

Dipl.-Psych.
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Dear academic staff,

there is an In-House Social Counseling Service within the University of Bremen.

The In-House Social Counseling Service of the University of Bremen is a central place of help for all employees at the university who have problems at work, private problems or health related problems. Here you can receive psychosocial and psychological counseling appointments and coaching, free of charge and without any risks for possible future civil service appointments or insurance policies.

The In-House Social Counseling Service has a staff of one: that's me. I am a psychologist and my name is Kassandra Ruhm. My work is fully confidential.

In the following text you will receive further detailed information about my work.

You can consult with me for many different reasons, for instance:

- if you have difficulties with your doctoral thesis or conflicts with your professor or your colleagues
- in case of burn-out, if you have difficulties planning your time or if you have other questions concerning your work at the university
- when you have problems in your private life, such as breakups or problems with your relationship or your family, in case of loneliness, if something personal is bothering you, if you are feeling down, If you are concerned about your life planning, ...

... and for many other reasons (see below).

Of course, I am not a specialist in all possible fields, but I can help you to find the right offers at the university, in Bremen and the surroundings where you will be able to find the help and support you need.

I can offer a sympathetic ear to your worries and help you look for the right path for you. I can support you in finding and defining your position and, if you would like, changing things,



but I cannot solve your problems for you and I do not have the authority to change conditions at your place of work. The decisions you make regarding difficulties in your workplace or elsewhere remain entirely in your hands. All information I receive from you will be treated confidentially. You always have the responsibility to act and the choice to decide on those actions independently.

For those of you who would like to know more, on the following pages, I give examples of some typical situations where someone could come to the In-House Social Counseling Service. Maybe you or a colleague are in a similar situation and preoccupied with the same problems.

In order to make an appointment you can reach me best via email or telephone.

Please provide a phone number for me to call you back. Thank you.

Best regards and maybe see you another time

Kassandra Ruhm.

Private life

After work you go home and only want to go to bed and not get up again. Nothing pleases you or makes you happy.

There are problems in your relationship, marriage or personal environment.

You are worried about your children.

You think about how to best balance the challenges of your job and research work against those of your family, and you want to talk to someone about it.

The situation at your home has changed and you need to figure out how to best cope with it.

Someone close to you is seriously ill or dying.

One of your relatives is in need of (long term) care.

You haven't been in Germany for long, and some aspects of the culture and interaction between people seems so alien, strange and weird. Maybe you don't know everything yet that might be useful in this situation? You feel like you need "instructions for use" for Germany, or a place where you can ask questions and talk about the sometimes astonishing behavior of German people?

You've fallen in love with another man and are unsure how to explain it gently to your wife.

Your way of life suits you, but does not fit in with the mainstream. You yourself do not have a problem with that, but some of the people in your life, including co-workers, may feel differently.

You're looking for a way out because of violence in your relationship.

You are in great distress.

You have psychological problems.

You are often unhappy or scared.

You are considering going into therapy, but you are not sure what to expect there, which form of therapy would suit you or how you can find the right therapist. Perhaps one who can communicate in a language other than German.

Sometimes it is not easy to find one's way in the jungle of so many different offers of advice and support. I can help you to get the help you really need.

Professional

You are looking for a reasonable way of handling with a heavy workload, with stress, unclear demands, or expectations that you cannot fulfill.

You suffer from writer's block in your scientific work.

There are conflicts among your colleagues or superiors.

You are so preoccupied with private or professional concerns that you are not able to concentrate on your daily tasks.

Your work atmosphere has become uncomfortable because of miscommunication or work overload.

There are unclear tensions within the team.

You are looking for a neutral party to help moderate discussions or conflicts within the workplace. As a moderator in workplace conflicts I have to remain neutral. When I give advice to a single person, I concentrate on the wishes and needs of the person concerned. I cannot work for two or more parties with differing interests at the same time. Therefore it would be advisable to consider whether you want a confidential one-to-one session or whether I should be the neutral moderator in a conflict.

You have the feeling that a colleague is not well and you wonder how you can help.

Supervisors can contact the In-House Social Counseling Service if they are considering how to deal appropriately with a conflict between employees and would like support in doing so. They can approach me if they are concerned about an employee, if they want to prepare for a difficult conversation with an employee, or if they would like to discuss anything else related to their role as a supervisors or manager.

Health

You are looking for the best way to cope with health problems.

After a long period of recovery and convalescence you want to prepare for the return to work or you want to have someone to talk to through the first time back. (There is also the Schwerbehindertenvertretung for disabled employees.)

You wonder whether psychological stress has caused or exacerbated your health problems.

You feel that your physical symptoms have not been caused or exacerbated by psychological stress. Nevertheless, you would like to work with a qualified professional to find out how you can best support your physical health through psychological factors.

You have health related problems which result from or are aggravated by the conditions in your workplace.

You haven't called in sick yet, but you notice that your health is getting "shakier". You would like to discuss with someone neutral whether there is anything you can do preventatively to make your health more stable again and prevent sickness absence in advance.

You have got a chronic or even life threatening illness.

...or any other problems concerning your private life or your professional environment.