



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
A College of Queen's University Belfast

## **Stranmillis University College – Counselling Service Strategy: 2007/09**

### **1.1 Aims and Objectives of the Service**

The Counselling Service at Stranmillis University College has close links with the Counselling Service at Queen's University and students may avail of the free Service either at Stranmillis or at QUB.

The remit of the Student Counselling Service is to contribute to the enhancement of student experience by promoting and encouraging positive mental health and wellbeing and by supporting students to reach their full academic potential.

The primary aim of the Counselling Service is to provide a high quality, free, confidential counselling service to students of Stranmillis University College. The secondary aim is to promote the development of emotional and mental wellbeing of Stranmillis University College students and those who support them.

### **1.2 Operational Objectives of the Service**

- 1.2.1 To provide an impartial, professional and confidential psychological support service that will assist students in addressing difficulties or issues that negatively impact on academic performance, quality of life and student retention rates.
- 1.2.2 To ensure that all potential clients know about the service.
- 1.2.3 To provide a service delivery system that is easily accessed by all students.
- 1.2.4 To evaluate and monitor the Counselling Service and pursue a policy of continuous improvement.
- 1.2.5 To pay attention to best practice in terms of service ethos ie that espoused by BACP/AUCC/IAUCC.
- 1.2.6 To create and maintain consultative links with other functions within the Student Support Centre as well as with academic departments, and other relevant University College departments and QUB.
- 1.2.7 To act as a referral service linking students to other University College and Community Services as appropriate.
- 1.2.8 To provide counselling and psycho-educational programmes/workshops and consultation services to students.
- 1.2.9 To maintain a programme of continuous professional development/supervision arrangements as required for accreditation by appropriate professional bodies.
- 1.2.10 To address student needs by liaising with the student body.
- 1.2.11 To ensure that client and counsellor safety is maintained.
- 1.2.12 To raise issues and provide information to management and staff on policy, law and social change that affects counselling.

## 2 Quality Standards

These Quality Standards will underpin the meeting of the above objectives.

### *Objective 1.2.1*

*To provide an impartial, professional and confidential psychological support service that will assist students in addressing difficulties or issues that negatively impact on academic performance, quality of life and student retention rates.*

#### Quality Standards

- Counselling is provided by professional staff qualified to BACP/IACP standards.
- Interviews by appointment with a Counsellor at the Student Support Centre within 5 working days.
- Emergency/Crisis interviews within 24 hours.
- 50 mins minimum time to be available to the client on a one-to-one basis in a confidential and private setting.
- Contract of the working relationship to be agreed in accordance with BACP guidelines.
- Follow-up interviews to be offered and/or referral to other agencies.
- Depending on student demand, reviews to be held at end of each 6 session period with the option to extend the contract further.

### *Objective 1.2.2*

*To ensure that all potential clients know about the service.*

#### Quality Standards

- Information about the Counselling Service to be included in all induction material.
- Posters to be displayed in relevant areas.
- Pamphlets and flyers to be distributed.
- Counsellor to attend appropriate induction meetings for new students and staff.
- Opening times well publicised.
- Updated web pages, and regular e-mail postings to all students and staff.
- High visibility for Counselling Service in the University College.

### *Objective 1.2.3*

*To provide a service delivery system that is easily accessed by all students.*

#### Quality Standards

- Annual review of Counselling Service publicity.
- Use of varied appointment times during the day including during lunchtime to accommodate the needs of students.
- Active collaboration with the International Officer, Widening Access office, Careers Service, Accommodation/Halls, Students' Union, Occupational Health other University College Departments, and associated services at QUB which provide services to students.

### *Objective 1.2.4*

*To evaluate and monitor the Counselling Service and pursue a policy of continuous improvement.*

#### Quality Standards

- Evaluation of service by clients.
- Responses to urgent cases within 24 hours.

- Regular monitoring of reception staff arrangements regarding the booking of appointments and dealing with queries including those of a routine or emergency nature.
- Use of Inform database to record and monitor service usage.
- Supervision for Counsellor in accordance with BACP/IACP requirements.
- Development Days – in accordance with BACP/IACP requirements.

*Objective 1.2.5*

*To pay attention to best practice in terms of service ethos ie that espoused by BACP/AUCC/IAUCC.*

Quality Standards

- The Counsellor meets with clients in ways that respect the client's values.
- The Counsellor acts with integrity and adheres to the BACP ethical framework for good practice in counselling and psychotherapy.
- Counselling is carried out by professionally qualified staff.
- Ongoing monitoring of the suitability of interview rooms with regard to privacy, confidentiality and atmosphere.

*Objective 1.2.6*

*To create and maintain consultative links with other functions within the Student Support Centre as well as with academic departments, other relevant University College departments and QUB.*

Quality Standards

- Attendance at staff team meetings to promote the Counselling Service.
- Attendance at any support groups (including those at QUB) to which invited.
- Marketing/promotional workshops/presentations to student groups on counselling and the Counselling Service as requested.

*Objective 1.2.7*

*To act as a referral service linking students to other University College and Community Services as appropriate.*

Quality Standards

- Annual review of how to refer clients to external agencies.
- Annual update of referral agency details.

*Objective 1.2.8*

*To provide counselling and psycho-educational programmes/workshops and consultation services to students.*

Quality Standards

- Regular organised programmes/workshops as appropriate.

*Objective 1.2.9*

*To maintain a programme of continuous professional development/supervision arrangements as required for accreditation by appropriate professional bodies.*

#### Quality Standards

- Attendance at specialised training courses eg those run by IAUCC or AUCC.
- Annual programme of CPD activities in accordance with accreditation requirements.
- Attendance at professional sessions in accordance with BACP/AUCC ethical guidelines.

#### *Objective 1.2.10*

*To address student needs by liaising with the student body.*

- Regular liaison between staff, student representatives and the Student Union body.
- Frequently updated promotional materials and displays on counselling issues and services.

#### *Objective 1.2.11*

*To ensure that client and counsellor safety is maintained.*

#### Quality Standards

- Caseloads managed at an appropriate load in accordance with BACP/AUCC guidelines.
- Appropriate insurance cover for Counsellors.
- Reception cover at all times counselling is taking place.
- Regular supervision of Counsellor.

#### *Objective 1.2.12*

*To raise issues and provide information to management and staff on policy, law and social change that affects counselling.*

#### Quality Standards

- Attendance at appropriate management and policy meetings.
- Input on staff development days and workshops when requested.
- Annual review of regular/routine links with organisations and agencies related to counselling, eg BACP, QUB Counselling Service.