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**AIT Student Counselling Service**

**Information for Students**

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***General Information***

AIT Student Counselling Service is a confidential service staffed by professionally qualified psychologist and psychotherapist/counsellors. Its aim is to provide easily accessible support for students when personal issues arise that affect their happiness, well-being, capacity to cope, relationships or learning. The service is free of charge to full-time registered students.

***Reasons for Attending Counselling***

Some of the typical reasons for students attending the Counselling Service include difficulties in day-to-day coping, relationship difficulties, issues around sexuality, academic concerns, family difficulties, social anxieties, mood changes, stress or past or present traumatic events. Any issues of concern to a student can be discussed at counselling.

Counselling provides an opportunity to speak privately with a professional about any problems that are worrying or upsetting. Talking to people who are specifically trained to listen, understand and make sense of problems can deepen a person’s understanding of what is happening, and then can help develop alternative ways of dealing with the situation. It is often helpful to attend counselling when ways of coping with a difficulty have been tried and are not working so that new ways of understanding and managing the problem can be explored.

***Accessing the Counselling Service***

Students can contact the counselling service in any of the following ways:

* Student Health Centre receptionist 090 6468063 or calling to the Health Centre
* Emailing counsellor@ait.ie
* Download and complete the registration and CORE forms from the Counselling page on AIT’s website and email it to [counsellor@ait.ie](mailto:counsellor@ait.ie) or return it to Student Health Centre receptionist.
* Students may also be referred to the service by a member of staff of AIT or by a professional outside AIT such as GP.

***Appointments***

The counselling service operates on an appointment only basis. When you contact the Student Health Centre requesting an appointment you will be asked to complete 2 forms: a Counselling Registration Form and a CORE form. The CORE form is a standardized form that helps us assess urgency, and is part of a system that helps you and your counsellor track progress and improvement. You can also access these forms online on the Counselling page on AIT’s website.

Appointments are offered as soon as possible but at times during the year there may be a waiting list. However, if a student is in crisis an appointment will be offered as soon as possible.

***You will be offered the next available appointment. This may clash with a class on your timetable but due to demands on the service this is unavoidable. If subsequent appointments are required they will be scheduled around your timetable.***

***Attending Counselling Appointments***

The first meeting between a student and a counsellor is primarily a consultation to assess the problem scenario and whether counselling would be appropriate, to explain how the service works and answer any questions that a student has. Consultations/appointments typically last up to 50 minutes and students attend weekly, fortnightly or at less frequent intervals depending on the student’s needs. Students usually attend for between 1-6 appointments. It may be possible to attend for more than 6 appointments should the need arise and this will be discussed between the student and the counsellor.

***Cancelling a Counselling Appointment***

Due to the high demand on the service we request that if a student needs to cancel an appointment that they try to give 48 hours’ notice so that the appointment can be offered to another student on the waiting list.

***Non-Attendance at Counselling Appointment***

Due to the high demand on the service we request that students attend their counselling appointments unless this is unavoidable. If a student does not attend their initial intake counselling appointment they will not be contacted, and must contact the service again if they wish to engage. Students who do not attend two consecutive scheduled counselling appointments will be considered withdrawn from the service and the vacant place will be offered to another student.

***Confidentiality***

What is discussed between a student and a counsellor is confidential and is not disclosed to anyone outside the Student Counselling Service. If the counsellor deems it beneficial to involve someone such as an academic, other Student Services Staff, a chaplain, a doctor or nurse, a parent or any other person, this will be discussed fully with the student and their consent sought.

Confidentiality may, however, be broken by the counsellor if there is a significant and immediate risk of a student harming himself or herself or of harming other people or in situations where a vulnerable person such as a child may be a risk of harm. At the first appointment with a counsellor students can ask any questions about confidentiality.

***Court Reports***

The service does not provide reports for court or Victim Impact Reports.