

What can you expect from counselling?

When you attend counselling you can expect a professional, responsive and respectful service. Our counsellors are fully qualified and experienced psychologists and social workers with extensive knowledge and understanding of the personal, family and work problems of students and staff.

A counsellor can assist you to gain a clearer understanding of whatever problem you have, and identify appropriate strategies or options for you to consider. Counsellors aim to be sensitive to issues of cultural diversity.

Counsellors do not give advice but help you to explore alternatives so that you can make the best possible decisions for yourself. They aim to be independent, good listeners, and not blame or pass judgements.

Counselling through this service is not intended to be on a long term basis. Given the high demand for counselling, we provide short to medium term assistance, often with appointments spaced apart to give you the chance to try out changes.

Counselling works by an appointment system. Dropping in at the service in the hope that you can see a counsellor straight away may lead to frustration. In most cases you will need to contact the service ahead and book an appointment.

Who can use the service?

Students and Staff of the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts are eligible. Family, partners, and friends can attend counselling sessions if you and the counsellor agree it would be helpful.

What does it cost?

Counselling is free to all eligible clients.

Making an Appointment

You can make an appointment by visiting our reception desk, or by telephoning during normal business hours.

Demand for counselling is high during semesters and the waiting time for an initial appointment may be a few weeks. The waiting time may sometimes feel long, but in comparison to other Universities and other low cost community counselling agencies, it is relatively short. To get a counselling appointment in a Community Health Centre for example, the wait can be up to six months.

Once you have made an appointment it can help for you to think about the sort of changes you are hoping for, so you can begin to discuss these when you come to counselling.

At your first appointment, you will be asked to fill in a brief registration card outlining your personal details, and provided with material on privacy and management of personal information. Your counsellor will meet you in the waiting room at the time of your appointment and you will then be able to talk with them in their office. Most appointments last for about fifty minutes.

Cancellation of Appointments

If you are unable to attend a scheduled appointment, it is important to notify the service as soon as possible, and a minimum 24 hours beforehand. The appointment can then be reallocated to someone else.

Waiting Lists

We maintain a waiting list when there is more than two week's wait for initial appointments. In most cases, we are able to offer clients a time earlier than their initial appointment, due to others rescheduling their times.

Emergencies

Emergencies will be attended to as soon as possible. A telephone answering service operates when the service is closed. For emergencies out of hours, crisis phone services are available: Life Line on 131114, and Crisis Line on 136 169.

On Call

For people who wish to be seen urgently, shorter appointments (called “on call”) are offered at specific times each day. These do not require a booking, but there are limited places and they are offered on a first come, first serve basis. Please contact us to find out the on call hours on a particular day.

External Referrals

In some cases, you and the counsellor may agree that a more specialised external organisation or individual will better address your needs. An appropriate referral will be recommended. The counsellor will give you between one to three referral options for you to consider, depending on the issue.

Group Programs

Each semester a number of groups are offered by the Counselling Service. If you are interested in attending, please contact us. Information about current groups can be found on our website.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Refer to our privacy statement (handout) and our website. This is a confidential service and clinical information is not disclosed without your consent. The only exception is when it is necessary to protect you or someone else from imminent harm

**University of Melbourne
Counselling Service
138-146 Cardigan Street
Carlton
8344 6927 or 8344 6928
www.services.unimelb.edu.au/counsel**