



**OVERCOMING BARRIERS FACED BY MEN,
FORCED MIGRANTS AND CARE LEAVERS IN
ACCESSING COUNSELLING SUPPORT AT
UNIVERSITY**

LONDON'S EVENING UNIVERSITY

BACKGROUND / CONCEPTION OF AN IDEA

- How did the research question / arise?
- What puzzled us?
- What interested us?
- What is known about this?
- What were we curious to try and understand?

FORMULATION OF THE QUESTION

- What is already known about this?
- What of the puzzle is not satisfied by what is already known?
- What questions remain for us?

HOW TO GO ABOUT IT AND WHAT METHODOLOGY?

- Practicalities – how will we find the time and space to do it?
- Who would do the research and who would supervise it?
- What else is already known in the existing body of research?
- Who might have the answer to our questions?
- How would we access the information?
- What might that look like in terms of a systematic plan?
- Would it be safe and ethical?
- How would we analyse the data?

MEN: IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- Service visibility – marketing not speaking to men.
- Images of masculinity vs. vulnerability
- Scepticism regarding effectiveness of counselling – evidence?
- Lack of understanding of the counselling process - fear
- Prefer managing alone or with peers
- Stigma around counselling
- Concerns about counsellor discretion
- Problems too “minor” to warrant support

FORCED MIGRANTS: IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- Stigma around mental health and cultural difference
- Service visibility – marketing/images not relevant
- Concerns about confidentiality
- Bad past experience of counselling (incl. inadequate number of sessions)
- Assertion of independence (easier to manage alone) + faith
- Fear of segregation and wish to belong
- Concerns about prejudice and racism and cultural fluency of counsellor
- Wish to look to the future rather than engage with the past

CARE LEAVERS: IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- Wish to look to the future rather than engage with the past
- Previous negative experiences of therapy
- Concerns about confidentiality
- Concerns about short-term counselling
- Non-identification as a discrete group

MEN: OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- Advertising that speaks to men
- Assurance of discretion / confidentiality
- Stereotypes and images of masculinity being challenged
- Male counsellors / role models
- De-mystification of counselling and evidence that it works
- Alternative forms of support (not just talking therapy) e.g. exercise programme, peer support, online provision – self-help resources or anonymous chat
- Signposting and encouragement from academic staff

FORCED MIGRANTS: OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- De-stigmatising need for counselling support, raising awareness of what counselling offers
- Fostering sense of belonging in the educational establishment and supporting progression/attainment
- Marketing of counselling service – images inclusive of difference (clients and staff)

CARE LEAVERS: OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- Communicating assurance of discretion / confidentiality
- Peer support
- Exercise programme as an alternative form of supporting wellbeing
- Signposting and encouragement from academic staff
- Clear offer of one-off consultation to discuss needs (rather than expectation of short-term counselling)
- Clarity around focussed brief work (rather than opening up historic issues)

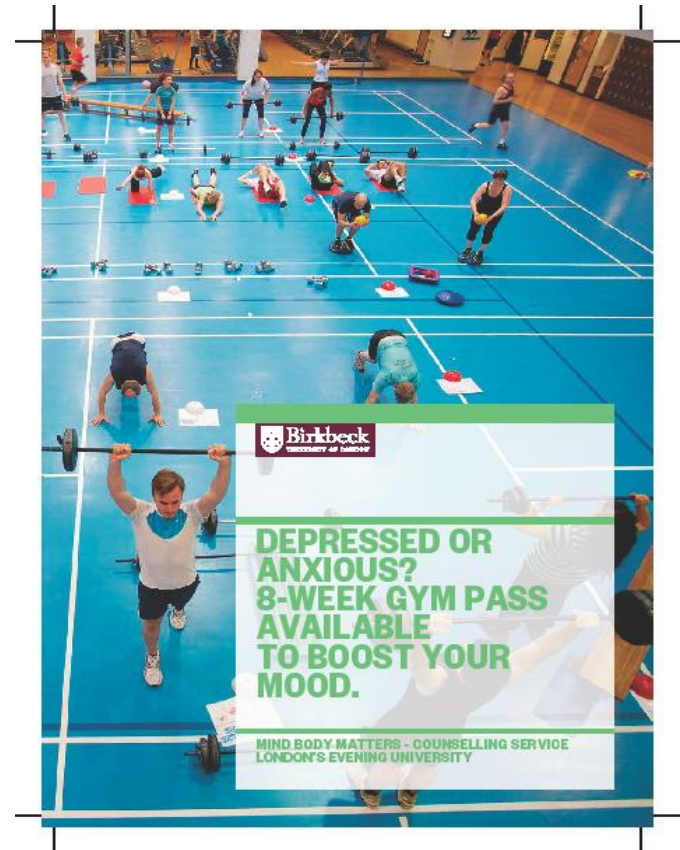
MAKING MEANING AND APPLYING LEARNING

- What meaning have we made of the data?
- How have we applied this to make improvements?
 - **Alternatives to counselling - Mind Body Matters + Peer Support**
 - **Communication - posters, podcasts and videos**
 - **Mental Health training for academic staff**
 - **Online counselling/support forums – investigate**

ALTERNATIVE OFFERS - MIND BODY MATTERS

"I couldn't leave the house previously, but attending the gym helped create a routine that was really helpful and increased my resilience."

"Doing something about it as opposed to ignoring it and carrying on and then getting into the situation of not being able to accomplish anything. Instead I am trying to build in routines and strategies into the way I deal with problems."



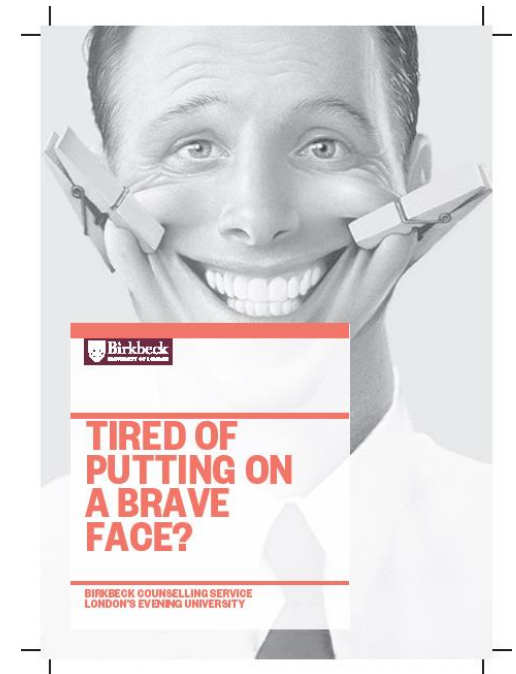
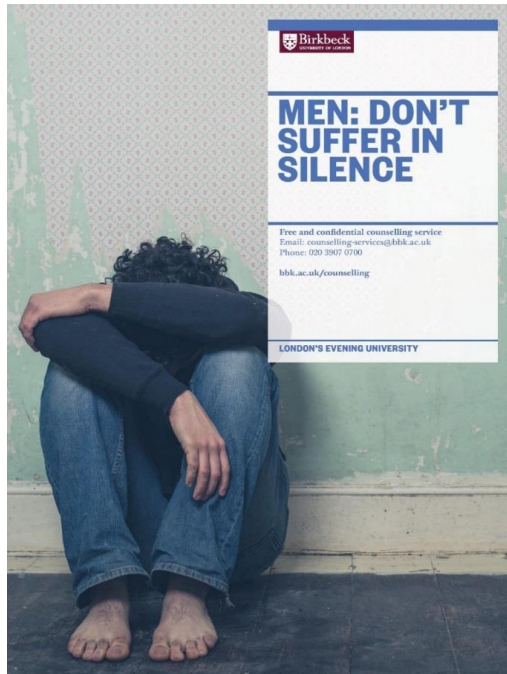
ALTERNATIVE OFFERS – PEER SUPPORT

*You have to develop ways so that you
can take up for yourself, and then you
take up for someone else. And so
sooner or later, you have enough
courage to really stand up for the
human race and say, 'I'm a
representative.'*



Maya Angelou


COMMUNICATIONS - POSTERS



COMMUNICATIONS – MOODLE



Listen to our Exam Relaxation podcast by clicking [HERE](#)

 News

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DEMYSTIFYING COUNSELLING - PODCASTS



IMPACT SO FAR

Over 2 years of project, out of men that have used the counselling service:

76% said that counselling has helped them stay at university

82% said counselling had helped them do better at academic work

95% said counselling had contributed to improving their overall experience of college.

80% said counselling had helped them develop skills that would have an impact on their employability

CONCLUSIONS

- What have we learned?
- What further questions arise from this?

AND FINALLY...



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