

Edge Hill University Counselling Team
Confidentiality and Record Keeping Policy

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a very important aspect of counselling sessions, enabling people to feel they can talk freely about their concerns in a safe environment. At the same time it can sometimes be important that your support at university is coordinated, particularly if it relates to time out of study or mitigating factors affecting your ability to progress. In these circumstances we might work closely with colleagues to support you. This would be discussed and agreed with you before you start your first counselling session. The information below will give you some background information so you can make an informed decision.

The Edge Hill University Counselling Team is an organisational member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, and adheres to their Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions. All counsellors are aware of their responsibility for confidentiality and for outlining the circumstances which may limit this confidentiality.

Therefore there are some exceptions to confidentiality. These include:

- If we think there is a serious risk of harm to yourself and/or others.
- Where we cannot contact you but suspect you are in danger. For example, if you had not been seen for several days and colleagues and/or friends felt concerned, we may disclose information without your agreement.
- Where there is a legal requirement to disclose information. This could be for example because it has been ordered by a court, or because the law requires for information to be passed on without consent.
- Where you have given us your consent to share information and/or to liaise with others as above.

Liaison and Correspondence

Where written information may be required to be passed on to a third party, our Policy is to restrict the information to the minimum. This would normally be to provide only written confirmation of attendance and non-attendance and factual information regarding the presenting problem, engagement with counselling and outcome of sessions. We are not able to provide in-depth reports or to give opinions or diagnoses. At times, liaison with internal and external services may be necessary to ensure an adequate and appropriate response to your needs. To be able to do this, we require your written consent and therefore you will be asked at your assessment appointment whether you wish to sign our consent form so we can liaise where appropriate.

Notes and Record Keeping

The Counselling Team keep minimal notes and records. In line with best practice guidelines and to ensure continuity in the therapeutic process, we will keep records of your attendance and brief notes regarding the content of your sessions, together with any measures you have completed and correspondence. All information is gathered, stored and destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). This information is kept electronically and used to aid the efficient running of the service.

Security

All material is kept securely on a specially developed electronic system which is accessible only to the Counselling Team and the Student Wellbeing Team. Information is shared across both teams only when necessary to ensure your fuller support. Client records are kept for seven years (from the end of the academic year of your last appointment) and then deleted confidentially.

Access to Information

If you have any concerns about our policy on confidentiality and record keeping, you are welcome to discuss it fully with your counsellor. If you wish to see the information held on you, please put your request in writing to your counsellor. We will be happy to book a session for your counsellor to go through the records with you, normally within 21 days.

If you require any further information, please contact us on:

Tel: 01695 650988

Email: counselling@edgehill.ac.uk

Or write to:

The Counselling Team

The Health and Wellbeing Centre

Milton House

41 Ruff Lane

St Helens Road

Ormskirk L39 4QP