

# LYIT COUNSELLING SERVICE

## INFORMATION FOR LYIT STAFF

The health and welfare of students is everyone's concern. Staff encounter students in their many varied roles within the Institute.

Occasionally staff may encounter students who are very distressed. Sometimes the issues that are the cause of a student's distress may be relatively minor, in other situations they may be more severe and complex.

When you think that the student might benefit from specific help they can be referred into the Student Counselling Service. It is important to be prepared for emergencies, but you should be aware that they occur very rarely and expert help is available.

Below are answers to some frequently asked questions and some simple guidelines around responding to a distressed student.

# LYIT COUNSELLING SERVICE

## STAFF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Who is counselling for?

Counselling is available to all registered students (full, part-time, undergraduate and postgraduate) of Letterkenny Institute of Technology.

### Is it free?

The service is free to all registered students of LYIT

### Is it confidential?

Yes. As a general rule, counsellors will not divulge any information about students outside the service, without their permission. Please see the Counselling Service Confidentiality Policy for more information.

### How does a student make an appointment?

Students can make an appointment by calling into the Student Services Reception desk and requesting an appointment or they can request an appointment by telephoning the Student Services administrator on 074 918 6855.

They can also email the counsellor at [counselling@lyit.ie](mailto:counselling@lyit.ie) to request an appointment or telephone 087 955 5266, leaving a short message and a contact telephone number.

# LYIT COUNSELLING SERVICE

## STAFF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Can I arrange an appointment on behalf of a student?**

If you feel the student needs to see a counsellor, it is important to have their agreement in this. You can then make an appointment for them.

It is best to do this in the presence of the student as it is important that they are involved in the process and this means they will be more likely to attend the arranged appointment.

If you have concerns about the safety of the student or believe they require an emergency appointment please indicate this when making the appointment.

### **I am concerned about the welfare of one of my students what should I do?**

The first step may be to raise your concern directly with the student by speaking to them in private. They may not be aware of why you have suggested the meeting. It is best to clearly communicate your concern in an empathetic way, giving a simple and clear example of the behaviour that has given rise to your concern.

You can encourage the student to seek support from the services offered within Student Services (Counselling, Careers, GP, Nurse, Chaplaincy, The Curve) or encourage them to access support from services they may already be linked in with, in their locality.

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## STAFF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Will a student be able to see a counsellor straight away?**

The Counselling Service is a busy service however we aim to get back to all students within 48 hours of them contacting the service. Sometimes it is not possible to see students immediately however there is every effort made to see the student for an initial assessment as soon as possible.

### **What about emergencies?**

Emergencies will generally be seen on the day.

### **How many sessions will a student be offered?**

This varies for each individual, typically the counsellor will meet with the students for 1-4 sessions but in some cases this can be reviewed and further sessions will be offered if appropriate.

### **Can I contact the service to get advice on what to do to help a student?**

Yes you can contact the student counsellor if you would like to talk through how best to help a student. To respect a student's privacy it is best not to disclose the name of the student to the counsellor unless you have the consent of the student and are intending to refer him/her to the Student Counselling Service.

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## STAFF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Out of Hours Support**

Sometimes situation arise out of hours. Here are useful telephone numbers if you believe that a student needs assistance when it is out of hours

### **NowDOC**

1850 400 911

### **Letterkenny Garda Station**

+353 74 9167100

### **Letterkenny University Hospital**

+353 74 91 25888

### **SATU (Sexual Assault Treatment Unit)**

0870681964 or via 0749104436

Services available 08.00 – 20.00 hrs, Free, 365 days a year

Out of hours please contact Letterkenny General Hospital  
Emergency Department: 074 91 25888 ext. 3595

### **Can I give feedback on the service?**

Yes. We encourage staff to give feedback on the service, we review procedures regularly and aim to be responsive to the needs of all who have contact with the service. We do this being cognisant that our primary objective is to provide a psychological service that meets the needs of students at LYIT.

### **Can staff attend the service for counselling?**

No. A counselling service is provided through Human Resources, with the Employee Assistance Programme. The EAP service is a free counselling service offered to staff of LYIT, it can be accessed via phone or email, support is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Tel: 1800 995 955. This service is fully confidential and no record of individual employee attendance is available to the College.



# LYIT COUNSELLING SERVICE

## STAFF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How do I recognize when a student might need help**

Although college is often a very exciting prospect for students and an experience they are looking forward to, for some it can be a very challenging time and be a period of great transition as they negotiate and try to balance the disparate demands of home, college, friends, flat/housemates, finances, job.

Staff who have a lot of contact with students are often in a position to notice indirect signs that a student may be struggling. There are a lot of college services that aim to support students whilst they are in college. The Student Counselling Service aims to offer a place for students to talk through issues that may be impacting negatively on their academic or personal wellbeing.

Often it is when we notice something has appeared to 'change' about the student; in their work, personality, relationships with others or personal hygiene. This is often a marker that the student is feeling stressed or may not be coping well.

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## STAFF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Academic

- When a student's grades drop noticeably from one semester to the next.
- When a student asks for repeated extensions for work submission.
- When a student's work is inconsistent

### Personality

- When a student appears withdrawn in class.
- When a student who has previously participated in class no longer does so.
- When a student gets emotional easily, either cries or has an angry outburst.
- When a student appears to be using drugs or alcohol.
- When a student's personal hygiene is poor.

### Relationship with others

- When a student does not appear to be able to work well with their fellow classmates in group work.
- When you receive complaints from peers in relation to their behaviour.

# LYIT COUNSELLING SERVICE

## RESPONDING TO A STUDENT

If you are concerned for one of your students you should speak to them in private. They may not be aware of why you have suggested meeting. It is best to clearly communicate your concern in an empathetic way, giving a simple and clear example of the behaviour that has given rise to your concern. You can encourage the student to seek support from the Student Counselling Service.

Often it is daunting for the student to seek professional help, it can be helpful if you are able to give accurate and clear information about the service to allay any concerns about attending. If there are any queries that you are unable to answer please contact the service and speak to the counsellor whilst the student is with you so that concerns may be addressed.

Where possible encourage the student to make the appointment themselves, this ensures that the student is active in the process of seeking help which ensures that they are more likely to engage in the process.

If you or the department intend to have a follow up with a student who has indicated they intend going to counselling, it is useful to clarify this when you are initially meeting them. This clear communication around what can be expected reduces anxiety and facilitates management of the situation.

A student is entitled to refuse to attend counselling, at other times s/he may wish to think about whether they will attend or not. This must be respected. In this instance it may be helpful to document your interactions with the student for future reference.



# LYIT COUNSELLING SERVICE

## INFORMATION FOR LYIT STAFF

The Counselling Service is located upstairs in the Student Services Department in An Dánlann (Multi Purpose Centre).

The counsellor is available every day Monday to Friday from 9am until 5pm.

To make an appointment telephone the counsellor Nicole Murray at 074 91 86817 or telephone 087 955 5266 or contact Brenda Hamilton at the Student Services reception at 074 91 86855 or email [counselling@lyit.ie](mailto:counselling@lyit.ie).

Each session is normally for 50 minutes to 1 hour.

Emergencies will always be seen on the day.