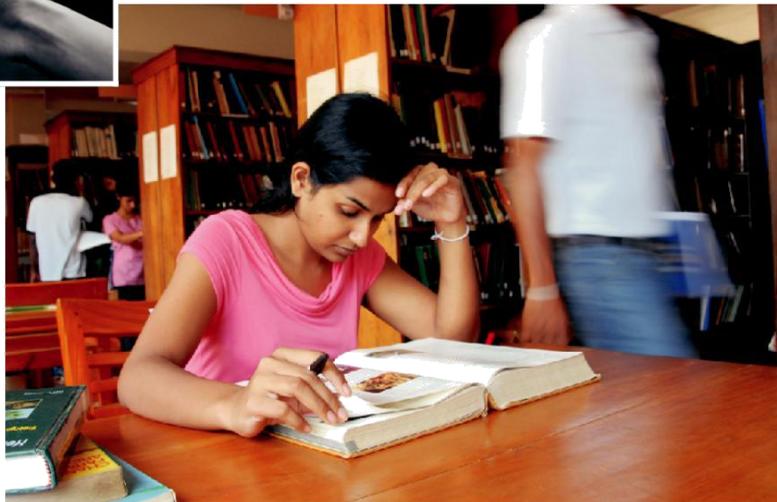




**Your path to
a successful
future...**



Counselling

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What is counselling?

Counselling is a collaborative process whereby the counsellor and client work together to try to identify, understand and resolve the issue(s) causing concern. (<http://www.une.edu.au/counselling>).

Counselling also attempts to empower a client to face present and future problems and challenges confidently.

Who is a counsellor?

“The counsellor’s role is to facilitate the client’s work in ways which respect the individuality of the client, confidentiality, the client’s values, personal resources and capacity for self-determination”. (British Association for Counselling, 1992)





Commonly held myths and realities about counseling

Myth	Reality
<p>Everyone should be able to solve their own problems. You only need to see a counsellor if you can't cope.</p>	<p>Deciding to discuss your problems with a counselor doesn't mean you're unable to cope. Many people see a counsellor to help them sort something out that's worrying them, often because they don't feel they want to worry or burden their family.</p>
<p>You only need to see a counsellor if you have an unsolvable problem or have been abused or something has happened to you.</p>	<p>Many people need someone to confide in, not just those who have difficult issues to deal with or have been abused. Counselling is a way of helping yourself to deal with things that are getting on top of you or are getting in the way of living your life.</p>
<p>A good counsellor will tell you what to do and sort out your life for you.</p>	<p>The role of a counsellor is not to tell you how to run your life. Good counsellors listen, support and challenge, so that you're able to come up with your own solutions.</p>
<p>You should be able to cope. Why should you want to tell someone about your private business?</p>	<p>Turning to a counsellor for confidential support and advice about private worries or concerns can be the most helpful and reassuring option for someone to take. A counsellor offers you confidentiality, genuineness and unconditional acceptance and helps you to look at things more clearly - very often when you are in the middle of a situation or crisis, you 'can't see the wood for the trees' and someone without any agenda or involvement in the friends and family network can be invaluable</p>

*Source: British Association for counselling and Psychotherapy,
(Company limited) <http://www.bacp.co.uk/education/whatiscounselling.html>*

When should you see a counsellor?

Your personal and social life influence on the academic achievements. As an undergraduate at the university, you may face many new issues, experiences, relationships, disruptions, challenges, stresses while adapting to your independent life from home. This is the peak time of your personal change and development. Therefore, you may want to talk to a counsellor under following circumstances:

Academic issues

- Difficulty with the medium of instruction (Language difficulty)
- Frustrations regarding the study programme (due to loss of expected degree programme)
- Time management/workloads Exam anxiety/exam phobia
- Poor Performance (Inadequate GPA)
- Support for repeat examinations, special exams, examination time tables
- Support for learning techniques.
- Difficulty in selecting your specialization



Personal issues

- Home sickness; staying away from home for the first time.
- Financial difficulties.
- Concerns about finding partners.
 - Major life changers; freedom and taking individual responsibilities.
- Coping with stress.
- Managing relationships and coping with love affairs.
- Difficult colleagues / roommates.
- Problem solving or decision making.
- Dealing with a sudden crisis.
- Low self-esteem and personality problems.
- Loss and grief due to death or separation of immediate family members.
- Domestic violence or sexual abuse.
- Student intimidation and harassment.
- Psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression or phobias.



Are there any alternatives to counselling?

Some people don't feel like talking to someone else about themselves or their personal problems. For them, it may be more beneficial to work through their issues in other ways such as by joining a music or art therapy session or taking a course of study relevant to their problem, for examples; stress management, time management, building self-esteem, conflict transformation and assertiveness training.

If the issue or problem is clear to you, you can also try to use self-help instructions appropriate for your problem and test the relief.

People who are experiencing similar problems, such as cancer, leukemia and other serious illnesses meet to discuss common issues and problems to manage their stress. Some people get some form of relief by visiting and relaxing in religious places or attending in religious activities.



Types of services provided by counsellors

- Individual counselling.
- Couple and group counselling sessions.
- Telephone/Skype counselling after office hours.
- Workshops and seminars relevant to specific issues.
- Academic guidance.
- Providing some reading materials.
- Referral to other services (within the university or outside).

Selecting a suitable counsellor for you

Here's no clear answer to this question. Many people from different backgrounds and with various qualifications work as counsellors. Therefore, it is important to find the right counsellor for your situation according to your analysis. It may be advisable to attend a session and make your decision within the university as the service is free for you.

Things to be considered before choosing a counsellor

Depending on your culture, way of thinking and personality you may consider some of the following things before choosing a counsellor.

- Whether you like a male or female counsellor.
- The counsellor's culture and mother tongue.
- The counsellor's area of specialty.
- The counsellor's qualifications and experience.
- Counsellor's image among the student community.

A good counsellor will:

- Believe in you.
- Respect you and allow you to work through your experiences and emotions.
- Be able to respectfully challenge your perceptions or position when it's necessary.
- Have faith in your ability to work through your problems.
- Allow you to make your own choices and respect your decisions.
- Be trustworthy and sensitive.
- Provide you with the information you need.
- Be happy to discuss the issues surrounding confidentiality.

<http://www.une.edu.au/counselling>.

It's better to ask some questions like; how much will it cost? (only for external consultancy services), how will the sessions be conducted?, how is your privacy protected? and whether the counsellor has the professional status, at the first visit or over the phone before making an appointment. In addition to the answers you get, you may be able to get some idea about the counsellor and his/her sensitivity to your situation.

What are your rights?

As someone who is receiving counselling, you have very clearly defined rights.

- You should be treated with care, consideration and dignity.
- You have the right to begin and end counselling at any time.
- Your counsellor should not engage in any type of sexual relationship with you

<http://www.une.edu.au/counselling>.



The duration of a counselling sessions

Counselling sessions last up to 50 minutes for an individual or up to 90 minutes for a couple.

Confidentiality of your counselling sessions

Generally, a verbal contract is agreed on between you and your counsellor at the first/assessment session before you start working together. The counsellors are also bound by a professional code of conduct. ie. If you want your counsellor to speak to some outsider regarding your problem, then your counsellor will get your permission.

It is only under very extreme circumstances (e.g. to protect the personal safety of someone) that counsellors may be required to break confidentiality. This would be necessary in order to conform to certain legal/ethical requirements. As far as possible the counsellor would seek approval from you before doing this.

How many sessions you need to attend?

For most of the minor issues that students have, one or two sessions is sufficient. However, for some students it may be necessary to attend several or many sessions depending on the seriousness of their issue.

The counselling relationship

The counselling relationship is different from other relationships and counsellors follow certain ethical principles.

Although within the counselling session, there may be a high level of friendliness and closeness, having a friendship with clients outside the sessions may interfere with the counselling process. Therefore, counsellors do not generally become their clients' friends. Counsellors are not permitted to have a romantic or sexual relationship with their clients.

Counsellors are non-judgmental and are prepared for you to discuss any issue, including concerns you may have about the counselling relationship.



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If your visit is to ask for support for special considerations on attendance or any other administrative matter?

If your issue is related to faculty administrative matters, you must inform the counsellor in advance or at least at the beginning of your session. There is no guarantee that your counsellor will support your request. However, you will be directed to relevant officer/s or the counsellor will assist you to follow the Faculty administrative guidelines.

Asking for medical certificates for exam matters

The counsellors are not yet allowed to issue medical certificates for students. However, your counsellor will closely communicate with the University Health Center and properly guide you to get such reports according to university regulations under such circumstances.

Assessing your progress

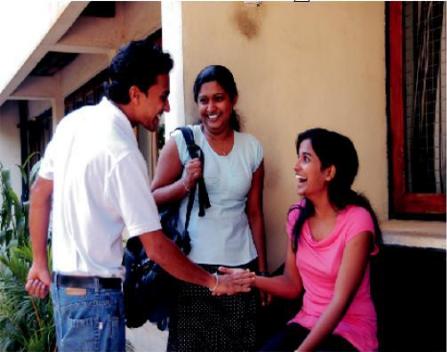
Counselling is meant to be a positive experience and is collaborative in nature. Therefore you should be able to discuss your progress and any other concerns you may have with your counsellor. If you are not happy with your progress discuss the possible reasons for that. If you think that there is a mismatch between you and your counsellor it is possible to change the counsellor.



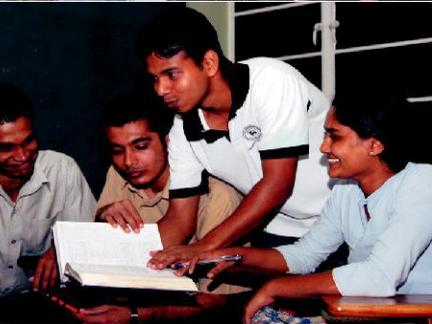
Success Stories



Nalinda attempted to commit suicide several times during his first academic year as his GPA was below 1.0. He was so keen to resolve his problems but he was under severe depression at the time of meeting a counsellor. The counsellor first assisted him to take medical treatments immediately. At the same time the counselor was also in contact with the medical staff to monitor his progress. Although he recovered up to a certain extent after long term treatments, the consultant advised to continue counselling to prevent him getting back to the same illness. The main root courses identified by the medical officer were language difficulty and financial difficulties. The counselor guided him to overcome both those barriers with the assistance of ELTU and an outside donor (non-performance based financial support). He completed his degree and working as an executive in a leading company at present.



Nilanthi met a counselor as her academic performance declined drastically. Initially she explained that economic problems aggravated her stress and led her to perform poor. However, after few sessions the counselor diagnosed that the main course was related to the frustrations related to her love affair. Her boyfriend was an outsider and his workstation was away from the university making less time available for them to meet and talk. She had a feeling in her mind that he will stop the affair due to difficulties in meeting coupled with her unpleasant family environment. The counsellor met both of them and helped to settle the stressful thoughts. As a result she improved her GPA gradually and graduated in time.



Recommended Self-Help Resources for students

Contact information of counselling services

Career guidance unit, (for career counselling) Students' centre, WUS Building, University of Peradeniya. Tel:0812392013 (Intercom 2013).



External services:

- Telephone counselling (National institute of Mental health NIMH – call 1333).
- Global Minds, No. 26 B, Nugegoda Road, Pepiliyana Tel. 0114320942/3 (paid service)
- Youth Friendly Services Centre, No. 21/1, Keppitipola Road, Bogambara, Kandy Tel. 0812223462 (Hot line- 0602815618). Email: yfs.suvapiyasa@yahoo.com, chami.com24@yahoo.com, avishaka66@yahoo.com
- National Youth Counselling Centre, Training Centre- Polgolla (Mondays and Wendesdays). Tel 0812499500.
- Training Centre -Maharagama NO. 65, Highlevel Road, Maharagama (Mondays, Thursdays & Fridays) Tel. 0112850986
- Sri Lanka Suicide Hotlines Sumithrayo - Kandy. 693/4 Peradeniya Road, Mulgampola, KANDY
Contact by: Face to Face - Phone - Letter: Hotline: (081) 2234 806 Website: srilankasumithrayo.org

Hours: Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun: 09:00 - 17:00