interventions at different sites
- In liaison with the line manager, coordinate and plan workloads within the Counselling team to ensure that provision of support to students is of a high standard and that students are assessed and seen within a reasonable time period during peak times.
- Actively participate in regular formal peer supervision meetings to ensure high professional standards and ethics and compliance with competency frameworks.

### **INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

- Attendance and participation at regular counselling team meetings in order to share clinical expertise, provide peer support and discuss individual caseloads, clinical dilemmas and issues around ethics and good practice as well as regularly review the general operation and development of the Service.
- Attendance at clinical supervision session both internal and external.
- Work and liaise as appropriate with academic and other departmental staff on behalf of students and the institution, offering a professional consultation service regarding students of serious concern and / or at academic risk.
- Use effective communication skills, both oral and written, to deal efficiently, effectively and tactfully with people at all levels.
- Disseminate all relevant information to the University community in an appropriate and timely manner and document all key processes and procedures.
- Participate in University meetings as required, including working groups, conferences, etc.

### **STRATEGIC INPUT**

- Promote institutional awareness of the counselling service.
- Play an active role in the promotion of the Counselling Service to students and staff, improving access and understanding by providing talks to students and staff groups and representing the Counselling Service in University events such as open days, international students orientation, induction etc.
- Contribute to the University's response to major changes or world events that impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the University's students.
- Represent the University of West London at regional and national events and professional interest groups as required and to report back any findings and issues to the University community.
- Provide information for University publications, including prospectuses, booklets, leaflets and web-based information and contribute to the writing and production of a range of publications and guidance for students and staff for the Counselling Service.
- Work collaboratively as part of Student Services to ensure high service standards to students and to lead on service developments and improvements initiatives.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- Deliver a safe and effective service by actively working within the policies and procedures of the counselling service, with particular reference to procedures for working with those students at risk of harm to self or other and /or suicide.
- Understand the University's obligations and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act, Equality Act 2010 and to act in accordance with the Act.
- At all times to carry out your responsibilities with due regard to the University's Equal Opportunities Policy
- Be aware of, and comply with, the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act at all times.
- Adhere to all of the University's procedures and policies.
- At all times to help maintain a safe working environment by attending training as necessary and following the University's health and safety codes of practice and policy.
- Maintain links with external specialist groups, keeping up to date with developments in policy and practice. Monitor and contribute to relevant counselling mail base groups such as BACP-UC jiscmail.

## **SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE**

It is essential that the person appointed has, and is willing to work towards achieving, the following knowledge:

- Ensure a professional and effective standard of clinical practice by working within the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) ethical framework; maintaining a pro-active approach to continuous professional development; and keeping abreast with changes and developments within the field of student counselling.
- Ensure one's own professional competence, fitness to practice and clinical standards by effective use of regular clinical supervision.
- Maintain and develop links with external counselling organisations such as BACP UC (University and College Counselling Services), BACP, BPS (British Psychological Society) and UKCP (United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy).
- Undertake and be supported with regular training and continuing professional development in order to keep abreast of changes and developments in the field of counselling, and to ensure compliance with professional competency frameworks which require 30-50hrs minimum of CPD per year in order to maintain registration.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of BACP guidelines, policies, procedures and working practices within an education environment.

In addition to the above areas of responsibility the position maybe required to undertake any other reasonable duties relating to the broad scope of the position.

### Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
<p><b>Qualifications and/or membership of professional bodies</b></p>	<p>Diploma or higher qualifications in counselling/psychotherapy</p> <p>Accreditation/Registration with British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy BACP, UKCP or other relevant professional body</p> <p>Evidence of training and continuous professional development</p> <p>At least 2 years post-qualifying experience of providing individual counselling or psychotherapy</p>	<p>Post-qualification training in one or more additional specialised therapeutic areas such as CBT, Solution Focused Brief Therapy or Motivational Interviewing.</p>
<p><b>Knowledge and experience</b></p>	<p>Knowledge of and adherence to the BACP (or equivalent) Ethical framework for Good Practice in Counselling &amp; Psychotherapy</p> <p>Proven ability to provide short term solution focused counselling within a multi-modality service.</p> <p>Proven ability to carry out therapeutic assessment and discern suitability for short term counselling and or other interventions</p> <p>Ability to draw on an evidence base in choice of interventions such as CORE, PHQ9, GAD 7.</p> <p>Demonstrable understanding of confidentiality and equality/diversity issue</p> <p>Proven ability to keep up to date with legislation and working knowledge of current counselling legislation, policy and procedures, particularly within an educational institution</p> <p>Well-developed skills in the ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, complex and clinically sensitive information to clients and professional colleagues both within and outside of UWL.</p>	<p>Understanding of the organisation and ethos of a post 16 education institution and the implications on support services</p> <p>Experience of working in an educational establishment in a therapeutic helping role</p> <p>Experience of assessing clinical risk in the context of common mental health problems.</p> <p>Experience of managing an independent and specialist caseload.</p> <p>Knowledge of more than one model of intervention and the ability to choose and apply different interventions.</p> <p>Familiarity with mental health issues in the field of education counselling</p> <p>Be knowledgeable in Conflict Resolution and Mediation</p>

	Knowledge of specialist organisations and referral agencies for individuals with specific issues	
<b>Specific skills to the job</b>	Experience of providing counselling to individuals from a range of cultural groups	
<b>General skills</b>	<p>Ability to plan and prioritise own workload based on the day to day requirements of the counselling service and making efficient and effective use of the resources available to own area of work and within the Wellbeing Services.</p> <p>Computer literate with windows based products as communication and management tools, e.g. Microsoft Word and Excel</p> <p>Proven ability to work and communicate effectively within a multi-disciplinary team and wider university setting</p> <p>Ability and willingness to learn new systems and skills and disseminate where appropriate</p> <p>Ability to show attention to detail and produce work and documentation of high quality</p> <p>Excellent interpersonal and communication skills</p> <p>Self-motivated, with a flexible approach to work and working hours</p> <p>Excellent problem solving ability and analytical skills</p> <p>Able to use initiative</p> <p>Commitment to providing an excellent and proactive customer focused service</p>	<p>Able to think strategically</p> <p>Experience of analysing data.</p> <p>Experience of providing training and development</p>
<b>Other</b>		
<b>Disclosure and Barring Scheme</b>	This post requires an enhanced DBS check	

**Essential Criteria** are those, without which, a candidate would not be able to do the job. Applicants who have not clearly demonstrated in their application that they possess the essential requirements will normally be rejected at the shortlisting stage.

**Desirable Criteria** are those that would be useful for the post holder to possess and will be considered when more than one applicant meets the essential requirements.