

# Efficacy of humanistic counselling in schools for emotional distress

<b>Submission date</b> 02/12/2009	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
		<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 21/12/2009	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 15/02/2013	<b>Condition category</b> Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims.

The study aimed to look at the effectiveness of school-based humanistic counselling in reducing psychological distress in young people.

Who can participate?

The study was for people aged 13-18, who were experiencing some degree of emotional symptoms.

What does the study involve?

Participants were randomly allocated to six weeks of counselling, or asked to wait for counselling.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The benefits were that young people in both conditions had an opportunity to experience counselling, which we know from previous research is generally experienced as helpful and is associated with positive gains in psychological wellbeing. However, there was a small risk that people would find the counselling unhelpful or, for a very small percentage, actively hindering.

Where is the study run from?

It was run in Glasgow and in the north-east of England by the University of Strathclyde.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

It ran for approximately six months from January 2009, and is now complete.

Who is funding the study?

It was funded primarily by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, with some additional funding from Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS.

Who is the main contact?

Professor Mick Cooper

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# Contact information

## Type(s)

Scientific

## Contact name

Prof Mick Cooper

## Contact details

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# Additional identifiers

EudraCT/CTIS number

IRAS number

ClinicalTrials.gov number

Secondary identifying numbers

UEC0809/19

# Study information

## Scientific Title

Efficacy of humanistic counselling in schools for emotional distress: a pilot randomised controlled trial

## Acronym

SCOOLS

## Study objectives

For young people (13 - 18 years old) experiencing psychological distress, weekly counselling will be more effective than waiting list conditions.

## Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

## Ethics approval(s)

University of Strathclyde Ethics Committee approved on the 17th December 2008

## Study design

Multicentre randomised controlled pilot study

## Primary study design

Interventional

**Secondary study design**

Randomised controlled trial

**Study setting(s)**

Other

**Study type(s)**

Treatment

**Participant information sheet**

Not available in web format, please use the contact details below to request a patient information sheet

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Emotional distress

**Interventions**

Counselling:

Young people were offered weekly counselling for up to six sessions. The nature of the counselling was therapeutic rather than advice- or career-orientated, and was based on the competences for humanistic psychological therapies developed at University College London through funding from Skills for Health. Counselling, defined in this way, puts particular emphasis on the development of a trusting relationship between the therapist and client, and tries to understand the client's 'world' from their point of view. Counsellors were BACP accredited practitioners or equivalent, working within a set of professional ethical guidelines for counselling and psychotherapy. They had experience of working in humanistic ways with young people. A selection of session recordings were audited by the research team to monitor adherence to humanistic psychological therapy competences. The Humanistic Competences Compliance Checklist Version 3 was developed for this purpose. The Checklist was based on the format of the NICE(R) Record Sheet.

Waiting list:

Young people allocated to the control condition were not offered any formal counselling intervention for the six week period. However, they were informed that they had access to the school's full pastoral care provision at any point during the trial, including the school's pre-existing counselling service. At the endpoint assessment, participants in the waiting list condition were offered the option of direct entry to counselling.

Follow-up on both arms was at six weeks from baseline assessment.

**Intervention Type**

Other

**Phase**

Not Applicable

**Primary outcome measure**

Emotional Symptom Score on SDQ (SDQ-ES), measured at baseline and six weeks

## **Secondary outcome measures**

Measured at baseline and six weeks:

1. Total Difficulties Score on SDQ (SDQ-TD)
2. Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (MFQ)
3. Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation for Young People (YP-CORE)
4. Experience of Service Questionnaire (ESQ)
5. Social Inclusion Questionnaire (IQYP)
6. Adapted Change Interview (for clients)
7. Adapted Change Interview (for waitlist)

## **Overall study start date**

05/01/2009

## **Completion date**

26/06/2009

# **Eligibility**

## **Key inclusion criteria**

1. Aged 13 to 18 years, either sex
2. Experiencing borderline or abnormally high levels of emotional distress, as indicated by a score of 4 or above on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) Emotional Symptoms Subscale at assessment
3. Motivated to attend counselling, as indicated by a response of 'somewhat true' or 'certainly true' on the Anxiety Control Questionnaire (ACQ) at assessment
4. Capable of consenting to participate in research, as indicated by a member of the pastoral care team
5. Greater than 85 per cent attendance at school, as indicated by a member of the pastoral care team

## **Participant type(s)**

Patient

## **Age group**

Adult

## **Lower age limit**

18 Years

## **Sex**

Both

## **Target number of participants**

32

## **Key exclusion criteria**

1. Risk of significant harm to self or other, as indicated by a member of the pastoral care team and the researcher at assessment
2. Involvement with other child and young people mental health agencies, including the established school counselling service, as indicated by a member of the pastoral care team and

/or the young person at assessment

3. Planning/likely to move school during period of study, as indicated by a member of the pastoral care team and/or the young person at assessment

**Date of first enrolment**

05/01/2009

**Date of final enrolment**

26/06/2009

## **Locations**

**Countries of recruitment**

Scotland

United Kingdom

**Study participating centre**

**76 Southbrae Drive**

Glasgow

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G13 1PP

## **Sponsor information**

**Organisation**

University of Strathclyde (UK)

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**Sponsor type**

University/education

**Website**

<http://www.strath.ac.uk>

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/00n3w3b69>

# Funder(s)

## Funder type

Government

## Funder Name

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (UK)

## Funder Name

University of Strathclyde (UK)

## Funder Name

Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Trust (UK)

# Results and Publications

## Publication and dissemination plan

Not provided at time of registration

## Intention to publish date

## Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

## IPD sharing plan summary

Not provided at time of registration

## Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>	results	22/04/2010		Yes	No