

## Dear colleagues

My name is Kathrine Marie Westh, and I will give a short presentation of our team Counselling Support, who we are, what we can do and what we can do with and for you.

Counselling Support is a part of the SPS-team, which is again a part of Study Service. We are a relatively new team and was created in august 2021 with the purpose of supporting all staff at SDU. As our titles say, we are both counsellors. I am cand.mag in interpersonal business communication with further training as a certified conflict coach. Rasmus is an authorized psychologist and further trained as a supervisor by completing a course approved by the Danish Psychologist Association. We both have a share in all the functions of the team, but I focus more on presentations and courses, and Rasmus focusses more on supervision and consultation. The general themes of our courses have been subjects ranging from conflict management, dialogue training, difficult conversations to collegial sparring. We are also a part of the crisis/emergency response, which also includes experiences of abusive behaviour at SDU and we cooperate with Educational Law & Registration, when students or faculty report cases, or sometimes when they have questions or doubts regarding reporting a case.

The acronym SPS stands for Special Education Support (specialpædagogisk støtte), and as we are part of the SPS-team, you should also contact us, if you have any questions relating to what SPS is, how to get Educational Support as a student, how it works on a more general level and the like. It is very important, that all staff at SDU knows, what the possibilities are, if we meet a student that has a psychological, neurological, functional or physical diagnosis. Dyslexia (reading learning difficulties) and dyscalculia (math learning difficulties) also fall under this umbrella. Likewise, if you suspect a diagnosis, we are also available for counselling.

## Tilgang

- → Vi har ben i SPS teamet og derfor ved vi meget om studerende med diagnoser, men...
   → Alle studerende kan udfordre os i vores job.
- →Vores tilgang er at møde de studerende som studerende først → Uanset hvad vi ellers ved eller tænker om dem
- →I nogle tilfælde kan det være hjælpsomt med viden om diagnoser
  - → Dette kan dog ikke stå alene, da det altid er det konkrete menneske, man sidder overfor, der kommer før diagnosen.
- →Rådgivende Support hjælper alle ansatte i relation til alle studerende

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Both I and Rasmus have worked as Special Educational Support Counsellors for students with psychological, neurological or functional diagnoses, and we have amassed a good amount of knowledge and understanding in regard to students with diagnoses and what it means to be a student with a diagnosis. From this foundation we apply the perspective that students with diagnoses are students first and foremost. This means that in our counselling knowledge or suspicion about a diagnosis can of course be a part of the conversation or course. We do however strive to rise above diagnostic thinking and try instead to approach things with openness, curiosity and giving/sharing responsibility. We apply this perspective because it is important keep in mind, that we are an educational institution and the students with diagnoses are not patients or clients here, but young grown-ups who have made the choice to study and to a very large extent are both tremendously capable and willing to do so.

Knowledge about diagnoses can, in small amounts, in some instances, and integrated with the perspective expressed above, be helpful. But with this knowledge we also run the risk of being deceived into drawing simplistic and unidimensional conclusions about a concrete and complex individual and their behaviour. Psychological illness and suffering tend to be extremely diverse and to a large extent dependent on the personality, temperament, and current, concrete circumstances in which the individual is situated. We run the risk of classifying the students by their diagnosis, and putting them in boxes unnecessarily, and thereby remove ourselves from relating to them with openness and curiosity.

Adding to this, we know from surveys that many students with diagnoses feel more positive towards coming to SDU, because they can be Anders or Josefine first, and not me-with-aspergers or -me-with-anxiety og me-with-dyslexia. Meeting all with openness and curiosity, trying to figure out how to diversify teaching and education, and then from that point having expectations for and making demands to the students will be beneficial both to those with and those without diagnoses.

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So to reiterate: We are here for all **staff**, **educators**, **counsellors**, **administrative personel** to help with any problem or challenge relating to any meeting or dealing with one or more students in any work-related context, because we have to keep in mind that all students may be the one to push us or challenge us in our professional capacity. We are here to spar, consult, teach, supervise or just talk about all the tasks and professional relations you experience challenges or difficulties.

When you call for us and we meet you, we want to begin with a dialogue to try to ascertain the situation and the challenge. Is it relational, task-related, role-related, situational or a certain behavior? It may for example be a difficulty in being in situations, where students cry, or having to be clear about a code of conduct or expectations with a student, that does not currently behave in an acceptable manner.

As a professional one might become aware that a certain kind of student elicits some emotional or behavioral response which is deemed inappropriate or unhelpful. It can also relate to more general themes like the communication in particular circumstances, how responsibility should be share with a student in a particular situation, one's way of relating and adapting to varying roles in relation to students depending on the task at hand.

Formater			
<ul> <li>→ Oplæg, temaformiddage og undervisning</li> <li>→ indenfor f.eks. Dialog, svære samtaler, konflikthåndtering, konkollegial sparring, supervision m.v.</li> <li>→ Debriefing, individuelle samtaler og forløb</li> <li>→ (hvis man har en svær opgave ift en studerende, har været u</li> <li>→ Gruppesupervision og gruppesamtaler</li> <li>→ Del af kriseberedskab på SDU (tilkald og debriefing)</li> <li>→ Vi kan også hjælpe med viden om SPS, støttemulighed</li> </ul>			
SDU 🎓	SPS og Rådgivende Support: Hvad kan vi gøre for dig som underviser?	4	

Our primary goal is to focus as sharply as possible on your concrete situation and challenges. We therefore try to ask specific questions and adapt to your needs. It also means, that we would like to follow up on our work with you later, in order to facilitate the usefulness insofar as it makes sense to you.

We offer a wide variety of formats depending on the problem and resources at hand. Even if your needs for counselling does not fall into the specific themes mentioned above, don't hesitate to contact us anyway – we may be able to do something, nonetheless.

As it is, we offer both presentations and courses, individual and group supervision courses, shorter consultative courses and sparring conversations.

## Snitflader til andre på SDU

- → Studie Trivselsvejledningen
- $\rightarrow$  Personalepsykologen, HR,
- → Arbejdsmiljø og tillidsrepræsentant

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5

