

University of Birmingham Mental Health and Wellbeing Service is a short-term therapy service and generally we work in a 5 session model.

Your Practitioner/Counsellor will contract to work towards a therapeutic aim that they feel is realistic within the 5 sessions available. A lot of useful work can be done in 5 sessions however it is unrealistic to expect to work through longer term issues or more complex presentations in this time. If you are experiencing longer term or more complex issues your Practitioner/Counsellor may advise you to register with a longer-term service if you have not already, and some suggestions of where to register are below. As there is likely to be a significant wait for these longer-term services we would encourage to register as soon as possible. Your Practitioner/Counsellor will explore with you what can be safely accomplished in the 5 sessions you have together – this could include psychoeducation/building routine/coping skills/tools and techniques for emotional regulation or looking at patterns of behaviour and/or relating. Being a University service if there is an issue that is affecting your academic performance this may be prioritised to ensure you can remain on your course. Your Practitioner/Counsellor may refer you to other places within the University for support if appropriate.

Before your first session it might be helpful to spend some time thinking about what you consider the priority is for you to work on in this episode of support. It is always helpful to try and be specific about what you want to do more of rather less of when it comes to therapy aims – so, for example, rather than ‘I want to feel less socially anxious’ you might work towards the aim of ‘I’d like to feel more comfortable in social settings’. It can be helpful to think about how you would know if you were achieving this – e.g it might be by saying yes to more invitations to socialise or joining a society you have wanted to be part of.

At your first appointment your Practitioner/Counsellor will explore with you what you wish to get out of the five sessions and what you would like to focus on during your work together. Your Counsellor will check in with you as you go through your sessions that the work you are doing together is going in right direction for you. You are also very welcome to let your Counsellor know at any stage if you feel the work you are doing isn’t helpful or if you wish to explore a different focus.

At the end of your sessions it is important to take some time and reflect on what you have got out of your sessions and what you want to take forward – sometimes it can be easy to forget what you have covered in therapy as time passes. It is recommended to write down a note or letter to yourself which you can refer to in the future that captures some of the key things you have covered and what you want to remember. Also do look into some relevant self help books/workbooks/podcasts that will help you to continue reflecting and developing. There are some great ones on our website [Online Resources \(birmingham.ac.uk\)](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/online-resources) or you can ask your Practitioner/Counsellor to recommend any specific ones that they think you might find helpful.

Please do remember that before, during or after your therapy sessions you can access UBHeard - the 24/7 support line [Mental Health Support Line \(birmingham.ac.uk\)](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/mental-health-support-line) where you can speak with a Counsellor at any time for in the moment support.

Frequently asked questions.

What’s the point of doing 5 sessions?

A lot of work can be done in 5 sessions! The majority of our students find that engaging in 5 sessions of support leads to improvements in how they think, feel and behave. Over 5 sessions there is space to explore the issues faced, gain perspective, learn tools and techniques and think about changes you might like to make. A really good way to view therapy is as personal development - something you might do at various points throughout your life when you need support or want to work on something rather than it being something you do once to ‘fix a problem’.

I have had short term therapy previously from another organisation– can I now have longer term at UoB?

We only work within a 5 session model and are unable to offer longer term support, please refer/register with the services below for longer term therapy. You can however use our 24/7 support line whenever and as often as you might need to throughout your studies. If you have a diagnosed mental health condition you may also be eligible for longer term support throughout your studies from a mentor with mental health specialism as part of a Reasonable

Adjustment Plan – see [Disabilities, long-term mental health conditions and specific learning difficulties \(birmingham.ac.uk\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk) for more details.

I have finished my 5 sessions – can I re-register straight away for another set?

Students have a limit of one episode (5 sessions) during the busiest demand period per academic year from October – June however can re-register outside of these times. Multiple registrations for similar issues would suggest that longer term support may be needed, and students maybe encouraged to explore this option in these circumstances.

Can I see the same therapist as I saw for my previous set of sessions last academic year?

If you let us know you have a preference to see a specific Practitioner/Counsellor we will try our best to accommodate this – although there will be times when this simply isn't possible if a staff member has left or changed roles. Requests for a specific practitioner may mean you wait longer to be allocated and start your sessions.

Options for longer term therapy

GP – your GP can make any referrals for assessments within community for longer term support. Some GP practices have their own Counselling provision as well.

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Nationwide NHS provided service with whom you can normally self-refer. You can find your local IAPT service on the [Find an NHS psychological therapies service \(IAPT\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Living Well Consortium Offers free therapy in Birmingham for 16-25 year olds

Forward Thinking Birmingham (for people aged 25 or under) including out of hours support and drop in service. Their phone number is 0300 3000099

NHS provided Healthy Minds offering taking therapies for over 25s

Open door free counselling with people aged 12 -25 and takes referrals from your GP or Forward Thinking Birmingham

Birmingham LGBT Centre provides free psychotherapy for LGBTQ individuals in Birmingham

Self-Referral Form | Our Roots CIC OurRoots Counselling and CBT for people over14

Newman Health and Wellbeing offering low cost/free counselling to adults and is based in Bartley Green

St. Martins Counselling in the Bullring offers low cost long term Counselling

Cedar Counselling – south Birmingham provide low cost subsidised counselling session

Carrs Lane Church provide a free/subsidised counselling service to which you can self-refer. Their phone number is 01241 643 6363

Meridan Centre in Billesley, Birmingham. They ask clients to pay £1 for every £1000 they earn. Eg, £10 if earning £10,000. You can self refer by calling or emailing. Their phone number is 0121 441 1900.

Pattigift is a Birmingham based Service offering Counselling to people of African heritage

To find the details of an approved private counsellor in your area (although you will probably have to pay for these sessions) visit www.bacp.co.uk OR www.psychotherapy.org.uk