**Contract with GCU Student Counselling Service**

**The Counselling Service is only available to students who are registered for the current academic year.   Please note if you are not currently registered as a student at GCU,  you are not eligible to access the Counselling service.  Please let us know if this is the case,  and where possible,  we will provide information on other counselling services.**

This document forms the basis of the counselling contract between the student and GCU Counselling Service.

This contract relates to face-to-face and online (telephone or video) counselling.

1. **Counselling Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an important part of the counselling process. It helps people talk openly about their concerns in a safe manner.

If working online (telephone or video), staff will ensure that they are working in a confidential space, and we encourage you to establish a confidential and safe space for yourself, as well as the appropriate technology (such as a working microphone and speakers/headphones).

**Staff working in the Counselling Service will not pass on personal information about students (including information on attendance) to anyone outside the team (including academic staff) unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

The occasions when we would share your confidential information include:

* If we believe you are in danger of seriously harming yourself or another person.
* If a child’s physical or emotional wellbeing is at risk.
* Where we have been given information, which would render us liable to civil or criminal court procedure should it not be disclosed.
* When you have given us your consent to disclose information.

In these kinds of situations, we will support you to disclose the information to the relevant person/agency yourself. However, if there is no indication that this has happened, or is likely to happen, or there is serious danger, the counsellor/psychotherapist may pass on the information directly.

Within the Student Wellbeing Service, the Counselling Service, Disability Team, Mental Health Advisers and Student Wellbeing Advisers, all work together as part of the same team. From time to time, we may need to discuss individual students to ensure that the best service possible is provided. We will ask for your permission before sharing any information wherever possible.

We may also contact you by email to advise you of further support we can provide you with e.g. upcoming workshops /events. Let us know at any time if you would prefer not to receive these emails.

* **Counsellor/Therapist Supervision**

The counsellor/therapist may discuss his or her work with a Counselling supervisor, as required by the BACP/BABCP, but will not reveal or indicate the client’s identity or the identity of others of whom the client has spoken.

* **Record-keeping and Confidentiality**

The counsellor/therapist will maintain a record of your contact with the Service. These will be held securely and confidentially in line with the University Data requirements**. You have a right to access your information held by the Service.**

We ask that you read and understand the Confidentiality and Record Keeping information with the Counselling service. This is available at the following webpage:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/counselling/aboutcounselling>

1. **Attendance**

At present, we are offering a choice of face-to-face or online (telephone/video) counselling.

If your preference is for face-to-face, you have the option of wearing a mask during your session, though this is no longer a legal requirement. If you would prefer to wear a mask, you may also request that your therapist wears a mask. Some therapists may wear a mask even if you choose not to as this may be their preference. You and your therapist may briefly discuss your preferences at the start of your sessions.

For ventilation purposes, windows may be kept open and air-conditioning may be on, therefore please dress accordingly. We will also continue to maintain a high standard of cleanliness within the offices of the Wellbeing Service.

To help reduce the flow of traffic and to help keep everyone safe, please arrive **at the stated time** of your appointment and **please do not bring anybody else with you**. If you arrive late your appointment will still need to end at the agreed time, or in some circumstances it may be rescheduled.

If on the day of your appointment you are unwell (e.g. experiencing Covid-19 symptoms), we would encourage you to cancel your appointment and it can be rearranged for a later date.

We ask that you prioritise your commitment to your counselling appointments within the week. The Counselling Service is under significant demand, and cancellations and appointments not attended without prior notice (DNAs) increase the length of time the next student on the waiting list will have to wait to be seen.

* **Starting your sessions**

Once you have been offered a counselling appointment, we hope/expect you to be available to begin your sessions.  If for some reason, you are unable to begin your sessions when offered, please discuss this with your therapist/counsellor.  We are unable to hold appointments until such time as you are free.

* **Cancellations or DNAs**

We understand that sometimes you might need to reschedule an appointment. We ask where possible you **provide at least 24 hours’ notice** if you cannot attend.

If you cancel your appointment or do not attend without prior notice, please note that it is **your responsibility to reschedule.** If we do not hear from you **within 4 working days,** we will assume you no longer require our services and your file will be closed. Repeat cancellations may also result in your file being closed.

Please note that each short-notice cancellation or DNA appointment will count towards the number of sessions you have been offered. Two DNAs will automatically result in your file being closed.

**If your file has been closed**, please note that you are welcome to attend GCU Counselling again, by scheduling another intake appointment, in order to be put back on the Waiting List.

* **Counsellor/therapist needs to cancel a session**

If your counsellor/therapist is unable to attend a session, you will be contacted as soon as possible by an email to your University email account. The counsellor/therapist will be in contact with you as soon as possible to offer to reschedule this.

1. **Complaints procedure**

There is a formal complaints procedure available to you should you be unhappy with any aspect of the service you receive from the GCU Wellbeing Service.

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/supportservices/governance/complaintsstudentconduct/complaints>

I have read and understood the above information (typing name below will be considered as your signature):

Signed Date

Signed(therapist) Date

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask – studentwellbeing@gcu.ac.uk