

Counselling Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Oxford Brookes Student Counselling Service is one part of the broader Wellbeing provision within the University. Wellbeing services include: Counselling; Disability; Dyslexia/SpLD; Non-medical help; Student Welfare; Equality Adviser; Mature Student Adviser; Transitions and Multifaith Chaplaincy.

Wellbeing staff are committed to ensuring that your confidentiality is protected in line with this policy and have undergone training on the requirements of Data Protection and Confidentiality and are subject to sanction for any breaches of confidentiality both from the University as their employer and their Professional Registration Body.

The Counselling Service is bound by University's own regulations, the Law of the Land, Statutory Regulations and by The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework.

Counsellors work as part of the Wellbeing multi-disciplinary team to ensure that you receive a comprehensive, integrated and professional response to enable you to achieve successful completion of your course. Where we feel it would be useful, and/or of benefit to your wellbeing we will share relevant information about your contact with different areas of Wellbeing: this helps us provide you with a joined-up service and avoids duplication. Information is only shared within Wellbeing, and on a strictly need-to-know basis. You may withhold your permission for us to share information in this way so that your contact with us is kept confidentially within the Counselling Service. However, this might affect the level of support Wellbeing as a whole is then able to offer you.

The information you share with us is held confidentially within Wellbeing. We will not reveal anything about you, your attendance, or discussions in appointments, to anyone outside of Wellbeing unless you give your consent in writing. In very exceptional circumstances, we may take a decision to disclose information without our consent. These circumstances are:

1. If we believe that there is a serious risk to your safety or the safety of another person, we may contact University colleagues or external services such as a GP or mental health team. Whenever possible we will discuss this with you and seek your permission to share information, but in some circumstances we may have to proceed without your consent.
2. When the member of staff/service could be liable to civil or criminal court procedure if the information is not disclosed e.g. if you informed us that you were involved in criminal activity, knew about an act of terrorism etc.

Decisions to disclose information without your consent will be authorised by a senior member of staff within Wellbeing. Any information that is shared would be kept to a minimum, and shared only on a 'need to know' basis.. A record of the disclosure will be retained as part of your case file which you are entitled to see in accordance with the provisions of UK Data Protection Law

Even if you have restricted the sharing of information to the Counselling Service team the above exceptions to confidentiality will still apply.

If you see a counsellor as part of the help you receive, he or she will talk about their work to their own personal supervisor, who is also bound by the same rules of confidentiality.

Counsellors keep brief written notes as a professional and service requirement. All records, including this form, are kept securely and in accordance with the requirements of UK Data Protection Law.

Details of your contact with us do not appear on your academic record.

When you register online you will be asked to confirm that you have read, understood and agree to the confidentiality statement.

When you meet with or speak to a member of our team they will confirm your agreement to this policy and discuss any concerns you may have about information sharing.

If you have any concerns about confidentiality before your register please contact the Wellbeing reception on 01865 484 650