

The Counselling and Mental Health Service

Annual Report 2020/21

Counselling and Mental Health Service Team

Head of Student Life and Wellbeing

Temporary post left March 21)

Associate Director Student Life and Success (interim) (started April 21)

Permanent staff (core team)

Lead Counsellor (1.0 fte)

Senior Counsellor (0.6 fte left Dec 20)

Counsellor (0.5 fte increased to 0.7 Jan 21)

Counsellor (0.6 fte)

Counsellor (0.4 tfe increased to 0.6 Jan 21)

Counsellor (0.4 fte started March 21)

Mental Health Advisor (0.6 fte started January 20 left Sept 20)

Mental Health Advisor (1.0 fte started March 20 left Sept 20)

Mental Health Advisor (0.6 started December 20)

Mental Health Advisor (1fte started January 21)

Administrative and Reception Staff

Disability Officer – p/t CMHS admin

Disability Officer – p/t CMHS admin

Disability Officer – p/t CMHS admin

MyBradford Service – CMHS reception

Sessional Counsellors (casual hours) - 4 staff

Associates and trainees – 5 staff

In addition to paid permanent counsellors, we use a team of associates and trainees to deliver the service. Associates are qualified counsellors who work on a voluntary basis in order to gain more experience and accrue the necessary hours in order to be eligible for BACP accreditation (or equivalent). Trainees are counsellors in training who, as an essential part of their training, need to be on a placement in order to gain the necessary experience as a course requirement. Both associates and trainees are provided with appropriate extensive supervision, training, mentoring and support in order to ensure that they provide the best service for our clients. In 2020/21 we had one associate and four trainees in the team.

About the Service

The Counselling and Mental Health Service is a BACP accredited service which provides counselling and psycho-educational training for the students and staff of the University of Bradford and counselling for students at Bradford College. We also provide mental health advice, information and support to students at the University. We work within the BACP Ethical Framework. We are a busy service, and in order to accommodate the numbers of clients and minimise waiting times for counselling, we usually offer a brief therapy model of up to four sessions for students and 6 for staff in the first instance, after a 25-minute intake interview to assess need and/or offer immediate help. We will always endeavour to extend this contract when appropriate, in cases of risk, for example, or where the work cannot be usefully or ethically contained in four sessions. Most counselling and mental health advice takes place at our premises in Student Central although due to COVID-19 we adapted to Service to offer telephone / video conference appointments and resumed some face to face in July 2020 when we returned to campus. We offer psycho educational workshops to students and staff at the university, all of these have been on Zoom this year. Service users can access the service through an on-line registration form; they will then be offered an Intake appointment.

Year review:

- **Outstanding Achievement Award. We were thrilled to find that our service won this award in the category of Student Support!**
- The Counselling and Mental Health Service continued to extend and adapt to the **mental health advisor roles**. 2 Mental health Advisors left early September 2021. Two MHAs joined the service in December 2020 and in January 21. The interim period for mental health advice was covered by the service lead. Adapting the Service to include MH advice and embedding new staff into the team - new processes, procedures, team collaboration etc - was ongoing throughout 20/21.
- **Restructure of service.** The remaining Senior Counsellor left the service in December 2020. This gave an opportunity to create another grade 8 post and to level and balance the service structure. The senior (previously 2) role and lead were covering all the supervision of other service staff (trainees, associates and sessional counsellors). To enable all the core team counsellors to take a formal role in supervision two counsellors were trained to be clinical supervisors (one already qualified). Grade 9 hours were shared between bot and a new 0.4 counsellor role who joined the service in March 2021.

- Head of Student Life and Wellbeing (temporary) left in March 2021 and Associate Director Student Life and Success (interim) started April 2021.
- The service continued to adapt to **COVID-19** – creating new ways to respond to students and staff needs. The whole Service was adapted to continue to offer an accessible, safe, confidential, professional service in compliance with university values and the BACP Ethical Framework. Examples are:
 - **C19.** From July 20 a skeleton team returned to campus to be able to offer, in line with the overall University strategy, a **blended mix of appointments** – telephone, video and face to face. All staff (including trainees, sessionals and associates) were equipped with laptops for working from home and PPE for working on campus. Monthly rotas were put in place. Only core team and trainee counsellors were part of the onsite rota.
 - **C19.** Our workshops for students were adapted to create a regular, weekly offering on Zoom ‘**Wellbeing Wednesday**’. Weekly seemed to be a better response to the levels of isolation students were experiencing.
 - **C19.** We also set up a ‘**Coping with COVID**’ group with ran every Tuesday afternoon aimed at students who were affected in any way by the pandemic.
 - **C19.** We increased the number of **articles** we provided for newsletters for staff and students to support wellbeing and address issues such as isolation, anxiety and self-care.
 - **C19.** We found ways to **collaborate more closely with other internal teams** also supporting students; Students Union, Student Life, Disability Services for example – sharing information about events and projects and informing to students about support available at key periods (letter to students in accommodation email at the beginning of term for example, resources available over the winter and spring holiday periods).
 - **C19. Closer collaboration also with external services** such as Bradford Student Medical Health Practice (meeting March 21), Homes for Students (onsite halls of residence), First Response (meetings Feb and March 21), Qwell and Student Space. Service Lead attended training events with both Qwell (Oct 2020) and Student Space (April 21). The CMHS registered with Student Space in Sept 20 – students who access their website are directed to the service.
 - **C19.** Service Lead gave a presentation at the **good practice sharing event** for universities across Yorkshire and the Humber in February 21, entitled ‘Supporting Positive Student Mental Health and Wellbeing during COVID 19’.
 - **C19.** Service Lead attended a **BACP Online Networking event** for colleges and universities in February 21. An opportunity to share good practice with other institutions and get ideas for supporting students during this challenging time.
 - **C19.** Given the challenges students were facing economically, we supported the **hardship fund** (managed by Student Life team) by emailing all our service users to flag up the existence of this fund.

- **Crisis cases and response.** There has been an increase in referrals to the mental health advisors this year- from 87 in 2019/20 to 209 in 20/21. There has also been an increase in the number of risk cases (red flagged on Titanium) from 20 in the year 19/20 to 116 in 20/21. This has had a big impact on the service. Closer collaboration with other professionals has been a priority along with making sure our responses are thought through clearly following the BACP Ethical Framework. As well as some of the points highlighted above, we created a daily check in meeting space for the whole team to access, chaired by Service Lead (or other) to debrief and support each other. We also provided rota cover over the two-week winter break - a first for the core team.
- **Health and Wellbeing Fitness to Study** - the mental health advisors and service lead were involved in several cases.
- **Training with Disability Service** continued for the staff in mental health advisor roles and for the service lead. This training focused on disability process and procedures such as Disabled Students Allowance, Health and Wellbeing Fitness to Study policy and procedures, creating an LSP learner support profile and creating an AOE assessment of entitlement.
- **Calm Room** – due to the pandemic we had to close this facility this year sadly.
- **NHS MyWellBeing College** – continued in partnership with this service. MyWBC was remote this year so referrals for one-to-one CBT, self-help focused support went through MyWBC admin. They also offered 3, 6-week online courses for students - in October 2020 and April 2021 we advertised a Managing My Anxiety course, and in February a Managing My Depression course to all students. Service Lead also took part on a Twitter event for World Mental Health Day with MyWBC to promote the courses, one to one support and Wellbeing Wednesday workshops to students.
- **Bradford College** - we continued to work with college students offering them counselling appointments both face to face and remote. Increased collaboration with their Safeguarding and Welfare teams due to the impact of the pandemic on students.
- Service lead and other core team staff were involved in various **cross University projects**: PGR Connect, Step Up to HE (You and Your Wellbeing), Online Transition Module, Peer Assisted Learning, Care Experienced Student working group, Mental Health First Aid training for staff.
- **Peer Mentoring for Wellbeing pilot.** The MHAs have worked closely with the Student Experience and Success Team to provide referrals and to encourage participation in a student mentoring project designed to build a support community for students with mental health conditions. Seven students are engaged in the pilot project with a view to rolling the project out next year if the pilot proves successful.
- The team offered weekly **workshops for students** through the new scheme – Wellbeing Wednesdays which included, mindfulness, building resilience, procrastination, assertiveness, managing change and anxiety. Some of these were offered in collaboration with colleagues in Academic Skills during Activity Weeks and

Careers Service colleagues. We also offered Coping with COVID (above) and a workshop for International Students along with the Student Life team.

- We decide to reduce our POD, **workshops for staff**, offer this year, choosing to focus more on student support. was reduced this year due to pandemic. Service Lead ran an 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction course in the autumn 2020.
- The core team were involved in **promoting the service** and wellbeing themes through student and staff Induction events and at Open Days, World Suicide Prevention Day, World Mental Health Day, University Mental Health Day.
- We had 11 **Freedom of Information** (FOI) requests this year.
- **Supervision to other teams.** One of the counsellors supervised the mental health study coaches monthly from the Disability Service.
- The team offered **consultative support** with regards to complex student cases to all staff at the University.

Service Satisfaction headlines

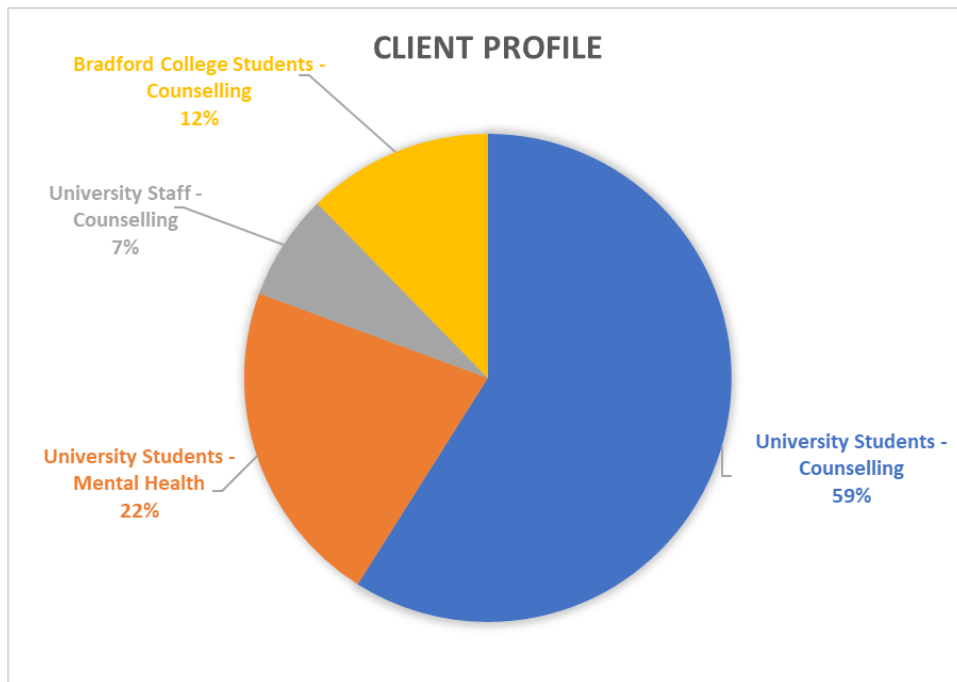
- **95%** Very happy or happy about their experience of the Counselling Service
- **70%** said counselling helped them do better in their academic work/work
- **75%** said coming to counselling improved their overall experience of University/ College/ Work
- **73%** said that counselling helped them develop skills that might be useful for future employment (eg building resilience, increased confidence etc)
- **46%** found counselling was the most significant factor or an important factor in helping them stay at University/College/work

Service Use

Statistics

Individual Service Users Total: 965

- University students counselling 569
- University students mental health 209
- University staff counselling 68
- Bradford College students counselling 119



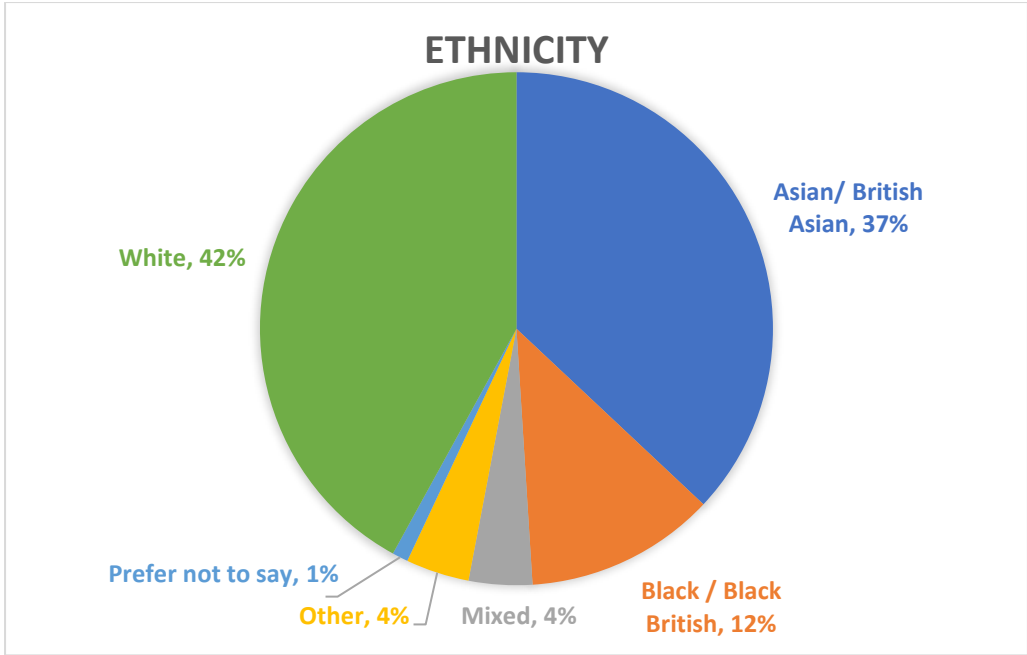
Appointments Provided Total: 4914

- Appointments attended 3492
- Appointments unconfirmed (offered but not confirmed by client) 634
- Appointments cancelled 268
- Appointments DNA 380
- Counsellor cancelled 93

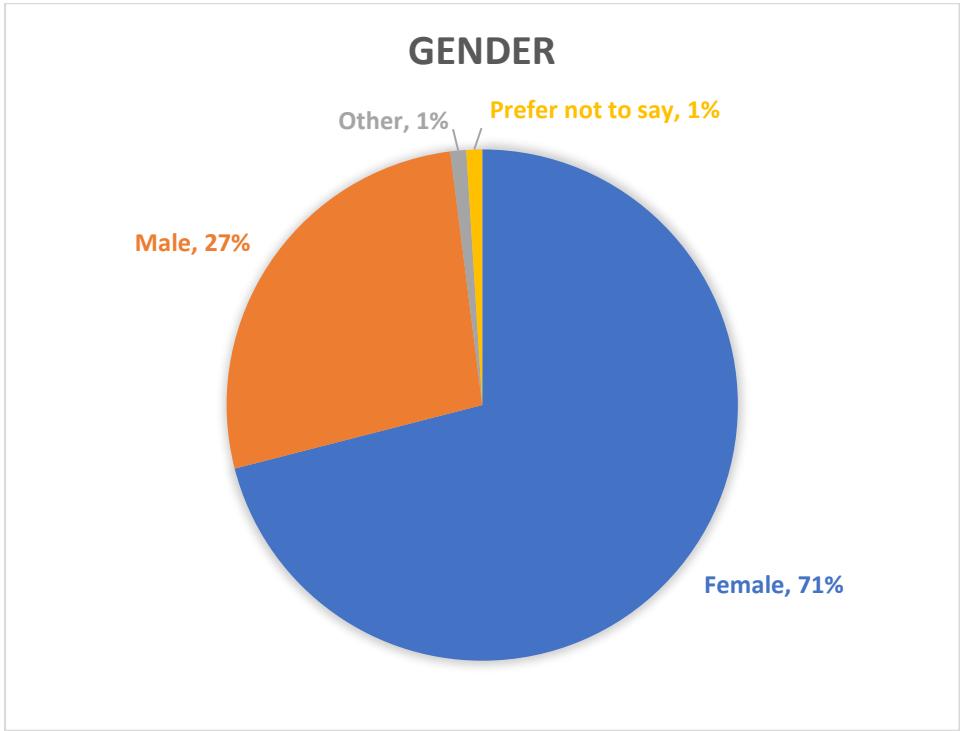
Average number of appointments 4.73

Workshop Attendees: 381

Ethnicity stats



Gender Stats



Presenting Issues

'Presenting issue' is what is identified by the counsellor or mental health advisor at Intake as being the primary initial problem.

- 1) Anxiety 27% (of 965 – not all of whom will have attended an Intake)
- 2) Depression 18%
- 3) Loss 7%
- 4) Relationships 6.5%
- 5) Abuse 3.5%
- 6) Other MH conditions 1%

20/21 Risk

20% of all student clients seen at Intake were assessed to be at risk. The categories below show the percentage of those 20%:

- 1) Suicide 58%
- 2) Self-harm 24%
- 3) Academic 12%
- 4) Risk to others 4.4%
- 5) Risk from others 1.5%

Waiting times

- Average waiting time for an Intake (first) appointment was 3 days.

Staff Counselling

- Staff client numbers:
68

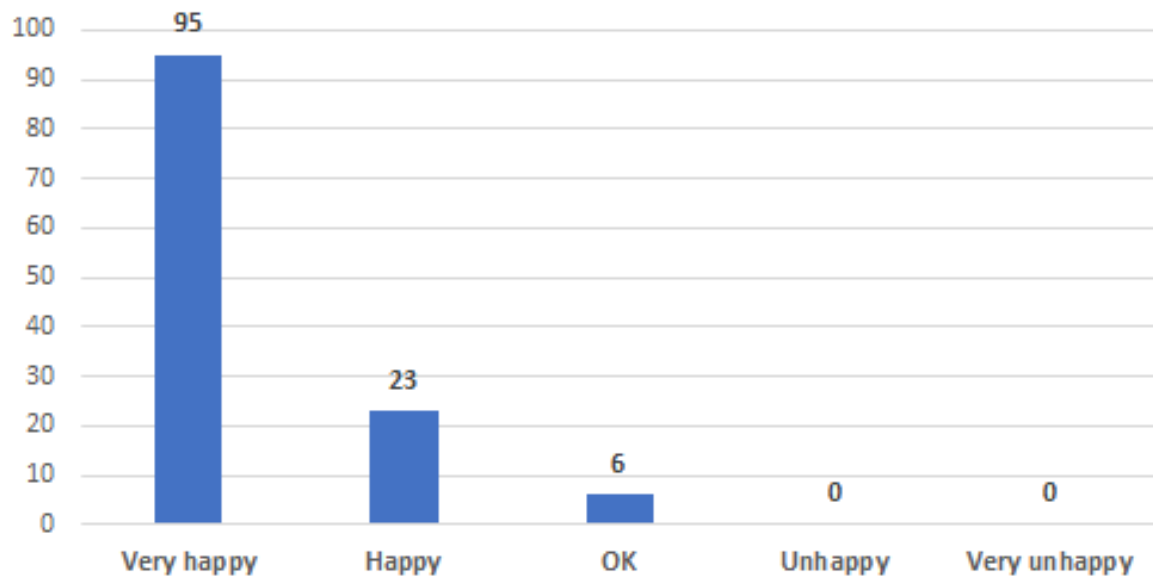
Referrals by:

- Department 23.5%
- Self 23.5%
- Website 22%
- HR 17%
- Occupational Health
7.5%

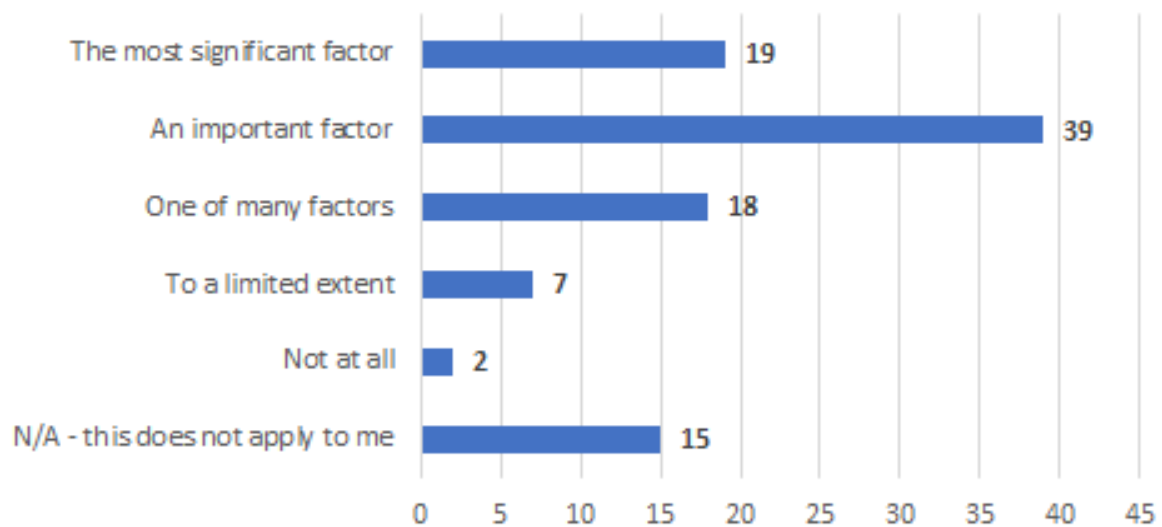
Job type:

- Administrative 41%
- Other 32%
- Academic 27%

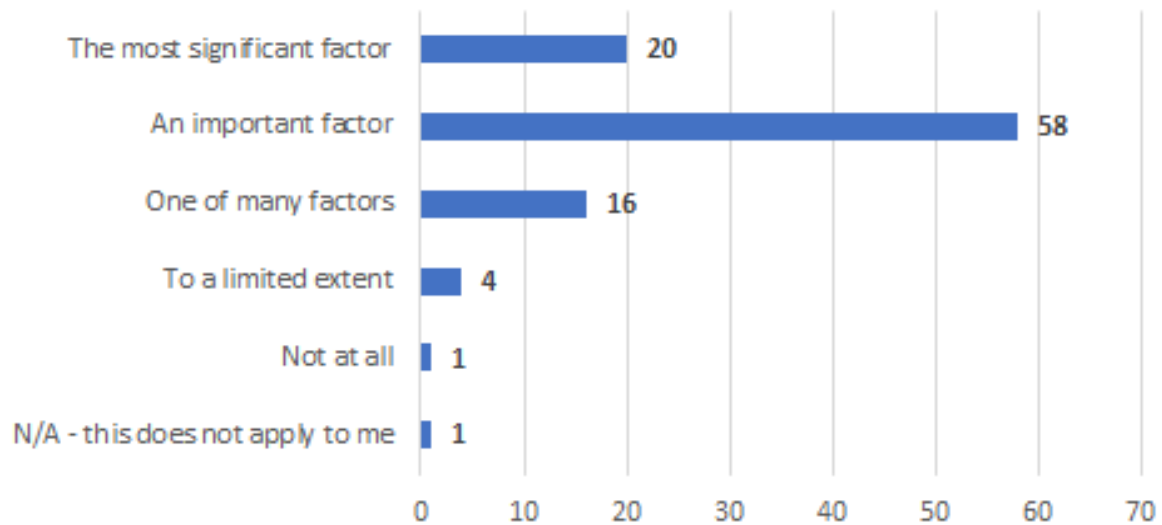
How do you feel about the service you've had here?



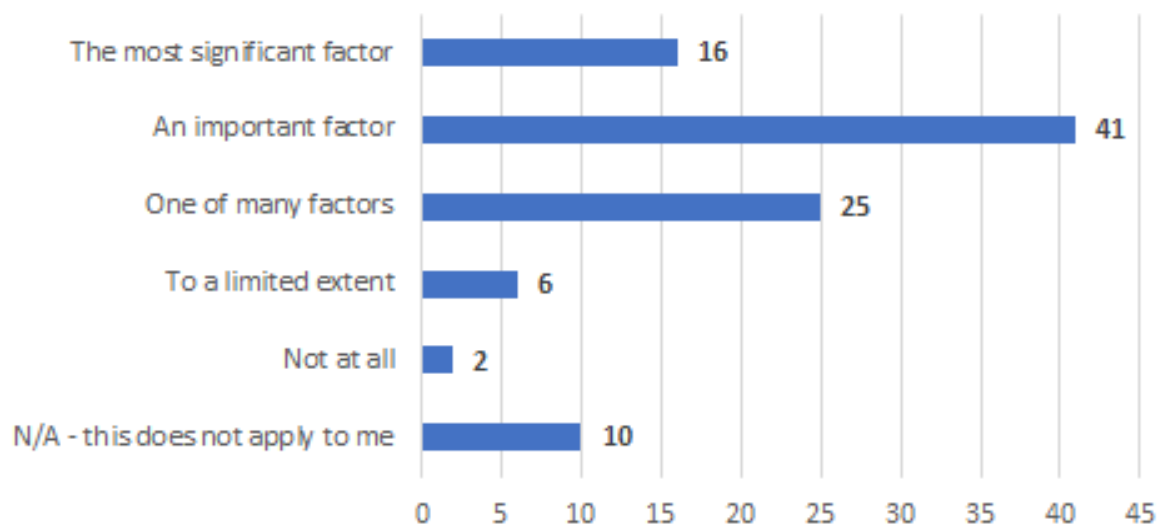
To what extent is counselling helping you to stay at Univeristy/College/Work?

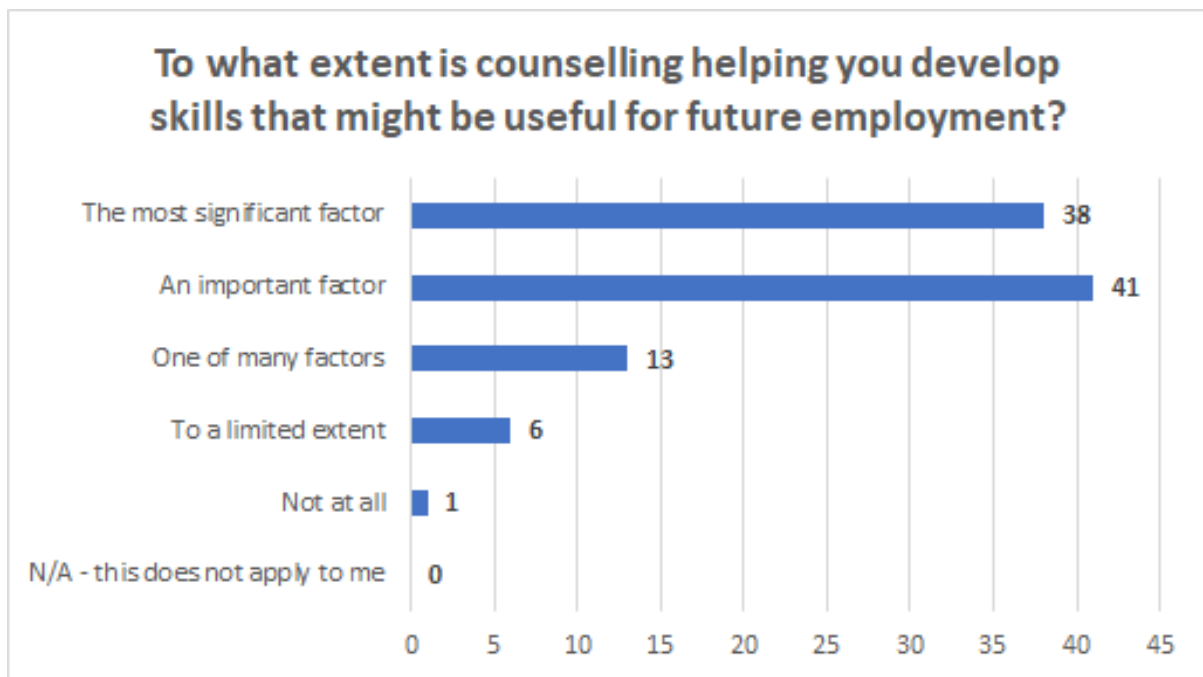


To what extent is counselling improving your overall experience of University/College/Work?



To what extent is counselling helping you do better in academic work/work?





A sample of Feedback comments

Through my counselling experience I have been able to get through a tough period and I have been able to focus on what to do in similar situations to what I have been through. Though this experience I have been able to come up with solutions and it has really helped being able to speak to someone. I would definitely encourage people to reach out when they need help.

I wanted to send a quick note to say thank you for your counselling support. The sessions have been helpful to better understand relevant schemas and I look forward to building upon the learnings moving forward.

It was crucial for me to learn to have an outlet for emotions. These four sessions really helped me understand the importance of allocating a set amount of time to discuss my feelings and organise my thoughts. Having someone also see a more positive perspective to something I viewed as negative has also really been helpful.

This service is invaluable, X my counsellor was very good with helping me deal and cope with everything going on.

The counselling service helped me through one of the most difficult periods of my life. X was a fantastic counsellor and so empathetic. The advice he gave was not an outsiders imposed top down, instead he listened to what I was and wasn't saying and helped me work through my problems organically.

The services are absolutely fantastic, I have no issues at all with the services that were provided to me. The Counsellor was very reassuring, brilliant listener and offered excellent advice on how to deal with the issues that I've been experiencing.

