



Towards a Standard Minimum Dataset for counselling services embedded in higher and further education

Participant Information

As a part of the Student Counselling Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SCORE) initiative we're exploring the data which services collect about their students who access counselling or mental health teams within the sector. To this end, we are asking you to take part in a brief study focusing on developing a national dataset of student counselling outcomes.

Please read the following information to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

What is the purpose of this study?

A vision of the SCORE consortium is to develop a national dataset of student counselling outcomes to explore and demonstrate effectiveness in the sector. We believe that this type of national effort is needed to inform conversations and decisions about counselling embedded in further and higher education.

This project is part of a wider initiative from the Student Counselling Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SCORE) consortium to pool counselling service data (see SCORE website for further information: <http://www.scoreconsortium.group.shef.ac.uk/>).

Who is doing the study?

This study is a collaboration between five Universities and two professional organisations including; University of Sheffield, Keele University, Kings' College London, University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP).

The Minimum Dataset Project is led by Dr Emma Broglio, Prof. Michael Barkham, Louise Knowles (Head of Counselling service at University of Sheffield) and Mark Fudge (Head of Counselling Service at Keele University).

Why have I been asked to participate?

We are asking to hear about data collection practices from service leads and counsellors who work in counselling or mental health services within higher education settings.



Do I have to take part?

No. Although we would like to encourage you to take part, doing so is entirely voluntary and no one will know that you have not agreed to take part in this study. If you do take part now, you can withdraw your data up until it is anonymised in Dec 2020 and you do not have to give any reasons.

What will be involved if I take part in this study?

If you decide to take part then you will be invited to complete an electronic survey that asks a few questions about your service, the student data your service collects and how it's collected. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The survey will also ask whether you would like to take part in an *optional* focus-group discussion which will be used to discuss the survey results and further aspects of service data collection.

The focus group will be held online using an online platform (e.g. Microsoft Teams or Google Meet) and will last for approximately 2 hours, joining instructions will be given to all participants. The discussion will be led by a current member of the SCORE group (i.e., a research facilitator or practitioner from a counselling service) and will include 6-8 participants. The discussion will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. All identifiable information will be removed and anonymised from the transcripts.

What are the advantages of taking part?

There may not be any immediate benefits to you personally but the information you provide will help us to gain valuable knowledge and insight about how services currently collect student data. Your insight will help to inform the development of a national dataset of student counselling outcomes, which will be used to explore and demonstrate service effectiveness in this sector. If you choose to participate in the optional focus group, you will be able to share your experiences with other counselling services staff and learn from other practitioners working in this space.

What are the disadvantages/risks of taking part?

You would have to allow time, around 10 minutes to complete the online questionnaire and approximately 2 hours if you volunteer to take part in the online focus group discussion.

Though it is possible for individuals to be identified during the focus group discussions, you will be advised to turn off your computer's camera to mitigate this risk. In the unlikely event that your video feed is captured during the focus group recording, you have the right to withdraw this content and can do so by emailing the focus group organiser (Dr Emma Broglia).

Neither the survey nor the focus group are expected to cause you distress, but if you have any questions, comments or complaints about any aspect of this research please feel free to contact the project lead (Dr Emma Broglia).



Can I withdraw from the study?

Yes. You can withdraw your data up until it is anonymised in Dec 2020 and you do not have to give any reasons. If you withdraw then we will not contact you again about this project. You can also request for any data that we already have about you to be destroyed if this request is made before the data is anonymised.

How will the information and personal data I give be handled?

All information you provide will be kept confidential and not shared outside of the research team. Your survey responses will remain anonymous and will not be associated with your personal details. It will not be possible to identify you from your survey responses.

Providing your personal details (e.g. email address) is optional and, if provided, will only be used to contact you about attending the focus group discussions. Your personal details will be stored separately to the rest of your information. If you take part in the focus group, these conversations will be audio recorded and anonymously transcribed, after which the original audio recordings will be deleted.

All data will be collected via password-protected, secure software platforms (survey software: Qualtrics www.qualtrics.com/; video conferencing software: e.g. Microsoft Teams or Google Meet) and stored on a password-protected, secure computer folder within the Department of Psychology at the University of Sheffield. Your data will only be accessed by approved members of the research team when there is a reason to access the data.

What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. All data will be processed and stored in compliance with University of Sheffield data policy and GDPR laws.

Anonymised project data will be retained for a minimum of 10 years after the project has ended. Personal details will be destroyed after the study project ends (duration of 2 years).

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice - <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>

What will happen to the results of the study?

The data that you provide will be anonymised and will be used to inform the development of a national minimum dataset for counselling services in higher education, as part of the wider SCORE initiative. For example, this will include comparing data fields collected by different



services to inform a data map, however this will be anonymous to anyone outside the research group. Data from the focus group will also be analysed using framework and content analysis.

Outputs from the project will be presented at conferences and submitted to scientific and professional journals for publication. It will not be possible to identify you or any individual institution in any reports, conferences or publications. If desired, your institution will have the right to request its own survey data and may do so by contacting Dr Emma Broglia.

Who has reviewed and approved this study?

The University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Psychology Department has reviewed and ethically approved this study (Ref. 036289).

Who do I contact for more information about the study?

If you have any queries about this project then please contact Dr Emma Broglia, Project manager, University of Sheffield and BACP. Email: e.l.broglia@sheffield.ac.uk

Alternatively, you can contact Mark Fudge, Head of Counselling at Keele and Co-Lead of Minimum dataset Project. Email: m.l.fudge@keele.ac.uk

Who do I contact in the event of a complaint?

If you have any concerns or complaints about the study, then you may contact Emma Broglia directly (e.l.broglia@sheffield.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can contact the Head of the Psychology Department (Professor Glenn Waller: G.Waller@sheffield.ac.uk). If your complaint relates to how your data has been handled, then information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice in the following link - <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet