

Introduction

The CGIAR Counselling Service is a professional, confidential and free service, which is available for a limited time period, to all CGIAR Staff worldwide, to support them during this difficult time of COVID-19.

CGIAR's Gender, Diversity and Inclusion (GDI) Function has sponsored 700 hours of Counselling, available as a shared resource to all Staff across the System.

The service provides one-to-one counselling and group specialist assistance on a range of personal, family, social, psychological and mental health issues in a non-judgmental and open manner. It also provides a range of wellbeing, resilience and mental health advice and information. Counselling is available in English, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Spanish and Arabic.

This CGIAR Counselling support may be especially helpful for Staff with caregiving responsibilities, who are struggling with the pressures of juggling the care of children with working from home for extended periods, those who are experiencing isolation in lockdown, and those who may be under very high levels of job stress during the pandemic. This confidential source of support is also available to anyone who may be experiencing domestic violence.

This service is independent of the CGIAR Counselling Roster, which is another information-only resource made available for Centers/Alliances to consider as part of their Employee Assistance Programs.

The CGIAR Counselling Service is being sponsored for a limited period by CGIAR's Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Program. It is free of charge and completely confidential.

The Counselling Service Team

The Counselling Service is outsourced to The Rome Institute, which is a highly experienced organization used by a number of UN agencies for counselling services.

The Rome Institute is a group of independent practitioners, working as professional counsellors, trainers, mediators and coaches with extensive experience helping individuals and groups with personal and work-related issues. The Counsellors diverse international and United Nations (UN) System experience. They have supported humanitarian and development staff all over the world in both Field and Headquarters locations. They are experts in dealing with stress, team dynamics, relationship issues, interpersonal communications, meaning and motivation, critical incidents and personal and work transitions.

The counsellors of the Rome Institute - Petra Miczaika, Lindsey Anderson, Jim Striker, Ronit Atlan, Henriette De Vries, Sorah Broder, Vicki Owens, Rahel Goenner and Celeste Rivera - are available to meet with staff by videoconference or phone.

Services are private and confidential. The Rome Institute Counsellors will not share any personal information with CGIAR.

How Staff Access Counselling

- The Human Resource Function of the Center/Alliance shares this information with Staff regarding the availability of the sponsored Counselling.
- Interested Staff contact The Rome Institute in confidence, using the following link: <https://www.romeinstitute.org/contact-us/> or petramiczaika@gmail.com
- The Staff member is contacted by the Counsellor and counselling begins. A counselling session typically lasts between 30 and 60 minutes.
- A Staff member can access a total of 120 minutes of counselling time. Should the Staff member wish to have additional counselling sessions, the Counsellor will request the allocation of this additional time from the GDI function, without revealing the Staff member's personal details.

What Staff Can Expect from Counselling

- In the initial meeting the Counsellor will listen carefully to the Staff member's concerns, will assist them in identifying the main issues and will help in drawing up together a plan of work.
- The sessions are an opportunity for Staff members to express their thoughts and feelings in an environment that is confidential, non-judgemental and professional.
- Counselling helps to facilitate self-awareness, assists the Staff member to cope and handle personal difficulties, and promotes Staff empowerment and good self-management skills in the process.
- The Counsellor may provide the Staff member with a range of guidance or suggested actions which may be helpful. They may also recommend potentially useful tools or information sources for consideration.
- The Staff member will be asked to complete an online feedback questionnaire, following the completion of the counselling. This will be anonymously aggregated into a monthly report, so that CGIAR is aware of how many hours of counselling have been used each month and what was helpful to Staff.

Why is this a time-limited Service?

CGIAR's Gender, Diversity and Inclusion (GDI) Function has sponsored 700 hours of Counselling, for immediate usage by Staff across the System, in recognition of the challenges being presented by COVID-19.

These hours will be used on a first-come, first-served basis.

It is anticipated that these 700 hours will provide Centers/Alliances with an immediate response to an urgent need. It will provide sufficient time to explore the options available for a shared, cost-effective, sustainable Employee Assistance Program / Counselling Service.