

Psychological counselling in higher education

Helen Margus
psychologist, MSc
Tallinn University
Career and Counselling Centre

e-mail: helen.margus@tlu.ee



KARJÄÄRI- JA
NÕUSTAMISKESKUS
loodud selleks, et toetada Sind õpingutes ning
aidata tööturul edukas olla!

Why counselling in the university?

Socio-economic reasons:

- Growing number of students
- Changing educational environment
 - increased financial pressure
 - increased academic pressure
- Insecurity about the future

Developmental reasons:

- Search of identity accompanied by instability, diversity of choices, confusion
- Adjustment with new requirements



KARJÄÄRI- JA
NÕUSTAMISKESKUS
loodud selleks, et toetada Sind õpingutes ning
aidata tööturul edukas olla!

• Supportive factors:

- devoting whole time to studying
- clear idea of what they professionally want to do later
- high self-esteem, tolerating own deficits
- high stress/uncertainty tolerance and coping skills
- good social skills, participating in recreational activities
- good study skills
- teamwork skills
- supporting family relationships

• Risk factors:

- not possible to completely devote to studies
- doubts about choice of major
- uncertainty about own capabilities, fear of failure, perfectionism
- low stress/uncertainty tolerance
- weak social skills
- weak study habits and skills
- struggling alone, others seen as competitors
- dysfunctional family relationships

Schumann, 2006



KARJÄÄRI- JA
NÕUSTAMISKESKUS
loodud selleks, et toetada Sind õpingutes ning
aidata tööturul edukas olla!

What kind of support universities offer?

- Individual and group counselling
- Peer-counselling
- Seminars and workshops
- Educative materials, web pages with useful links etc.
- Assisting management in creating supportive environment for students
- Scientific research



KARJÄÄRI- JA
NÕUSTAMISKESKUS
loodud selleks, et toetada Sind õpingutes ning
aidata tööturul edukas olla!

Psychological counselling services provided in Tallinn University

- Individual counselling
- Peer-counselling
- Seminars and workshops
- Web page with links to helpful materials



TALLINNA ÜLIKOO

KARJÄÄRI- JA
NÕUSTAMISKESKUS

loodud selleks, et toetada Sind õpingutes ning
aidata tööturul edukas olla!

How psychological counselling in educational settings differ from other institutions?

- Stress on prevention rather than counselling
- Mostly nonpsychiatric problems
- Short-term counselling, methods used vary greatly depending of counsellors education
- Knowledge about developmental, motivational and learning psychology is necessary
- Closely related to career-counselling
- Multicultural aspects



TALLINNA ÜLIKOO

KARJÄÄRI- JA
NÕUSTAMISKESKUS

loodud selleks, et toetada Sind õpingutes ning
aidata tööturul edukas olla!

What are the most common reasons for seeking help in Tallinn University?

- Adjustment difficulties
- Motivational crises
- Loneliness
- Depressed mood, fatigue, sleeping problems
- All kind of anxiety related issues (e.g. test anxiety, constant tension and worry, social anxiety)
- Relationship issues
- Eating problems
- Coping with stressful life-events



TALLINNA ÜLIKOO

KARJÄÄRI- JA
NÕUSTAMISKESKUS

loodud selleks, et toetada Sind õpingutes ning
aidata tööturul edukas olla!

My methods

- **Cognitive - behavioural approach**
 - intervenes in maintaining mechanism of the problem
 - stresses learning new skills
 - interpretations of events rather than events itself cause psychological difficulties
 - finding out dysfunctional beliefs
 - disputing them
 - testing validity of beliefs by behavioural experiments
 - replace with more adaptive ones
 - behavioural activation, abandon avoidance



TALLINNA ÜLIKOO

KARJÄÄRI- JA
NÕUSTAMISKESKUS

loodud selleks, et toetada Sind õpingutes ning
aidata tööturul edukas olla!

My methods

- Continuum
 - for changing all or nothing thinking
- Pie-technique
 - for searching and weighting alternatives



TALLINNA ÜLIKOOL

KARJÄÄRI- JA
NÕUSTAMISKESKUS

loodud selleks, et toetada Sind õpingutes ning
aidata tööturul edukas olla!