



# Abertay University

## Counselling Service Annual Report 2013-14

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## **KEY Results**

- ❖ Average wait for an appointment was 7.0 days
- ❖ 7.5% Increase in Students who used the Counselling Service
- ❖ This year more students contacted us for counselling than ever before.
- ❖ We provided 1548 Counselling sessions for 334 students, 7% of Abertay Students-a record
- ❖ 70% had 5 sessions or less
- ❖ 91% got an appointment within 2 weeks of contacting the service
- ❖ 21% of the students we saw were at risk.

## **In Client Evaluation**

- ❖ 88% said first appointment was soon enough
- ❖ Over 85% of students were happy with the booking system, waiting area and counselling room.
- ❖ 97% reported that their concern was harming their studies
- ❖ In total 46% of students considered that counselling to have helped them stay at university
- ❖ In total 52% of students stated that counselling helped them do better in their academic work.
- ❖ In total 80% of students stated that counselling contributed to improving their overall student experience
- ❖ In total 66% of students stated that counselling helped them develop skills useful for obtaining future employment.
- ❖ 96% of students said they would recommend the Counselling Service to a friend.

## **Introduction**

The Counselling Service exists to support student learning and personal development. Its role is to maximise students' potential to benefit from their University experience by offering quality short term counselling, developing and delivering appropriate workshops and training. In addition we have created P2P a student mentoring scheme and provide training in Mindfulness. We work collaboratively with others to achieve this overall aim.

This report includes key results, what we do, information on our contribution to Student Retention and Academic Success, Enhancing Student Employability, Supporting International students, Improving the Student Experience, Supporting Academic staff and Protecting the Reputation of the University. There is a collation of statistics on the work of the service this year, data from our quality audit system CORE, a summary of the evaluation exercise, a report on the P2P project and information about additional work. A brief account of Developments for 2012-2013.

## What Does the Counselling Service Do?

- Supporting students with pre-existing mental health issues of whom there are increasing numbers due to inclusion of a range of mental health diagnoses under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- Supporting students who experience age- and stage-related psychological issues (e.g. leaving home, relationships; developing a stable identity)
- Supporting students who experience university study-related issues (e.g. exam anxiety, procrastination, failure, lack of attendance, considering leaving etc.). These are likely to be inter-linked with the point above, but may be important to separate out to create a more student-specific case;
- Supporting students in serious crisis and at risk (e.g. suicide, self-harm, attack, substance misuse-induced state);
- Preventing psychological crises through offering support to individuals and groups of students when a traumatic situation occurs at university (e.g. the suicide attempt of a peer in halls of residence)

## The Counselling Service contributes significantly to:

### Student Retention and Academic Achievement

Counselling has a positive impact on student retention and academic achievement. Psychological issues/mental health problems impact negatively on academic outcomes and that counselling interventions can moderate this. The relationship between retention and accessing in-house counselling: **In the students' evaluation of their counselling experience with the service 46% said it helped them stay at University, 52% said it helped them do better on their course.**

### Enhancing Student Employability

50 per cent of all student respondents indicated that counselling was either 'an important factor' (4) or 'the most significant factor' (5) in helping them develop skills useful for obtaining future employment. Another 16 per cent indicated that counselling was 'one of many factors' (3) that helped them develop skills useful for obtaining future employment. **Therefore in total 66% of students considered that counselling helped them develop skills useful for obtaining employment.**

Activities which increase student employability are valuable. Employers' reports that even academically and technically able graduates are missing 3 categories of skill necessary for the workplace, one of which may arguably be developed through psycho-educational interventions delivered by counselling services. This category includes: self-awareness, emotional intelligence, personal values and motivation. We participate in developing workshops for student to improve self-reflective practice. The training and experience of P2P will also contribute to this. We also offer workshops on confidence, and dealing with stress.

### Supporting International Students

Living in a new country and experiencing a different culture as an international student can be challenging and at times impair good mental health. We provide specific information for international students during their induction and via our Coming to Scotland to Study information booklet. Last year 17% of our clients were international students including E.U.

### Improving the Student Experience

40% of all student respondents indicated that counselling was either 'an important factor' or 'the most significant factor'

in improving their overall student experience. Another 40 %- indicated that counselling was one of many factors that contributed to improving their overall student experience. **Therefore in total 80% of students considered counselling to have improved their overall experience of being at university.**

In the new situation in which fees will follow students rather than come direct to institutions, student satisfaction is likely to be paramount.

Quotes from student users of the counselling service to illustrate our contribution to improving the student experience:

“You're service transformed my life from suffering to enjoying life”

“I am back on track now to complete my course, worry free’

“She helped me to deal with difficult issues in my life. I felt emotionally supported and now I understand myself much better, I feel happier and more confident, able to cope with things, thanks to her help.’

“Counsellor was absolutely fantastic in every way, if I didn't have her support and advice I don't think I would have continued at uni this year’

‘If it wasn't for counselling, I'd have probably collapsed mentally under the strain of everything’

### **Supporting Academic Staff**

The counselling service helps in supporting other university staff (academic and support staff) in dealing effectively and supportively with students' psycho-social problems. There is a relationship built up between the counselling service and other university staff such that university staff are able to ask for help in dealing with a student or to refer the student directly, simply and early on in the process. The counsellors' knowledge and understanding of the university systems and processes allows them to be particularly helpful to students with not only their psychological issues by also their academic ones. Early referral means that intervention can be offered before problems become serious and before they have a significant effect on academic performance, and that academic and administrative staff are freed up to use their time more appropriately on their substantive role.

### **Protecting the Reputation of the University**

An important part of the work of the counselling service is in responding to crisis situations, in that it helps protect the university's reputation. This protection occurs via:

- distressed individuals receiving early help so that they are less likely to get to the point of acting out in a way dangerous to themselves or others;
- students affected by a traumatic event having somewhere to talk about their feelings/concerns and receive support, so that they feel less need to do this outside the university and thus worry their friends and family;
- in the event of a serious outcome (e.g. death of a student through suicide), the university being able to demonstrate to all stakeholders, its commitment to care of students through provision of an in-house service, regardless of whether the student chose to access it;
- because the counsellors are accredited by the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, there is external verification that the service meets professional quality standards and is regulated by the profession.

## Statistics on Counselling Service

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Number of Clients</b>	334	312	278	232

There has been a 7.5% increase in the number of clients accessing the service this year. Over the last 4 years the demand has increased by 44%. This demonstrates a growing acceptance in the use of counselling to help students manage the difficulties they are experiencing. We see it as a demonstration of our value to the students of Abertay. We see just over 7% of the student population. Our numbers continue to rise. Our location in the Library has made us more accessible to the majority of students.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Number of Sessions</b>	1548	1328	1114	1023
<b>On The Day Appointments</b>	40	53	56	50

There has been a continuous increase in the number of appointments over the last 4 years- this year a 16.5% upsurge, since 2010/11 66%.

There has been a decline in the use of On The Day Appointments this year. These are appointments bookable on the day to respond to a sense of crisis perceived by student or their referrer. This year's decline is due to using these appointments to see students waiting for an appointment, thereby avoiding a significant waiting list prior to Christmas. Because the University shuts down it is important to do what we can to see every student for an assessment appointment.

<b>Number of Sessions per % of Clients</b>	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
1	24	24	21	33
2	14	12	12	13
3-5	32	35	33	27
6-10	19	21	23	16
11+	11	8	10	11

71% of the students we see receive five or less appointments, this is similar to most university counselling services. Our overall goal is to support student learning and thus a focused and fast intervention to enable students to be successful at University comprises the majority of our work. The time at which a student decides that they need help is a key tipping point and an excellent opportunity to be an effective helper. This year 43 students contacted the service requesting appointments and subsequently did not attend.

<b>Nationality (%)</b>	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
International (including EU)	11	18	16	17
UK	89	82	84	83

International students can be particularly vulnerable because of the loss of their home culture and lack of support.

<b>Gender (%)</b>	20013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Female	56	60	63	60
Male	43	39	37	40
Transgender	*	*		

\* No figure provided as too small to calculate/may reveal clients' identity.

It is pleasing to see that significant numbers of males access the counselling service; it suggests we are accessible to men who have traditionally been seen as reluctant to use counselling. We are keen to offer a transsexual friendly service. We have produced material for LGBT community and on Men's Emotional Health about our service.

The university population contains 52% men and 48% women there is no record of the numbers of Trans students.

<b>Type of Client (%)</b>	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Undergraduate	90	91	90	87
Postgraduate	10	9	10	13

<b>School (%)</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>2012/13</b>		<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
AMG(18)	26	AMG	12	CGT	23	26
SET(28)	17	CSC	10	CSC	10	17
DBS(18)	10	DBS	9	DBS	10	10
SHS(36)	47	SHS	55	SHS	57	47
		SECAM	14			

Above is the percentage of students from each school who use our service. In brackets next to the School is the proportion of University population from that School. It indicates that AMG and SHS are over represented and DBS and SET are underrepresented in the population who use our service. We see 7% of the student population (4690). This is above the sector average.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Disclosed Disability (%)</b>	6%	11	14	14

Approximately 5% of student body have declared a disability. It is likely that there is under reporting of student numbers with a disability because of the stigma associated with having a mental health disability.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
<b>Average Days Total Wait for Appointment</b>	7.0	7.0	6.6	5.9

In 2013/14 91% of students were seen within 2 working weeks of contacting the Counselling Service and requesting an appointment, of these 59% got an appointment within a week. Some of the clients who waited longer were requesting a specific time or counsellor. We have made it one of our quality assurance targets to offer an appointment to all clients within 2 weeks of them contacting the service.

<b>Presenting Issue at First Session (%)</b>	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Abuse	*	*	4	4
Academic	10	16	15	16



The waiting area:	Yes: 86.00% (43)	No: 6.00% (3)	Not answered: 8.00% (4)
The counselling room:	Yes: 86.00% (43)	No: 8.00% (4)	Not answered: 6.00% (3)

There is some uncomfortableness for some clients in accessing our service they feel very self-conscious because we are in the library and the waiting area is for all students who have appointments with Student Services. This is unfortunate for some of the students however our numbers have increased since we re-located to the library which suggests that for most, this has made us more accessible.

## 6. What brought you to counselling ?

Concerns about my:

Experience of abuse	8%
Course of study	21%
Anxiety	69%
Health	6%
Eating disorder	*%
Behaviour being too compulsive or obsessive	13%
Depression, mood changes, thoughts of ending things	67%
Loss of someone or something that was important to me	34%
Behaviour or thoughts being regarded as odd or harmful by other people	12%
Relationships	29%
Low opinion of myself/lack of confidence	54%
Sexual difficulties	*%
Changes in my life	38%
Welfare problems (money, housing)	11%
Self-harm	*%
Other concerns	8%

\* No figure provided as too small to calculate/may reveal clients' identity.

These are presenting issues, the concern that seems most important when the student contacts the Counselling Service other issues emerge in the course of the work. The four most important presenting issues are Anxiety, Depression, Academic and low opinion of myself/lack of confidence,. There is a clear trend for numbers with anxiety to rise each year. We have produced a new booklet Stress: how to manage things better, on improving ways of dealing with stress.

## 7. In what ways do you think your counsellor has helped you?

1. In listening to me	91.67%	44
2. In understanding how I was feeling	68.75%	33
3. In understanding what my situation was	70.83%	34
4. In giving me useful information	60.42%	29
5. In helping me explore my concerns	62.50%	30
6. In helping me re-think how I do things	64.58%	31

7. In arranging for me to meet other staff	8.33%	4
8. In referring me to another service	12.50%	6
9. In another way	*%	*
10. The counsellor has not helped me	*%	*

\* No figure provided as too small to calculate/may reveal clients' identity.

### Retention

8. *To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you to stay at college/university?*

26 per cent of all student respondents indicated that counselling was either 'an important factor' or 'the most significant factor' in helping them stay on at university.

Another 20 per cent indicated that counselling was one of many factors that helped them stay on at university.

**Therefore in total 46% of students considered that counselling to have helped them stay at university**

### Achievement

9. *To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you do better in your academic work?*

26 per cent of all student respondents indicated that counselling was either 'an important factor' or 'the most significant factor' in helping them do better in their academic work.

Another 26 per cent indicated that counselling was one of many factors that helped them do better in their academic work.

**Therefore in total 52% of students considered counselling to have helped them do better in their academic work**

### Student Experience

10. *To what extent would you say that counselling has improved your overall experience of college/university?*

40 per cent of all student respondents indicated that counselling was either 'an important factor' or 'the most significant factor' in improving their overall student experience.

Another 40 per cent indicated that counselling was one of many factors that contributed to improving their overall student experience.

**Therefore in total 80% of students considered counselling to have improved their overall experience of being at university.**

### Employability

11. *To what extent would you say counselling has helped you develop skills that might be useful in obtaining future employment?*

50 per cent of all student respondents indicated that counselling was either 'an important factor' or 'the most significant factor' in helping them develop skills useful for obtaining future employment. Another 16 per cent indicated that counselling was 'one of many factors' (3) that helped them develop skills useful for obtaining future employment.

**Therefore in total 66% of students considered that counselling helped them develop skills useful for obtaining employment.**

**12. Please describe in more details the ways in which counselling helped you:**

1. Counselling helped me to hang on to life when I was at risk of losing it, for that I am very grateful. This service must NEVER be reduced or removed and indeed should be extended if at all possible to cover evenings and weekends, at least for emergencies.
2. Given advice on dealing with anxiety and feelings, was made to feel I wasn't the only person feeling like this and I wasn't alone and that it was normal to feel the way I felt
3. It gave me confidence to take action against my circumstances and reassured me I wasn't overreacting.
4. Someone to talk to when I felt I couldn't turn anywhere else
5. The major thing that counselling did for me was to show myself the same kindness I will show another person going through the same situation. Just listening to me helped me unburden.
6. Helped me understand the type of person I am and how I want to be, also help me evaluate why I am the way I am
7. It allowed me space to speak openly without fear of being judged. I was also helped in exploring my thoughts/feelings to help me understand how to change them.
8. It has helped me deal with situations and look at things rationally.
9. Counselling gave me a chance to get a lot of things off my chest without being afraid of what people will think of me. It allowed me to get a second opinion on my issues.
10. Counselling helped me accept myself more, and realise I need to think about myself more and not ignore my feelings.
11. On the day I felt good after speaking about my problems and it was nice to have someone that just listened. The counsellor was kind and friendly. However I only had one session so it is difficult for me to say if it has helped. Maybe with more sessions it might make a difference to how I feel.
12. I have learned that it's best to share my problems, no matter how silly it may be. I have also learned to not take notice when unimportant people judge me. Finally I have learned that my family and I need to stick together through the good and the bad.
13. My issue wasn't to do with school but she helped me figure out how to better manage stress and anxiety in a particular area so that can then be applied in all areas of life.
14. It helped me see life from a different point of view. Opened my eyes to why I was feeling the way I was and how I could change that.
15. I found myself struggling with dealing and working through emotional issues that rooted in trust. The counsellor has helped me deal with those emotions by making me feel that it was ok to feel that way. This has helped me facing my current relationships better. I had the feeling she understood very well where I was coming from and it was lovely to have someone who actually listened.
16. Helped me see things in a different and more positive light
17. Gave me reassurance and confidence that I could cope, and helped me see that I don't have to get everything perfect on the first try.
18. Provide a nice guy listen to me.
19. I was already very clear what my problems were and how to deal with them, but I really needed to talk to someone to let it out of my system, counseling was really good for this.
20. Talking with my counsellor helped me to have better control of my anxieties and emotions
21. Understanding my own feelings, Talking about things and having someone listen, Having someone give an unbiased opinion on my experiences/feelings, Not be so hard on myself, Try not to analyse bad things too much, Be more calm and less overwhelmed, Helped in so many ways!

22. Money and housing anxieties had meant I had considered deferring my final year of university or graduating at the end of my 3rd year. By encouraging me to see my problems in a more positive light, counselling has made me determined to finish my degree despite my personal circumstances. Problems which became overwhelming often got in the way of my coursework or attendance at university. Since discussing this with my counsellor, I am able to forget about the problems I am unable to fix and focus on my future.
23. I talked through my problems and my thoughts. The counsellor suggested deeper meanings and ways that I could improve or solve my problems.
24. It has helped me thought a rough part of my life and helped a lot.
25. It helped me view my situation from a different perspective, and allowed me to say things I couldn't say to the people in my life.
26. realise myself where my issues begin and although we had no time to explore further or in more detail it has allowed me to tackle my daily thoughts and behaviours in a more positive and proactive manner, which has then allowed me to manage my anxiety and confidence issues and progress with course work more effectively
27. Listened to my problems, evaluated my way of doing things, gave me an overview of what I was doing wrong, suggested to read a book which addressed my issues..
28. Just have a short period of time and someone to air out your feelings and getting unbiased advice really helps and supports you through university especially during a stressful time in 4th year
29. Provided me with the time and space where I can only talk about myself (where outside the counselling room I am rather reserved when it comes to my life)

### **13. Would you recommend this counselling service to a friend?**

Yes: 96%

No: 4%

This is a very pleasing endorsement of the work of the counsellors.

### **Risk**

We use the Risk questions from CORE to provide the basis for managing and containing risk. These questions are: I have thought of hurting myself; I have hurt myself physically or taken dangerous risks with my health; I made plans to end my life; I have thought it would be better if I were dead; I have been physically violent to others; I have threatened or humiliated another person. These questions cover suicidal ideation, harm to self and others. If any student scores 5 or more or 4 on any one item then the counsellor completes a risk form and discusses the client with the Senior Counsellor. Of those students who came for ongoing counselling 21% which equates to 62 students were deemed to be at risk. One of the aims of the counselling will be to reduce the risk. Also the client is supported to meet with their GP. For many students the Counselling and treatment by GP is sufficient to effectively manage the risk. For others a more comprehensive support package may be required involving Psychiatric services. We have risk procedure in place to ensure we are protecting the students, and reducing reputational damage to the university. It also helps support the counsellors.

By [REDACTED]

## **Beginnings**

I have facilitated 8 week Mindfulness courses in the NHS for 4-years for patients with stress, depression, anxiety, chronic pain and other chronic health problems. Research has shown positive results in reducing depression and stress and promoting wellbeing and based upon this evidence Mindfulness is approved by NICE (The National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence). Consequently this approach was seen as potentially very beneficial for students from Abertay.

## **What is Mindfulness?**

Mindfulness is an integrative, mind-body based training that can enable people to change the way they think and feel about their experiences, especially stressful experiences, maximise general wellbeing, building tools for life such as empathy, self-compassion, emotional resilience and tolerance.

## **Mindfulness Taster Sessions**

Usually participants are interviewed on a one-to-one basis so as to determine how suitable Mindfulness is for their needs and situation, and to go through the demands of the course. However, due to time constraints, I was unable to do the interviews and so instead I offered two taster sessions prior to the course running in November. These sessions gave the students an overview & understanding of Mindfulness – that doesn't offer a 'quick fix' and takes commitment to complete the course. Feedback from the taster sessions was positive with many wanting to continue on to participate in the course. Unfortunately due to timetables some of the students were unable to attend the course despite wanting to.

- 14 students attended the taster sessions.
- Of these 7 decided to attend the course and 7 decided that it wasn't for them or that they could not make the time commitment

## **Mindfulness Course**

The course is run over 6 weeks for 2-hours week and includes Mindfulness meditation, stretching and movement, group discussion and home practice; participants are asked to commit to attend all the sessions (which is no mean feat).

We used a room at the university gym as we needed space to walk around and for mats to be laid out on the floor on which students would sit and lie down. Although the room had enough space it was very cold and noisy due to music being played outside on the speaker-system.

## **The Sessions**

I ran the course with one facilitator (me) and 12-25 students attending depending on the week.

- 25 students attended the first official session of the course.
- 17 students attended the second session.

- Of the 8 that dropped out after the first session none had attended the taster session, leading me to conclude that they effectively used session 1 as a taster and decided it wasn't for them. This group would normally have been screened out by the pre-course interviews that I do.

### **C.O.R.E. Questionnaires**

'Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation' questionnaires were completed by the students each week as a tool to help me measure any possible clinical changes to the student's mental and emotional health from attending the Mindfulness sessions.

However not all students completed the questionnaires and of those who did not all identified themselves on the completed forms, meaning that I wasn't able to determine which were their first & final forms – this meant that although the data was collected not all of it was usable.

Next time, in order to get around this problem, I will need to give each form a code-identifier matched to each student that makes the forms trackable.

### **Core Scores:**

The core scores reflect clinical change over the six weeks of running the course, it is my believe that if we run the course on an 8 week basis that the students' scores would meet the non-clinical population. Out of 9 clients who completed both first session and final session core forms:4 demonstrated clinically significant change . All of these demonstrated large changes in score.2 demonstrated clinically reliable change. These involved moves from moderate to mild level and from moderate-severe to mild level. But both demonstrated large changes in score.3 demonstrated no reliable change. However all 3 started off in the 'healthy' range and all made small changes to healthier positions.

### **Questionnaires**

As well as using CORE I also produced questionnaire (9 questions) in order to find out the students experience, the effectiveness of the course, and what improvements that they think could be made to the course. Here are some of the comments...

"I have gained and learned new techniques to tackle my challenges"

"Acceptance instead of wanting to change things, but power to change, when I can."

"Being kinder and learning to relax, I thought I was easy-going, but feel a change in last few weeks and I am beginning to get much happier".

"I particularly enjoyed the mindful walk, mindful movement ant the 3 minute breathing exercise. It's also good hearing a group perspective which make me realise I'm not the only one who's critical of myself."

"I have gained awareness of the aspects of life that drain me, and in particular, how to know which ones can't be changed – worrying does no good! I find a way to deal with these or accept them."

Any complaints were about the coldness of the room and noise from outside (music playing from the gym next door).

## **Conclusion**

From the answers from the questionnaires, listening to the students and CORE data the students benefited from the Mindfulness Course, improved their sense of wellbeing and students gained life skills. Mindfulness makes a valuable contribution to the Counselling Service.

Proposal to run a course next year starting earlier with Taster sessions end of September with a view to running a course in October.

## **P2P –Mentoring New Students**

The P2P scheme was developed to help smooth the transition of new students into university life, in recognition that this can be a stressful process, and that students often find it easier to approach their peers about things that are worrying them rather than talk to staff. Providing such support at an early stage can prevent difficulties escalating, can foster a sense of 'belonging' and thus can aid retention.

The scheme is now about to begin its 5<sup>th</sup> year. At the end of the academic year 2012/3 the number of mentors in the scheme had risen to 38 (from the small beginnings 2 years prior to this of 7 students). This meant that we were able to offer every new undergraduate entrant (and some of the postgraduate students on a small number of courses) a mentor. Over the summer new entrants received a letter letting them know the name and contact details (e-mail) of their mentor, should they have any questions prior to their arrival at university.

A programme was drawn up by the Counselling Service staff and administrative staff within Student Services and the various school offices, for orientation week, so that pairs of mentors met with their allocated new students for a group meeting, to introduce themselves, talk about their experience of settling in and life at the university and acknowledge and address any concerns. They were then available to be contacted by their allocated mentees for any further help, advice and signposting, on an individual level.

The organisation of this programme was a mammoth task and did not always go as smoothly as we might have liked, but our mentors did a great job in coping with the hitches and talking with their groups and offering individual support afterwards, be that a one-off question, a single meeting or something more ongoing.

Over this year we have devised an on-line evaluation questionnaire which can be rolled out next year to all the mentors and new students after orientation to get their feedback on their experience, so that we can further improve the scheme for the following year(s). Unfortunately this year the questionnaire was not ready to send out early enough, so the response rate was low. However the responses we did have from new entrants were positive, and similarly from the mentors who also gave helpful suggestions of how things could run more smoothly the following year.

This year we have also produced a number of videos with mentors and also a mentor and mentee talking about their experience of the scheme.

A number of our mentors were involved in Conversation Nation again this year and a significant number were involved in the Principal's Award scheme, and have stated how

being a mentor had been important for them in securing employment or Masters courses, or clarifying future career directions.

In February we recruited and trained a new group of mentors, and 13 people successfully completed the training. In May we held a very enjoyable certificate presentation 'ceremony' for those mentors who were leaving the scheme in appreciation of their hard work, enthusiasm and commitment. For 2014/15 we will have 28 mentors who will again be ready to welcome and support new entrants for this next academic session. We are very pleased that as in previous years we have a diverse group of P2P mentors, across all the schools, representative of different backgrounds, cultures, international and home students, gender and age range. This means that we have a good pool to draw on when matching students who may request or for whom it is suggested that having a mentor might be helpful.

On a personal note [REDACTED] who has been a key staff member in the development and support of the P2P programme, left the university in [REDACTED]. She wanted to acknowledge how much she had valued and enjoyed working with the students who had volunteered to become mentors. She stated that 'the enthusiasm, warmth and motivation of our mentors has been inspiring. As a group they have really wanted to use their own experiences of starting university to make the transition of new entrants as smooth as possible. It has been heart-warming to work alongside such a community-minded group of students, who will have so much to offer not only to the university community but to whatever roles they go on to when they leave.'

## **Workshops**

### 'Mind the Gap – starting and settling into University'

Workshop as part of orientation for new students

### Reflective Practice (session 1 and 2) Food Science students

11<sup>th</sup> October

Approximately 25 students

18<sup>th</sup> October

Approximately 25 students

These sessions were introduced as part of the curriculum for the Food Science students in preparation for their practice placements. Part of their assessment process for this involves them keeping a Log of their experience and demonstrating their ability to learn by Reflective Practice. In the past students had often been confused about the purpose of the log and what and how to record. These sessions aimed to give students an overview of the general principles of reflective practice and using examples to see what this would mean in practice.

The sessions were part of a collaborative package, with the Careers Service relating the importance of reflective practice to their career prospects, and the tutor looking at the specifics of the logbook and learning outcomes.

### Introduction to Counselling and the Counselling Service (Business School)

Finance, Business and Marketing Students (yr 2)

31<sup>st</sup> October 80 students

Accounting and Finance (yr 3)

3<sup>rd</sup> November  
Approximately 50 students

### **Associate Counsellor**

Last year we introduced the Associate scheme , this provides an opportunity for a graduate of Abertay's Diploma in Counselling who has completed their training to further their development by counselling clients of the Counselling Service.

### **Development Plans 2013-14. How Did We Do?**

#### Referring on students at risk

Next year as a team task we are going to collate our experiences of referring student on via their GP to MH service. This will be done via team meeting then we may write about this to NHS in Tayside once we have the data.

#### To produce a leaflet on self-harm

#### P2P

We need to evaluate the mentees experience of mentors.

To link senior mentors with new mentors

Develop the Mentoring service for post grads

Review Training

Put together a presentation on P2P

#### Mindfulness

There will be 2 taster sessions in first semester and then a group if there is enough interest.

██████████ will be delivering this from sports centre.

#### Resource Information

Review the current one and bring it up to date.

#### Collaborative Working with LGBT group and Student Association

To provide a joint leaflet about support for this group within the university.

#### Review Bibliotherapy and add more details regarding Mindfulness.

We were unable to meet many of our objectives for last year. This was caused by the increase in demand on the Service as well as sustaining P2P and proving Mindfulness course.

We have handed over responsibility for P2P to the Manager of Learner Development and a dedicated worker will be recruited.

We did produce Wondering about Sexuality leaflet with LGBT and Students Association. Mindfulness was launched and will run again. Resource information is updated.

### **Development Plans 2014-2015**

Proposal to run Mindfulness course next year starting earlier with Taster sessions end of September with a view to running a course in October.

Survive the changes that have occurred in a short period of time, the loss of two members of staff and transition to One Stop Shop.

Self-Harm leaflet still needs producing and it would be good to produce one on depression, we need to add Mindfulness material to Bibliotherapy.