

University counsellors concerned as increased demand puts pressure on resources

A recent survey of university counsellors suggests that over the last three years the number of students seeking counselling has increased by 16%.

Commenting on the survey, Patti Wallace, Lead Advisor for University and College Counselling at BACP said:

"It is interesting to see that, while student numbers have remained stable or even declined slightly, more students are seeking help through the university counselling service. University fee increases, job market competition and the challenges of going through considerable life transition are all putting increasing pressure on students."

"We are also seeing signs that students are coming to us with more complex, serious and disturbing problems. For some services, this is a result of individuals being unable to access longer term NHS psychological support in a timely manner. Many of our counsellors are finding it difficult to refer students to the local Community Mental Health Team."

"In order to support students, we must maintain sufficient access to counselling and ensure that those who need our help can access it in a timely and appropriate way. One piece of good news from the survey is the sharp increase in the number of students who are using online counselling - a rise of 85% - reflecting a more connected generation, but also helping us to reach more students with limited resource."

The survey was conducted in October 2013 and completed by over a third of Head of University Counselling Services members.

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