



Brunel Counselling Service

Annual Report

2015 – 2016

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Counselling Team



Dr Ruth Caleb, Head of Counselling

Doctorate in Psychotherapy, Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Research Studies, M.A. Counselling and Psychotherapy, BSc (Hons), BACP and UKCP registered



Peter Eldrid, Deputy Head of Counselling

BSc (Hons), Advanced Diploma in Counselling, Diploma in Solution Focused Practice (BRIEF), BACP accredited



Alan Clarke, Senior Counsellor

MSc Psychodynamic Counselling, Postgraduate Diploma Careers Guidance, BSc (Hons), Cert. Ed, BACP accredited



Paramjeet Kaur, Counsellor

Diploma in Person Centred Counselling, Diploma in Eating Disorders, Certificate in Clinical Supervision, BACP accredited



Martyn Lloyd, Counsellor

Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling, Diploma in Group Counselling, BACP accredited



Irène Stone, Counsellor, Cognitive Hypnotherapist and NLP practitioner

BA (Hons) in Person Centred Counselling, MBACP (accred.), HPD, DipCHyp, NLP Prac, MNCH



Kieron Allford, Counselling Service Administrator

BA (Hons) in Business & Tourism Management, HND Travel and Tourism.

Many thanks go to **Heidi Gilhooly**, who worked with the Service as a maternity leave counsellor, and our trainee and associate counsellors **Roula Barlika, Karen Bolina, Natalie Brincklow, Liz Driscoll, Sarah Ferguson, Marie Fernandes, Jane Lovatt, Kevin Morgan, Marie Plose, Jelena Richards** and **Malvi Shah** for their valuable contribution to the Counselling Service during the last academic year.

Client Intake

The intake number for clients presenting at the counselling service this year was, **1144** including **87** staff clients. This demonstrates an overall increase of **22%** and a staff increase of **32%** from last year's figures.



Over the past 8 years the Counselling Service clientele has more than doubled. At the same time the overall Brunel University student numbers have slightly decreased. However, this does not mean that mental wellbeing at Brunel University has deteriorated for students and staff.

The Service's higher profile within Brunel, improved publicity and constant attempts to find creative ways to increase accessibility may explain the rising number of clients. Rather than assume that more staff and students have mental health issues than in previous years, we believe that having found ways to make counselling acceptable, accessible, available and confidential, more people wish to access the service.

Research evidence suggests that at any given time 1 in 4 adults in the UK experience at least one diagnosable mental health symptom in any one year.

A major issue that clients bring to counselling is that their studies or jobs are suffering as a result of their problems, and they are keen to resolve them as quickly as possible. BCS offers short-term counselling to support this aim. On average during this 10 year period clients have been seen for 5 sessions.

Our clinical evidence using the CORE outcome measure over the past 8 years (see [page 6](#) and [Page 7](#)) shows an average of 93% of clients reporting overall improvement in their psychological and functional symptoms. Due to this improvement they are better able to study, work more effectively and enjoy a better quality of life overall.

Counselling Service Profile

- The average wait for new clients for an initial assessment was only **2 days**.¹
- **72%** of clients were seen within 5 days of their request for counselling. **33%** of new clients were seen on the same day as their initial presentation. Those waiting longer were often at their request.
- The total number of counselling sessions offered was **5,054**, a **10%** increase on the previous year.
- Clients were seen on an average of **4.4** sessions, similar to previous years.
- The student male/female client split was **42.5%** male and **57.5%** female. This is very positive in terms of the national trend of around 33% of male clients and is our best percentage yet in terms of reaching more male clients.
- International (19%) and EU (7%) students constituted **26%** of the clientele, which is similar to the university profile.
- **21%** of student clients disclosed a disability, twice the profile of disabled students who have declared a disability. This demonstrates evidence for our target to reach students from widening participation groups.
- Students aged 21 or over at the start of their course constituted around **49%** of the undergraduate student clientele. This offers evidence of our good connection to mature students, another widening participation group.

Clients at risk of suicide, self-harm or harm to others

Management of clients at risk

On initial presentation, **58%** of student clients assessed themselves as having risk factors (including risk of self-harm, causing harm to others or suicidal ideation), as indicated by the CORE OM questionnaire. Clients who are assessed to be at risk of suicide or severe self-harm are prioritised for counselling.

Improvement in Symptoms

An overall improvement in mental health symptoms was shown by **93%** of clients with **73%** demonstrating a clinically significant improvement in their previous mental health symptoms as a result of their counselling according to the outcome measure analysis. This is likely to result in clients' ability to function at a higher level and progress better in their studies.

¹ This compares with 84 days in the NHS and 16 days in universities (HEPI 2016 Report 'The Invisible Problem? Improving Student Mental Health')

Use of Clinical Outcome Routine Evaluation (CORE)

Background

CORE (Clinical Outcome of Routine Evaluation) was devised by a research team to measure psychological problems experienced by clients needing counselling or psychotherapy. The CORE Outcome Measure is a clinically validated, reliable evaluation tool used by the National Health Service, many statutory and voluntary counselling services, and increasingly in universities. Thus when used by the Brunel University Counselling Service, CORE enables us to benchmark students' psychological functioning to the wider population.

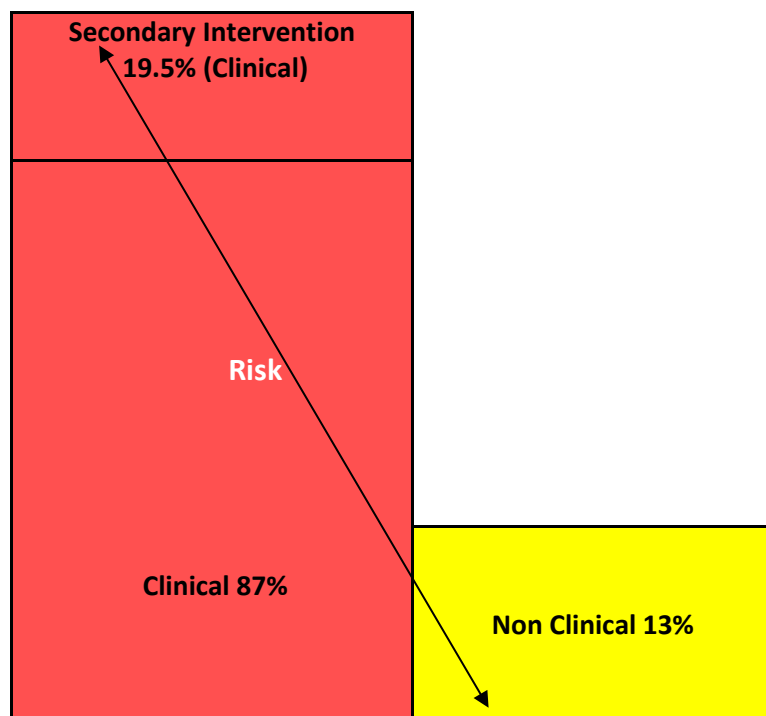
The CORE Outcome Measure takes the form of a questionnaire with 34 questions and offers a self-assessment by the client / patient of their symptoms over the previous week. The CORE Measure, used before counselling, acts as an indicator of risk and allows a service to triage its clientele and prioritise those considered to be at risk of self-harm, suicide or violence to others. Used before and after counselling it may demonstrate areas of change that are of importance for quality assurance and retention issues.

Use of CORE by the Brunel University Counselling Service

The CORE Outcome Measure is scored at the initial assessment session with the Counselling Service; for those clients who continue their full counselling contracts, this process is repeated at the end of counselling, thereby giving a detailed evidence-based record of change.

During the academic year 2015-16, the Brunel University Counselling Service developed its ninth full year of CORE Outcome Measure data. Using CORE is particularly helpful in offering comparisons with the overall population. The severity of the score is deemed to reflect the severity of the client's problems. For example those scoring under 40 (the non-clinical population) would be considered less in need of on-going counselling and would not be prioritised on a waiting list, whereas those scoring over 85 (the clinical population) might need to consider some form of secondary intervention such as psychiatric help. The questionnaire also alerts the counsellor to any risk of suicide, self-harm, or violence to others.

The chart below shows data on the **808** clients who completed the questionnaire at the start of their counselling.



The chart demonstrates an increasing level of risk (see arrowed line) from the non-clinical to the clinical population and those who may require secondary intervention.

Risk is identified in terms of suicidal ideation and plans, self-harm and potential harm to others.

58% of clients indicated at least some level of risk but there is clearly a range from: 'I have occasionally thought of hurting myself' through to 'Most of the time, I am making plans to end my life'.

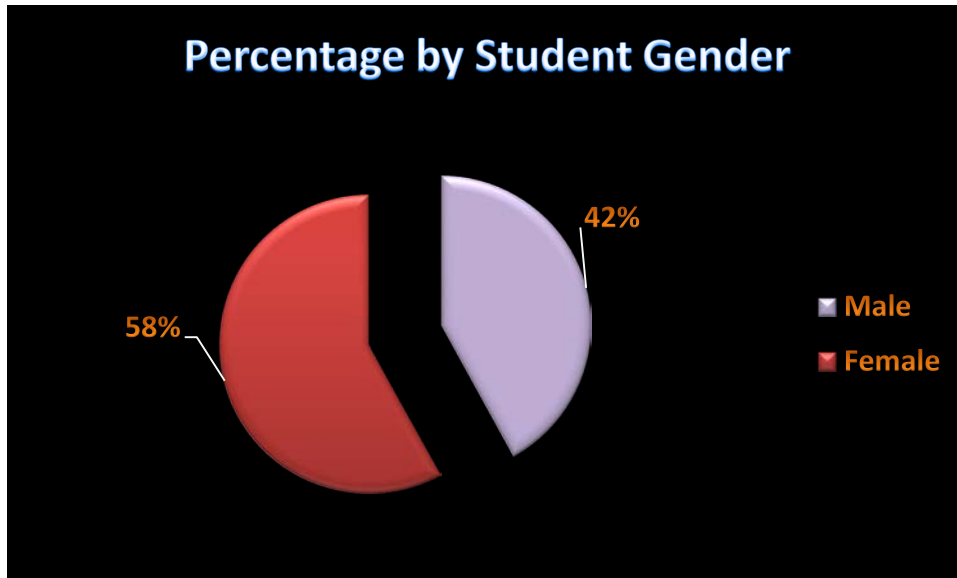
- The vast majority of our client group, **87%**, are in the clinical population (**red**), and are likely to benefit from on-going counselling.
- Included in this group are **19.5%** who may require a medical intervention such as psychiatric treatment.
- **13 %** were in the non-clinical population (**yellow**). They could be at risk of failing to reach their academic potential, but are likely to have had low levels of risk in terms of harming themselves or others.

Impact of Counselling on CORE Score 2015/16

- **166** clients completed a second CORE at the end of their counselling and thereby gave us data to evaluate the impact of their counselling.
- On-going clients experienced an average improvement of **31** points. Any change over 19 points demonstrates clinical significance.
- An overall improvement was shown by **93%**.
- **73%** of clients showed an increase of 19 points or more after counselling, demonstrating a major clinically significant improvement in their previous mental health symptoms. This improvement has a great impact on retention and or reaching academic potential.
- Deterioration was shown by **7%**. Unfortunately deterioration is to be expected in a small minority of clients who may be experiencing the onset of serious mental health problems. Or it may be that for a few clients, counselling was not useful to them at this point in their lives.

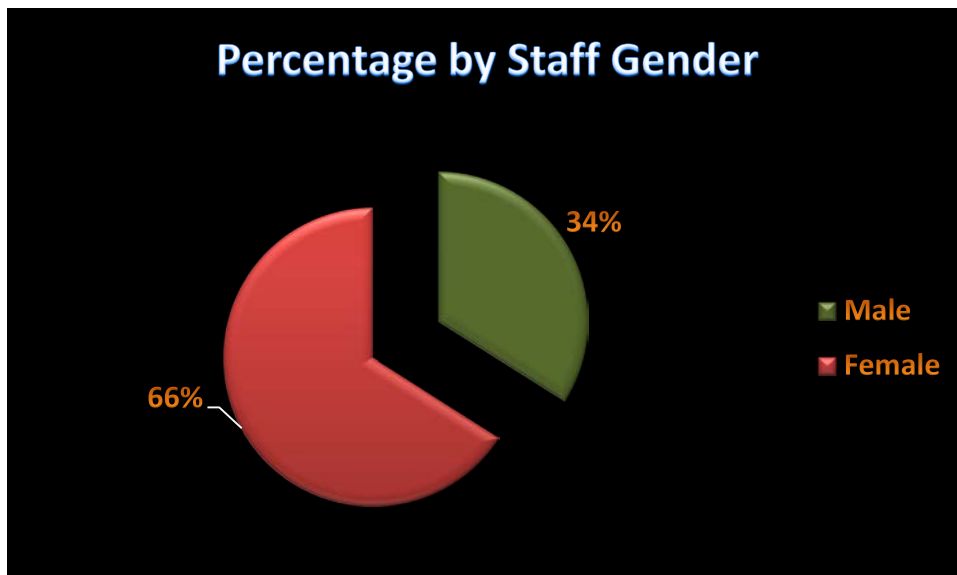
Client Data

The percentage of male student clients has increased again to 42%.our highest ever male percentage. While this is still lower than the male student profile at Brunel it is encouraging that more men are seeking help.



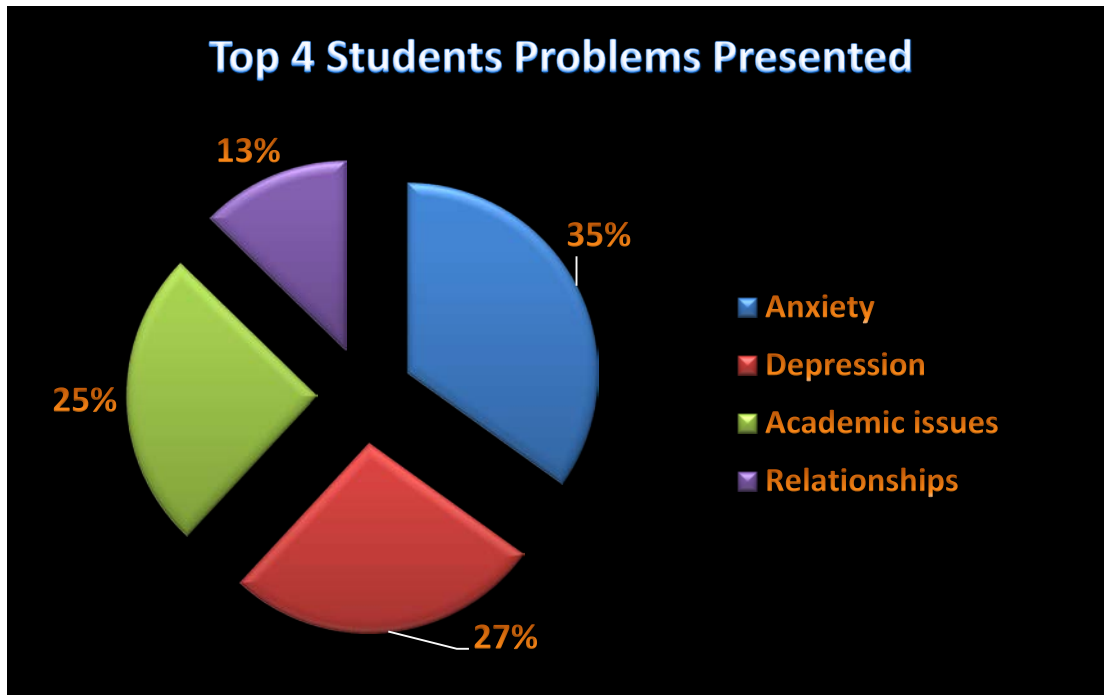
Not surprisingly women find it easier to come for counselling than men. Yet men are at far greater risk, being three times more likely to commit suicide. Many may have been prevented from doing so by timely GP support, medication and talking therapies such as counselling.

So encourage the men you know to talk - it may save their lives.

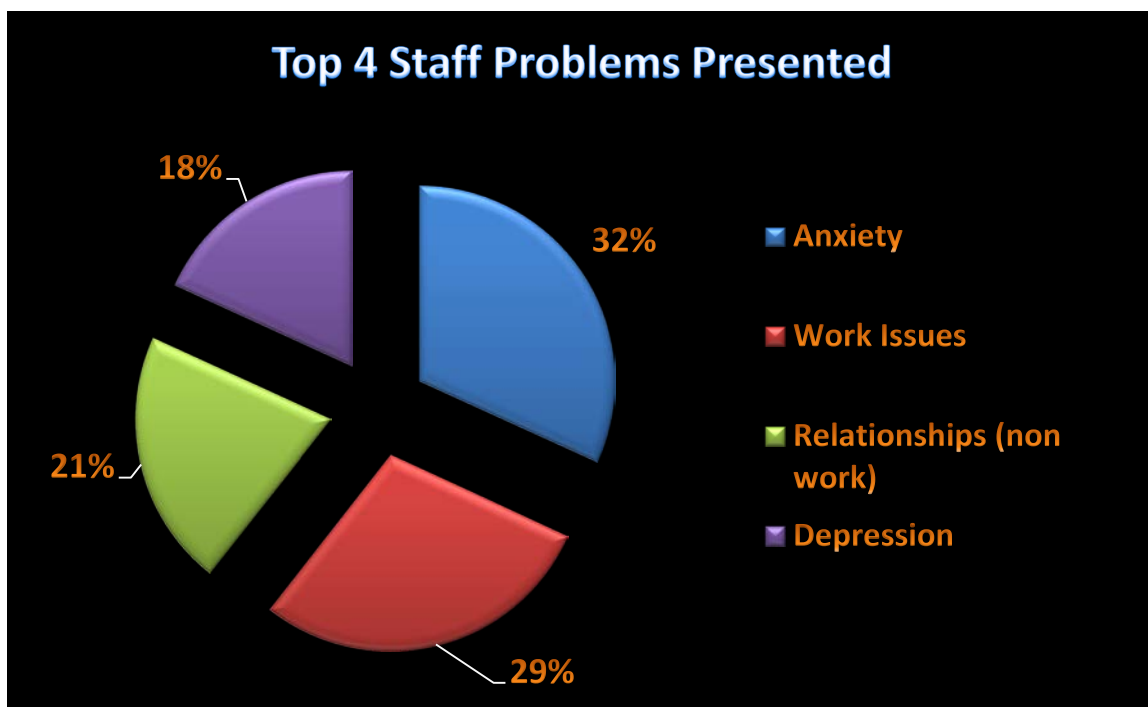


It may be that older men still find it difficult to seek help. The Counselling Service will continue to encourage staff to access counselling.

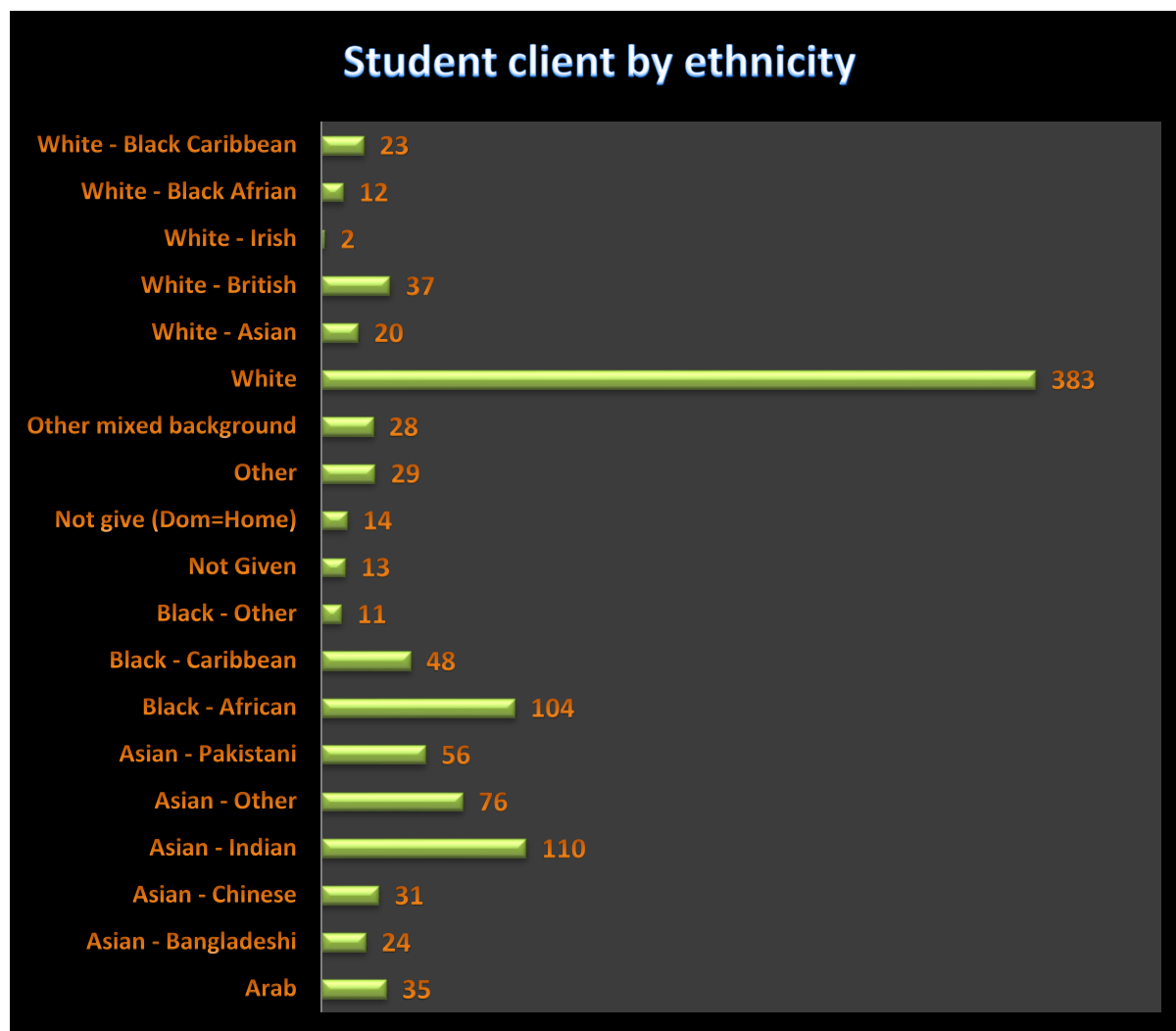
Presenting Problems



Why do people come to counselling? Most want change: to manage better, feel happier, have better relationships, deal more effectively with everyday life, be more productive and feel more positive. Interestingly staff and students seem to want the same kind of change; to be less anxious, less depressed, improve their relationships and feel more satisfied in their studies and their work.



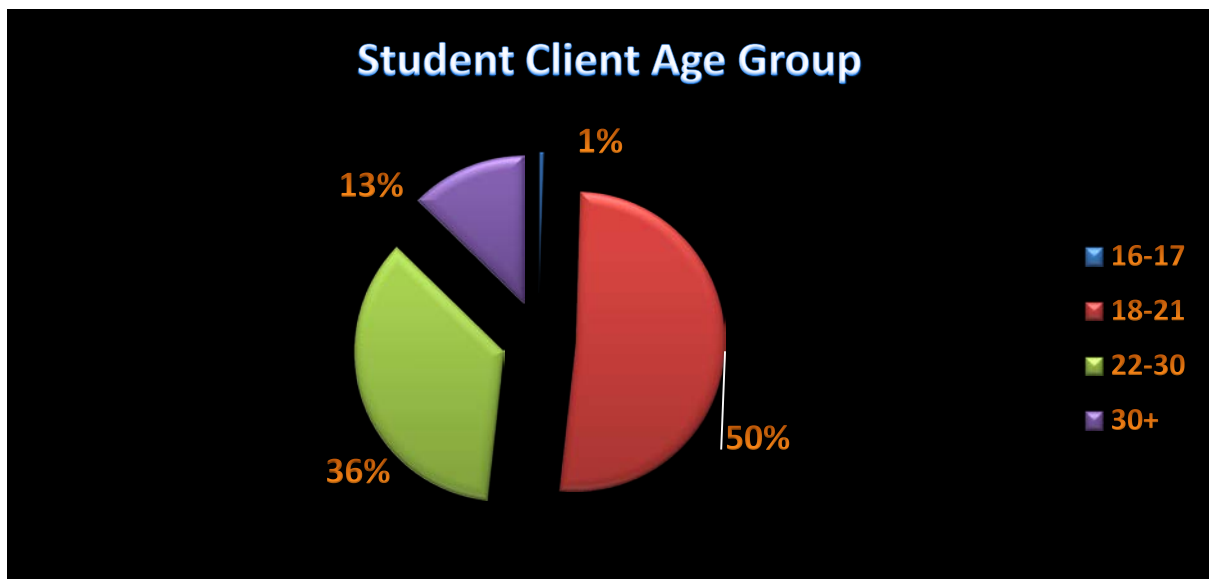
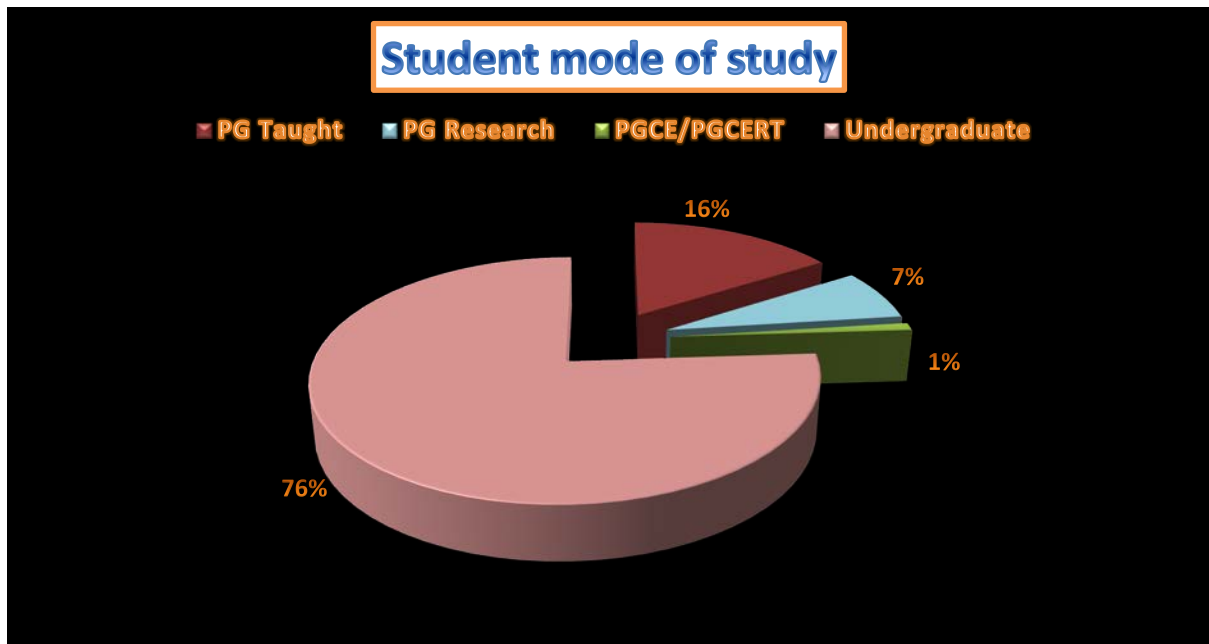
Client Ethnicity



The ethnic profile of our clientele largely reflects the university profile, as does the take up of counselling from international students. This has been achieved by the service continuing to talk regularly to international students at their inductions and continuing to ensuring that different ethnic groups are encouraged to apply for training placements.

In the past 10 years we have worked with 112 different nationalities of the 130 represented at Brunel.

Student Age and Mode of Study



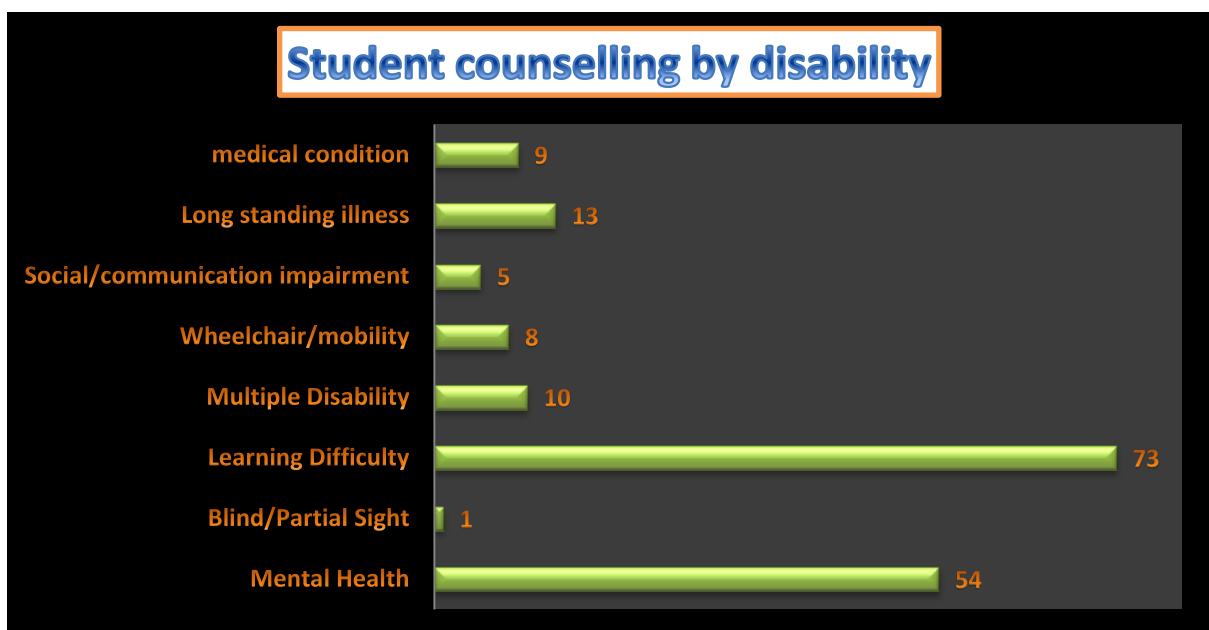
Students aged 21 and over at the start of their course constituted around 49% of the student clientele.

Widening Participation

The Counselling Service is proud of its close relationship with the Widening Participation Unit, and enormously grateful for the previous financial support offered to increase our ability to support to students who are in one or more widening participation categories.

Our commitment to widening participation means we are continually finding new ways to reach mature undergraduate students, care leavers and disabled students.

The table below demonstrate our success at this.



21% of our clients were disabled, nearly twice the Brunel profile of 11% of students who disclosed a disability to Brunel.

Care leavers

Those students who have been 'cared for' by local authorities are a small but potentially vulnerable group. We are aware that the difficulties that being looked after may engender could make University life even more difficult to manage. However the excellence of our award-winning Widening Participation team in ensuring that these students are supported and made aware of all the student services reduces this difficulty.

The counselling team is committed to offering a flexible and responsive service, with a wide range of early and late counselling face to face, Skype or telephone sessions, workshops and groups, aiming to reach those care leavers who live off campus.

Service Evaluation Feedback 2015/16

From the feedback from student clients below counselling is clearly a highly positive experience for BUCS clients.

Clients' description of their negative feelings before and after counselling

Negative feeling	Before counselling	After counselling
Frustrated	86%	0%
Stressed	86%	14%
Anxious	86%	14%
Tired	72%	14%
Alone	72%	0%
Unmotivated	57%	14%
Confused	57%	0%
Depressed	57%	0%
Lost	57%	0%
Sad	44%	0%
Distraught	44%	0%
Angry	28%	0%

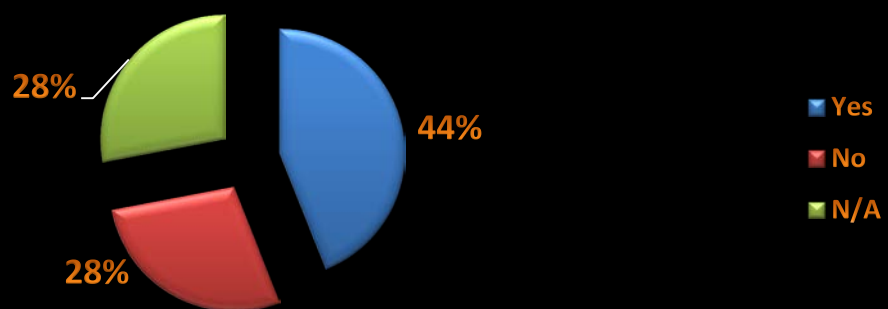
Clients' description of their positive feelings before and after counselling

Positive feeling	Before counselling	After counselling
Coping	28%	72%
Motivated	14%	28%
Confident	14%	28%
Insightful	14%	72%
Understood	0%	44%
Satisfied	0%	28%
Focused	0%	28%
Relieved	0%	44%
Happy	0%	44%
Relaxed	0%	35%

Service Evaluation Feedback

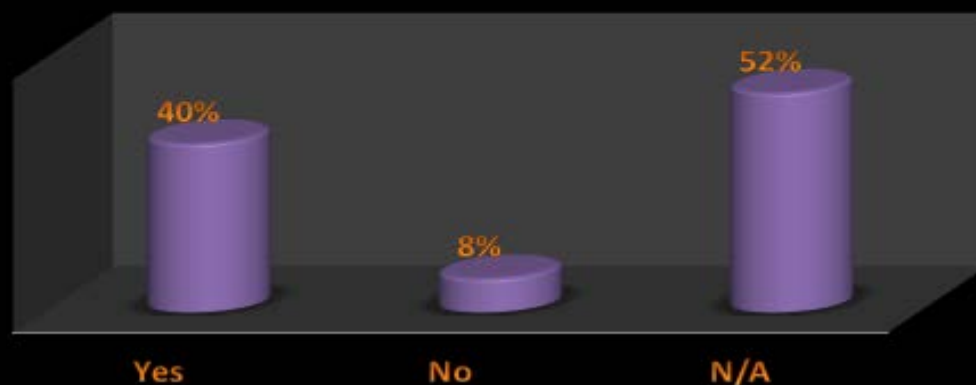
"You changed my university experience - I will bring forward in life all the insightful knowledge you have helped me attain"

Clients who were thinking of leaving Brunel University before counselling



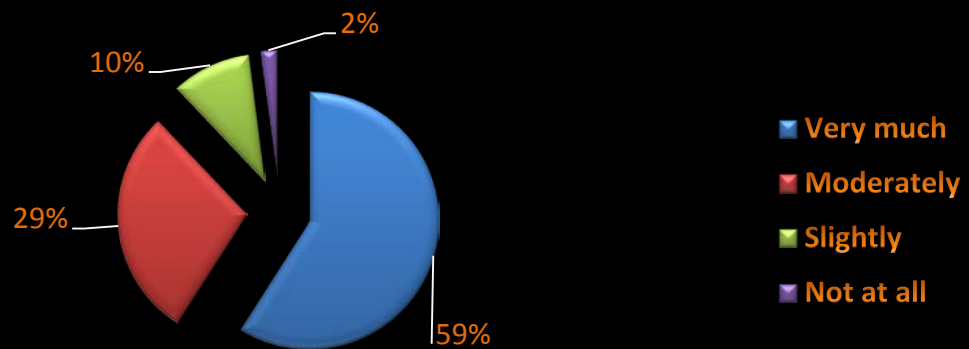
The charts above and below clearly demonstrates that counselling makes a strong contribution to the retention of students at Brunel University London.

Did counselling help you to decide to continue your course?



At a time when student retention is more important than ever these tables indicate that without counselling intervention Brunel could lose over 400 students every year, at a conservative cost of over £3.6million pounds to the university (assuming that they were all undergraduate home students paying £9,000 per year).

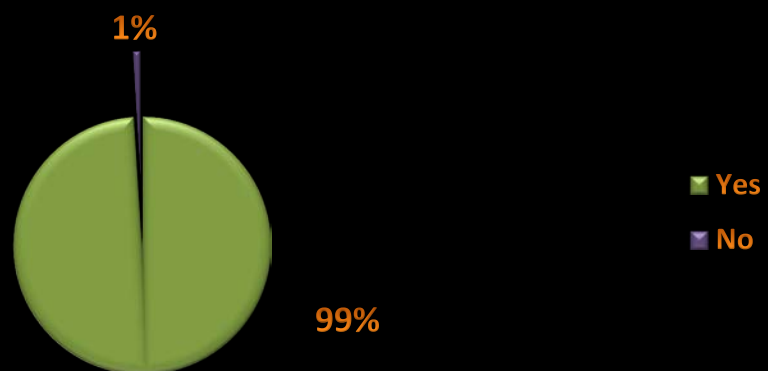
How strongly do you feel counselling has helped in your academic studies



Retention and supporting students to reach their highest potential also ensures that our alumni remain committed to Brunel, due to their own valuable experience. The chart below is evidence that counselling contributed greatly to helping students reach their potential

'I couldn't have finished University without it!'

Percentage of students that would recommend the Counselling Service to others



TRAINEE COUNSELLOR UNIT



In the last academic year, we were delighted to have 11 trainees without whom the waiting time for counselling would have been far longer. Many thanks go out to all of them for their excellent work with our clients.

Some of our more experienced trainees (associates) have taken on extra client hours and also been involved in doing assessments and drop-in sessions. They have been with us for over three years and have continued their role as paid associates.

All our trainees go through a full induction training before starting work. We provide ongoing regular supervision support to each trainee and associate. We have also set up regular supervisor meetings for all supervisor to meet and discuss how our trainees are doing in their placements at Brunel. This year we have taken on a further 3 new trainees who will be joining us in October 2016.

Paramjeet Kaur



"I have just completed my first year at the Brunel Counselling Service. This was also my first time working with clients as a trainee counsellor. With this in mind, it was extremely important to find a supportive organisation that not only held in mind my learning needs and the importance of regular, quality supervision but also understood the innate responsibility for developing my skills as a practitioner and the realities of the impact this kind of work can have on trainees. I have been supported and encouraged not just by my supervisor but by the entire team at the Brunel Counselling Service and it has been a

privilege and inspiration to work with the diverse and courageous clients I have met this year. I am extremely grateful to have been offered a placement with this Service and I am very proud to be a member of this team. Thank you!"

Malvi Shah
Trainee Counsellor

TRAINEE COUNSELLOR UNIT



"I have absolutely loved working for the BCS over the past 3 years. The care and guidance I have received has been second to none, and I have been supported and encouraged by every member of this amazing team. The excellent supervision provided here has enabled me to grow and develop as a counsellor, and to become a confident and qualified practitioner. Thank you for this wonderful and invaluable experience".

Natalie Brincklow
Senior Associate Counsellor



"My year at Brunel Counselling Service has been a wonderful learning experience. What perhaps has been most eye opening for me is the breadth of issues, difficulties and challenges the students I see bring to the sessions. Every day here is different and I cannot value enough the insights I am gaining through both the client work and the supervision sessions I receive. All of this has had a very positive impact on my training and in the last few weeks I have joined the BACP Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists.

This was big step for me on my pathway to professional recognition and it is due in no small part to the opportunity I have been provided at Brunel. It is a very supportive environment to work in and members of the service staff are always on hand to provide help and guidance. I have no hesitation in recommending Brunel Counselling Service to trainee counsellors looking for a clinical placement."

Kevin Morgan
Trainee Counsellor

OUT OF HOURS SERVICES



Our 'out of hours service', offering appointments in the early mornings (8am) and after business hours (6-8pm) has become a permanent way that students and staff who are not able to attend sessions during office hours access the counselling service. From the very start of this project in 2009 the sessions (drop-ins, assessment and face-to-face) were accessed in ever growing numbers. To meet this increasing demand the service decided to offer a full service at the Counselling Service location from October 2015 with two core counsellors and a senior associate counsellor conducting face-to-face, assessment and drop-in sessions between 6pm and 8.30pm.

In the first instance and to focus tight resources effectively, the service intended to run this expanded 'out of hours' pilot for the first term only and re-evaluate before the end of term 1. However, incorporating client feedback and attendance figures it was decided to extend the duration of the evening service at the Counselling Service location up to the end of May, and in key times (i.e. before exams) with up to 5 counsellors offering up-to 8 clients slots and 2 drop-in slots on Tuesday evenings.

"I was so grateful to be able to see a counsellor after my placement and wouldn't have been able to make sessions earlier so would have missed out."

(evening client)

During the period of October 2015 and June 2016 clients attended 102 (69.86%) out of 146 bookable appointments and 27 drop-in clients (58% of the offered slots) were seen during this time.

During the summer months (June till September) and with the continuous support from the staff at the Library and the ASK team the evening service has run from the ASK office in the Library with one core counsellor, seeing clients throughout the summer months.

A special thanks has to go out to our senior associate counsellors, Liz Bellchambers and Natalie Brincklow and counsellors Alan Clark and Paramjeet Kaur for joining me in delivering a full service to our students and staff.

The FUTURE > Academic Year 2016/2017

For the new academic year I am pleased to announce that the service has agreed to open its doors on two evenings (during term-times) to meet client demand. We look forward to conducting a full service on Tuesdays and Thursdays with 4 counsellors between 6pm and 8.30pm. As always this new pilot will initially run up to the end of term 1 where we will re-assess its effectiveness and resource requirements and make the decision whether to continue with two open evenings till the end of May 2017.

Irène Stone

Counsellor / Cognitive Hypnotherapist

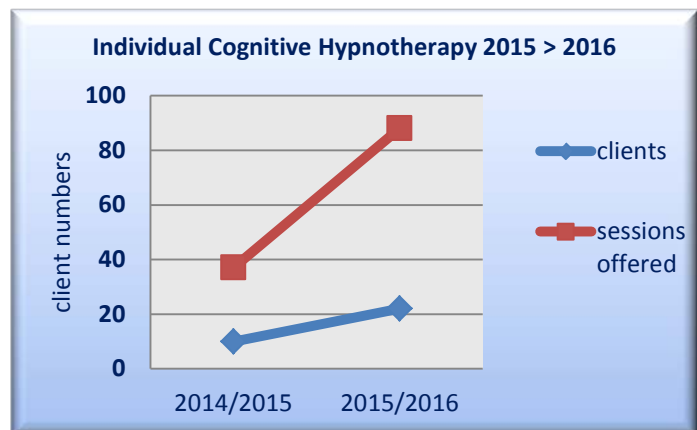
COGNITIVE HYPNOTHERAPY



For the second year running cognitive hypnotherapy has been offered to students with academic related issues. During the previous year this service was offered through the service internal referral system only to avoid putting additional pressure on the waiting list and run every Friday. This year the service extended the appointments to two days (during term 2) and students could attend appointments on Thursdays and Fridays.

The target for the academic year 2015/2016 was to exceed client figures of the last academic year (10 attendees, 37 client sessions) and to develop a course around exam stress to support students during the most demanding period of the year.

It soon became clear that even without widespread advertising popularity of cognitive hypnotherapy grew amongst students and attendees and session figures exceeded target figures shortly before term 1 ended. 22 students made use of the sessions with 88 appointments offered between October 2015 and June 2016 which is an overall increase of approx.120%.



The last two years have been insightful into the potency of this innovative approach to therapy and we would assume that this part of the Counselling Service would grow steadily. However the consequences of a highly popular service comes with pressure on administration and waiting list and with limited resources (i.e. lack of therapists, administration resources) it has been decided to cease individual cognitive hypnotherapy for the time being until such time as more resources are available to fund at least 2 cognitive hypnotherapists (2 days per week) and administration support.

Client's Feedback

- I felt extremely comfortable and welcome.
- It has given me hope that I needed.
- The therapist helped me to believe myself and knowing what am I doing wrong.
- Talking through my issues (the root of them) was helpful in allowing me to overcome the problems they caused.
- The recordings also helped as it assisted me towards achieving my goal and was a constant reminder of what I was yet to achieve.
- Improves concentration.

MINDFULNESS

What is Mindfulness?

John Kabat-Zinn, who is credited with bringing together eastern meditative practices and western scientific research in his work with people experiencing chronic pain, defines mindfulness as:

- **Paying attention**
- **With purpose**
- **In the present moment**
- **Without judgement or preference**

He often adds “as if your life depended on it” (and then adds “which it probably does”)

There is a myth that mindfulness means freeing your mind of thoughts. This is impossible as anyone who has tried to free their mind of thoughts can readily testify. Mindfulness can be practised ‘formally’ in time set aside for specific exercises, or informally, by bringing full attention to daily activities. Formal mindfulness practice involves training the wandering mind to repeatedly return to a specific reference point or anchor. Such a reference point might be the breath, the body, sounds or an object for example. Informal mindfulness practice involves bringing a quality of presence to everyday activities (described as “stepping out of auto-pilot”). Mindfulness practices are underpinned by an attitude of “kindly curiosity” towards oneself and others – an attitude that is rooted in acceptance, rather than change.

Mindfulness groups

3 mindfulness courses of (each of 4 sessions) were run between November 2015 and March 2016. These were open to the general student population and not just clients of the counselling service.

26 students participated in the 3 courses.

About 80% of participants had never experienced a mindfulness or meditation course / class before

Content covered:

A variety of basic mindfulness exercises were explored over the 4 weeks including:

- **Mindfulness of the breath**
- **Mindfulness of the body**
- **Mindfulness of an object**
- **Mindfulness of sound**
- **Mindfulness of thoughts**

Suggestions for home practice were a key component of the course and helped participants integrate mindfulness skills into everyday life. Participants were encouraged to keep a journal of their experiences over the course.

Evaluation

Each participant was asked to complete a short survey which aimed to rate their levels of mindfulness before and after the course:

Average “mindfulness scores”	Average score before course	Average score after course	%-age change
1 st group	25	31	+24%
2 nd group	27	37	+37%
3 rd group	28	37	+32%

- **100%** of participants scored the course as either 4 or 5 (on a 1 to 5 scale) in terms of the course’s usefulness
- **100%** of participants said that they would be interested in a follow-up
- **100%** would recommend the course to a friend

Martyn Lloyd – Core Counsellor



Feedback

Below are some comments from participants about what they valued from the course

Taking time out of the week to focus on myself through attending the class, but also through home practice > being

Meeting new people and learning what mindfulness is really about

Learning to become conscious of thoughts and processes in my mind that I often wasn't even aware of

The practical exercises that I could apply in my own time, during any time of day

Graduate School Group Work

The Brunel Counselling Service is working with The Brunel Graduate School in offering small, confidential group sessions for post-graduate students where concerns about coping with life in a new environment can be discussed and shared to support graduate students in the process of building confidence, and establishing productive working relations. This forum is to assist new graduates in making the transition to life at Brunel and for those graduates new to this country, life in the UK.

Many issues are addressed including codes of behaviour, expectations, obligations and different ways of relating. It is hoped the exploration and sharing of these concerns will work to ease transition and foster a sense of belonging. This in turn should enhance the quality of student experience and academic performance.

Students who choose to attend the sessions have the opportunity to develop, demonstrate and log a series of 'soft' skills of an interpersonal nature that are so valued by employers, for example interpersonal relationships and building strategies for negotiation and compromise in working relationships. These skills are measured against 'Performance Indicators' in the 'Researcher Development Programme'. Students are encouraged to share and analyse present and past approaches to relationship building in the workplace.

For many students the main challenges will focus on the need to make changes. Facing the implications of change is part of the supportive process. For some, at least initially, drawbacks to making changes can be perceived as too daunting, related to fears or anxieties about whether it will be possible to cope with change, or how identity or pride will be affected. Others are more concerned about how people around them will react to the changes. Engaging with these concerns with others can lead to a reduction in anxiety and pave the way for new approaches.

Styles of interaction and expectations flowing from a range of differing cultural and educational contexts are discussed and shared in the group. One aim being to identify and dissolve fears and anxieties and open up the possibility for a reworking of habits and thought patterns along the way to achieving more productive working relations. Students are encouraged to become pro-active in contributing to the fashioning of their working relations in order to promote their educational goals.

Finding Your Way Through Series

25.11.15	8 students
17.02.16	7 students

Making Changes to Manage Stress

9.12.15	8 students
9.03.16	15 students

We will continue to develop this work with the Graduate School in the 2016/17 academic year.

Training, Workshops, Inductions and Presentations to staff and students 2015-16



Brunel Counselling Service offered **50 training, workshops, inductions, open days and presentations** to **6,266** students and a further **18** sessions to **292** staff.

We continue to offer training to those in a peer support roles like the **student mentors** who work Monday – Thursday evenings helping support new students living in halls. We also are continuing to work with the **LGBT peer support group** and the **parents and carers peer support group**.

Our group work with students ranges from helping those from widening participation to prepare for the pressure ahead in a formal workshop through the **Headstart** programme to enjoying a burger while chatting with new business students. Normalising counselling in an informal setting, helping students and staff to see us as part of the Brunel community, can go a long way to demystifying what we do and enable more people to access us.



This is the third year of the buddy scheme set up through **Brunel Volunteers** to train those students who wanted to **buddy** new students helping them to settle into Brunel in their first 6 weeks or so. We now have over 200 student buddies.

Finding a fellow student like yourself, who understands how it feels to be a student and who is trained to support you, can be vital, especially if you are new and are feeling insecure.

Our training helps the peer supporter or mentor to recognise their role and not impose their experience but to listen and let the student tell them how it is for them. They also know their limits and when to signpost to other student services and importantly, how to get support and supervision for themselves.

This training forms an important part of our continued commitment to widening participation enabling all students to make the most of their time at Brunel University London. Being a mentor or buddy also offers our students the opportunity to develop additional skills and experience to further enhance their employability.

Staff Training

We know that raising awareness amongst staff and students helps people to be signposted to the appropriate service. Mental health is everyone's business not just those in the health and well-being section. Tutors are also much more aware of their pastoral role and this is going to increase as **tutoring@brunel** is rolled out further within the new colleges.



Peter J Eldrid




Managing
depression

OUR TRAINING WORD CLOUD

We are working throughout the university to reach as many staff and students who may need to know about us.

Student mentors Action Suicide management being women's day
Sexuality Policy home Plans team Stress support training Staff MEN
nightline less anxious Mindfulness hypnotherapy
Gender harm Resilience Self boundaries Sports well Refreshers keeping
ARC group International Relationships bullying
difference big white wall paper solutions listen
Finding way Reduce Adapting LBIC joy Well being
induction Samaritans 24/7 self harm
Stress Freshers Styles Buddy action peer
Changes Subs Pressure support GTLP awareness
staying Plans
Handling Managing Headstart Tutor
Relating Residences help Mental lecture
mentor PDAP Graduate Making LGBT
college Focused/Masters workshop train Better
Fayre Distressed supporting Well



Anxiety
reduction

MASTER YOUR EXAM STRESS



In April/May the Counselling Service piloted a new course based on techniques taken from Cognitive Hypnotherapy to support students with exam stress related issues. Due to the high interest in this course it was decided to run two classes back-to-back for a total of 40 students.

The course aimed to offer students techniques which can assist learning and aid memory recall as well as performance levels and general well-being by reducing stress levels. The techniques and skills taught during this course are transferrable and can support students in many different situations, as long as they are applied correctly, as taught in the course.

Students also fill in 3 short questionnaires (GAD-7, PHQ-9 and SWEMWBS) to establish their levels of anxiety, depression and wellbeing before attending the modules.

Outcome and Feedback of this year's pilot

(This course ran shortly before and into the first week of the exam period, which usually indicates a heightened level of distress, anxiety and depression.)

Anxiety rate:

- 56% of attendees indicated a decrease in anxiety of 1 to 4 points
- 33% of attendees indicated stability in their anxiety levels
- 11% of attendees indicated an increase in their anxiety level

Depression severity rate:

- 55% of attendees indicated a decrease
- 45% of attendees indicated no change/stability
- 0% of attendees indicated an increase

Well-Being Scale:

- 67% of attendees indicated an increase in well-being
- 33% of attendees indicated stability in well-being
- 0% of attendees indicated an decrease in well being

...I have no doubt at all, that this programme made all the difference in my preparation for final exams. Without it, I doubt I would have ended up getting a overall first, as I was a 2.1 student my first 2 years! (I found out I'm going to graduate with a first class honours, and I can't believe it)...

Student Feedback

What was most valuable about the course? How did it help?

- Feel more confident to do my exam and preparation.
- Everything. Especially the audio files.
- Understanding how stress works. The difference between Eustress and Distress.

What was least valuable about the course? Any negative outcomes?

- Lack of time during the exam week.
- There was no negative outcome.

➤ No negative outcomes - everything was valuable for me. I've had a great improvement.
What other improvements or changes would you recommend?

- Only thing would be more time and maybe sessions at the beginning of the year in term, then refresher sessions before exams.
- Start the course earlier so can learn all before 1st exam. Run through year so not just for exams.
- Longer sessions / more techniques.
- Run this course earlier on in the year.

Would you be interested in a follow up to this course? 100% Yes

Would you recommend this course to a friend or colleague? 100% Yes

A big THANK YOU has to go out to the co-facilitator Al Stone for his contribution, especially the wordweaving audio files. We look forward to his participation and expertise in future courses.

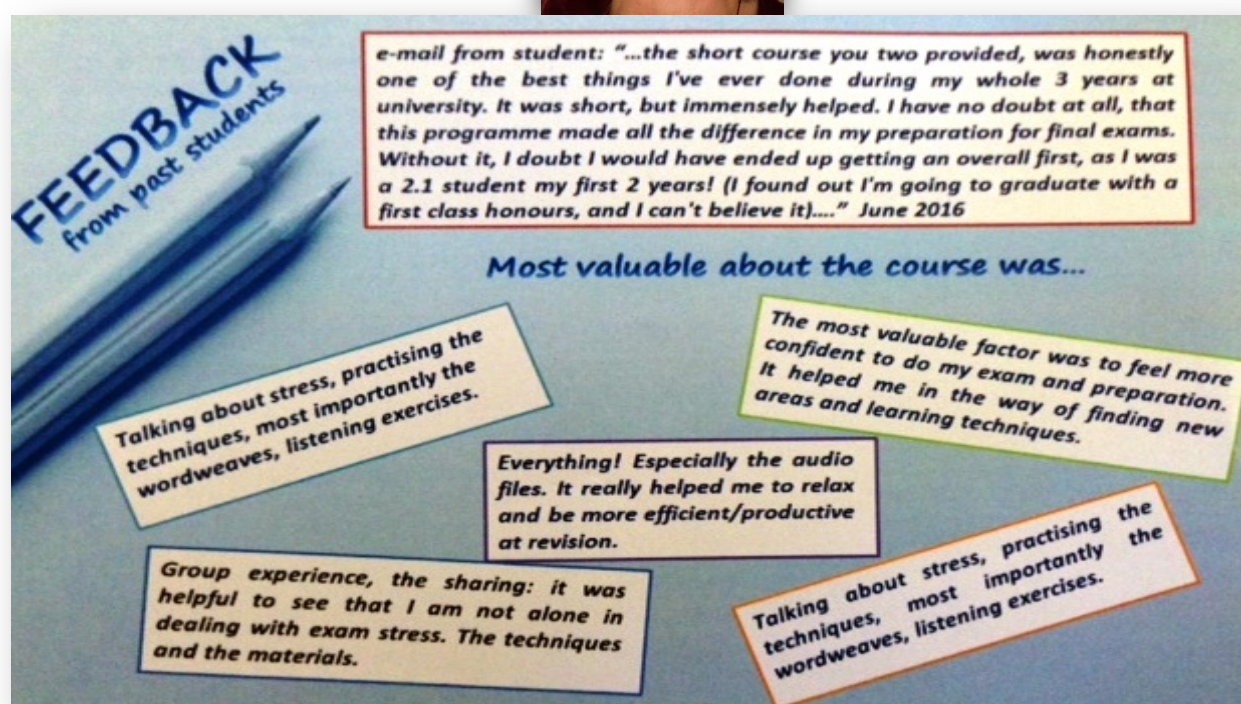
The FUTURE > Academic Year 2016/2017

For the next academic year we have been able to secure funding from the Widening Participation unit to offer two courses which will run over 5 weeks for 1 ½ hours each during term 1 and term 2 to support even more students.

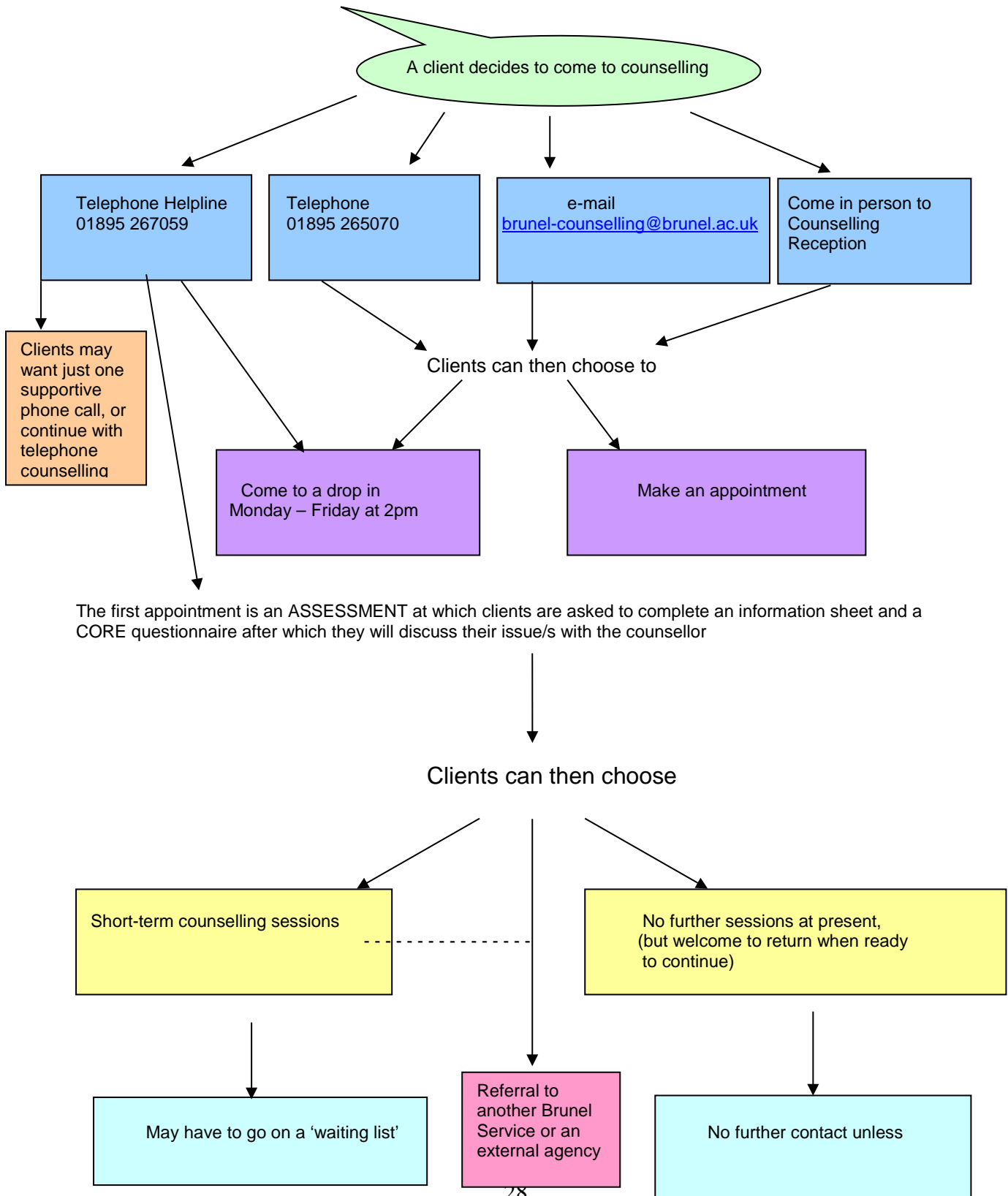
Feedback from our pilot group has been integrated in the changes made to the original course to improve student satisfaction and outcome of well-being and resilience whilst preparing for and performing during exams.

Irène Stone

Counsellor / Cognitive Hypnotherapist



Accessing Counselling: Flow Chart



To make an appointment with a counsellor:

- Call in person to the Counselling Reception opposite the Medical Centre.
- Phone **01895 265070** to book an appointment or leave a voicemail.
- Email us at:
brunel-counselling@brunel.ac.uk

Office Opening Hours

Monday	11:00am to 4:30pm
Tuesday	09:30am to 4:30pm
Wednesday	09:30am to 4:30pm
Thursday	09:30am to 4:30pm
Friday	09:30am to 4:30pm

URGENT SUPPORT

When the unexpected happens or you need help quickly:

If you have an experience, which leaves you feeling distressed, such as a broken relationship, bad news from home, course failure, bereavement, or violent incident, come along without an appointment to the **Drop-in:**
Monday – Friday, 2pm
(first come, first seen)

Phone our confidential Helpline:
01895 267059

You will be called back within 24 hours of a working day.

Further Support:

- **Security 01895 255786 ext. 66943**
- **Brunel Medical Centre**
(If living on the Uxbridge campus or local area)
01895 234426
- **The Samaritans** available 24 hours a day: **116 123**
www.samaritans.org.uk
- **Nightline** available to all students 6pm to 8am every night of term
020 7631 0101
www.nightline.org.uk (also free internet-based calls on Skype via website).
Email listening service:
listening@nightline.org.uk.
- **Big White Wall**
Free anonymous online support for all Brunel students having a tough time - go to **www.bigwhitewall.com/university** and use your university email address to login.
- **Get Connected** a free and confidential helpline for young people, plus email and webchat services
1pm to 11pm daily
www.getconnected.org.uk
0808 808 4994

