

Counselling and Wellbeing

Annual Report

Academic Year 2014-2015

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Our contribution to ARU

The Counselling and Wellbeing Service (C&WB) aims to contribute to the student experience by providing professional counselling and mental health support to students and providing training, consultation and awareness-raising sessions to staff to enable organisational wide understanding of psychological and mental wellbeing and appropriate support for students.

Summary Data – Student Support

Service use 2014/15 :

Number of registrations with the C&WB– **1232** (13/14 - 1005) – **increase of 23%**

Between academic years 2010/11 and 2014/15 there has been a 126% increase in the number of students registering with the C&WB Service (from 544 registrations to 1232)

Total number of individual interventions –**5371** (13/14 - 4507) – **increase of 19%**

Since 2012/13, when we began recording individual interventions, there has been an increase in interventions of nearly 40% (from 3852 to 5371).

Satisfaction:

We continue to meet the 90% target for student satisfaction

90% of respondents said they were satisfied with the support received.

91% would recommend the service to a friend.

Impact on Students

Feedback shows that the C&WB Service continues to make a direct contribution to student retention. Of those accessing the service who had said they had been missing lectures, considering or planning to intermit or drop out, 84% said that the support they received changed this.

To assess impact, students accessing therapeutic support are asked to complete before and after scores against factors such as concentration, motivation and confidence. Overall 81% report positive improvements on a range of factors:

- Improvement in concentration – **75%**
- Improvement in motivation – **87%**
- Improvement in confidence – **83%**
- Improvement in ability to study – **79%**
- Improvement in anxiety – **82%**
- Improvement in depression – **79%**
- Improvement in other – **81%**

Qualitative feedback from students:

Comments from student feedback –

- Counselling support has helped a lot with feelings of depression and I feel more stable, confident and generally happier in myself.
- My counsellor was very kind, helpful and supportive through a very difficult time. She was understanding and made me feel that I could open up about all of my worries. I'm thankful her referral to IAPT and the correspondence between her, my doctor and IAPTS was very organized
- Overall experience has been life changing and hugely positive
- I have and would recommend this service to others in a similar position to myself. I found it extremely helpful during a very difficult placement and I am thankful I got in touch and was seen so quickly. Very easy and accessible service.
- Before my counselling I felt like my world was collapsing in on me, big weight on my shoulders, darkness and that every activity was a mountain. Going to the sessions has made me focus on myself and my feelings with reflection and clarity. I feel I have made a big leap through the darkness and a good start in understanding and accepting myself, which in turn allows me to face the world with a little more confidence. Thank you.
- Helping a student to carry on studying is perhaps the greatest thing this service can do. Education is so important. This service does well to uphold this.

Summary Data – working with staff

C&WB provide consultation, training and awareness raising activities for all ARU staff which aims to improve understanding of and responses to MH and thereby improve the experience for students.

Staff training/awareness

Number of sessions	Topic	Number of attendees
3	Managing the moment	24
1	Alcohol awareness	9
1	Mindfulness	25
4	MH First Aid Lite	34
1	MH First Aid Standard (2 day course)	12
Total Attendances by staff		104

Other Staff liaison in support of MH

Cause for Concern – 22 cases

Fitness to Study – 2 cases

Staff satisfaction

100% of staff respondents were satisfied with the training they received from C&WB

100% would recommend this to a colleague

Our achievements

Increased the range and flexibility of the support we offer to both students and staff:

- Introduced online CBT therapy for students (Silver Cloud) that can be accessed through either a therapist supported route or direct self-managed access for those who wish to prefer not to register with the service.
- Negotiated direct referral into the NHS IAPT service (since February in Cambridgeshire and July in Essex). This extends the routes into therapeutic support for our students requiring lower levels of MH support intervention.
- Increased the number of placement counsellors thereby increasing access to the service (from 2 to 4)
- Increased the number of MH mentors offering specialist MH support to students with DSA (from 2 to 3)
- Introduced Mindfulness and food-&-mood sessions as positive mental health promotions
- Introduced fitness consultation referrals in conjunction with Active Anglia to promote mental wellbeing
- Introduced MH First Aid Lite as an option for staff who were unable to attend the full 2 day training. This has been offered as both a general option and as a session specifically for ALSS in response to concerns about MH situations within their faculty.

Comments on year 2014/15

This has been a very challenging year for the C&WB service. Registrations have risen by 23% for the second year in a row and interactions by nearly 20%. The types of presenting issues are now being monitored and it is apparent that a number of those engaging with the service have severe and enduring mental health conditions. We have worked with faculty and other colleagues to help reduce staff concerns and liaising appropriately to manage Fitness to Study cases, 'Cause for Concern' alerts and monthly case review meetings.

Staff have left the service during the year creating vacant posts at the Cambridge campus for both a Counsellor and a Mental Health Adviser. It has been particularly difficult to recruit to the latter, leaving the service without a specialist at a time when the demand is very evident.

As listed in the Achievement section, C&WB have put in place a number of measures to alleviate the pressure of increased demand and unfilled staff vacancies. In spite of the initiatives and developments, waiting lists for counselling emerged had to be put in place earlier in the academic year than had ever been the case in previous years and these remained in place until the end of the academic year. Deadlines for some actions identified within the C&WB Operational Plan have been extended. These include the review of MH policies and services against UUK guidance and development of targeted MH workshops for faculty specific students and staff.