

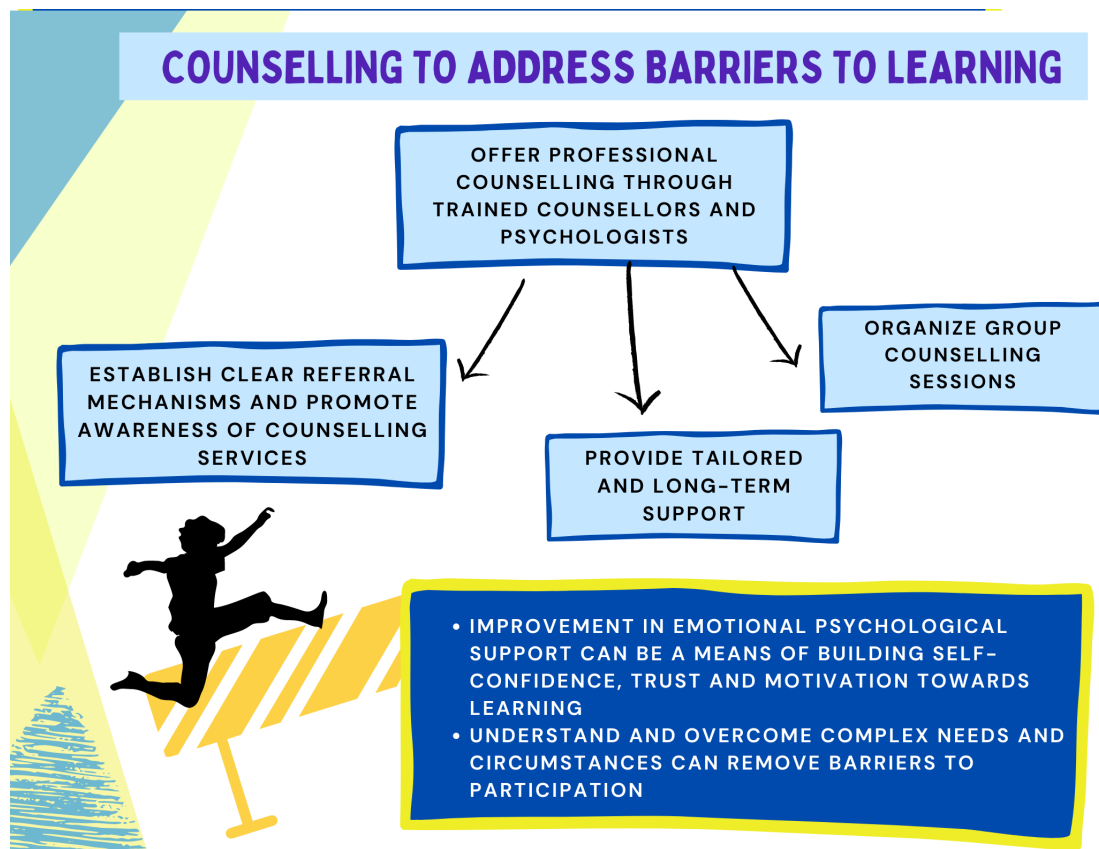


# Counselling to address barriers to learning

## Problem statement

### Addressed problem: Barriers to learning

Young people may find it hard to engage in learning because of wider issues they are facing in their lives. These might include health problems, caring responsibilities, housing, financial circumstances, antisocial behaviours or substance misuse. Professional counselling can help young people to tackle these wider issues.



## Beneficiaries

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Young people facing complex personal, social and/or family issues.

## Addressing the problem

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### How should professional counselling be provided to young people?

Professional counselling is delivered by trained counsellors, including psychologists. It helps the young person to come to terms with their personal circumstances.

Professional counselling may be accessed through 'one-stop-shops', which bring together various services for young people, or may be provided within the learning environment. It can also be part of a reintegration measure.

For young people facing particularly complex issues, counselling may be one part of a 'package' of support given by a team of professionals, for instance multi-professional school care teams and student support services.

The following tips are given as advice to policy-makers and practitioners involved in the design and delivery of such measures. The information is based on Cedefop research into successful measures as well as other relevant evidence.

### **Tip 1: Have clear referral mechanisms and promote awareness of counselling services**

Young people may be reluctant to come forward to access counselling services due to motivational, confidence or awareness-related reasons. It is important for teaching staff and other professionals working with young people to be able to spot those facing complex issues and to be aware of the services available to help overcome these.

Where counselling services are not an integral part of the learning environment, clear and effective referral mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that no young person 'falls through the net'. Counselling services need to promote their existence and make professionals, young people and parents aware of the kinds of problems young people face and the support services available to help.

### **Tip 2: Tailor support to the needs of the young person**

All young people are different and the problems they face, as well as the context in which they face them and their capacity to cope with them, also differ. Counselling provision – its intensity and duration – needs to be centred on the needs of the young person and their progress over time.

It should be based on an initial diagnostic or assessment of the young person's

needs and what he/she wants to achieve as a result of the counselling. It should continue until the young person has achieved these objectives and has the confidence and coping skills to be able to cope with his/her personal circumstances independently.

### **Tip 3: Provide long-term support**

At the core of counselling support is the development of a relationship between the young person and the counsellor which is based on trust and respect. This relationship takes time and regular contact in order to develop. A one-off intervention is not enough to help a young person to address his/her problems; counselling needs to take place over the longer term. Continuity is also important so ideally, the young person should be supported by the same counsellor throughout his or her education or training programme. It may also be necessary to continue counselling support beyond the length of the education or training programme the young person is taking part in. It is important that this opportunity is possible.

### **Tip 4: Integrate counselling as part of a case management approach**

A [comprehensive support to tackle complex needs](#) involves working with the young person to identify his/her support needs and acting on his/her behalf to ensure that the right services and professionals are engaged in providing this support. Professional counselling should be an integral part of a case management approach and one of a 'menu' of services available to the young person, according to his/her needs.

### **Tip 5: Envisage group sessions where there is a high number of at-risk young people**

In learning environments or communities where young people are at high risk of facing difficult circumstances, group counselling or information sessions may be appropriate. For instance, second chance measures may incorporate group counselling sessions covering health issues for example.

## **Expected outcomes**




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Outcomes of professional counselling

Counselling from a qualified counsellor or psychotherapist can be particularly beneficial for young people in difficult circumstances. Emotional and psychological support can be a means of building self-confidence, trust and motivation, enabling young people to think more positively about their future.

This type of measure is usually important for young people who are very much disengaged from education and training and have complex circumstances/needs. It can help them to understand and overcome these and therefore remove a barrier to participation.

The following outcomes can be expected at different levels:

 <b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	 <b>INSTITUTIONAL</b>	 <b>SYSTEM</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved well-being</li> <li>• Social / economic / psychological challenges being tackled</li> <li>• Improved work habits / social skills</li> <li>• Improved capacity to deal with one's learning difficulties</li> <li>• Lower absenteeism</li> <li>• Developing a positive attitude to learning and education and training</li> <li>• Improving self-awareness - understanding of own abilities, aptitudes and interests</li> <li>• Improved 'work readiness'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased support to teachers and trainers to work with learners with complex personal, social and / or family issues</li> <li>• Reduced risk of early leaving due to complex personal, social and/or family issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced rates of early leavers</li> </ul>

## Related protective factors

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## Related resources

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## Good practices

### Good practice

#### **Carpo - Assistierte Ausbildung (assisted VET)**

In Germany, assisted VET ('Carpo') incorporates intensive individual social-pedagogical coaching and guidance, offered by certified social-pedagogues.

 **Germany**

### Good practice

#### **Foundation Innove, Pathfinder centres (in Estonian: Sihtasutus Innove, Rajaleidja keskused)**

In Estonia, Pathfinder centres provide careers information; career counselling; speech therapy; psychological guidance; socio-pedagogical guidance; and special educational guidance.

 **Estonia**

### Good practice

#### **Capacity building to students, companies and vocational schools involved in apprenticeship-training (QuABB)**

The overarching goal is to reduce the number of contract dissolutions, which lead to a permanent drop-out of education and training.

QuABB also aims to support vocational schools as well as companies in working with "high-maintenance" apprentices.

 **Germany**

### Good practice

#### **JBA - youth labour employment agency**

*Jugendberufsagentur - Hamburg*

German youth labour employment agencies (JBA) bring together career guidance and counselling services in one single place.

 **Germany**

### Good practice

#### **Orienta4YEL**

Supporting educational and social inclusion of young early leavers and those at risk of early leaving through mechanisms of orientation and tutorial action.

 **Germany**  **Portugal**  **Romania**

### Good practice

#### **"FUORI SCUOLA" Pathways for the recovery of early school leaving**

*FUORI SCUOLA Percorsi di recupero dalla dispersione scolastica*

FUORI SCUOLA is a project that aims to tackle early leaving from education and training at the local level of provinces.

 **Spain**  **United Kingdom**

Having a holistic approach aiming at the wellbeing of young early leavers, each organisation provides services in four areas:

- a) development of professional skills;
- b) development of personal and social skills;
- c) development of key competences;
- d) reaching out, engagement, reception, listening and guidance.

 **Germany**  **Italy**  **Portugal**

 **Spain**  **United Kingdom**

## Tools

 **Tools**

### Online questionnaire 'Risiko Check' and coaching tool 'Counselling profile' in the context of the project Stop Dropout

The EU-funded 'Stop Dropout!' project has developed a 'Counselling Profile' (or personal profile) for use by qualified professionals in fields such as counselling, psychology or human relations. It is a structured interview scheme which can be used to use to guide individuals who are at risk of dropping out.

 **Austria**  **Czechia**  **Germany**

 **Slovenia**

 **Tools**

### DIDO - Dropping-in the dropouts toolkit

The DIDO toolkit contains practical tools aimed at preventing dropout in adult education.

 **Belgium**  **Denmark**  **Finland**

 **Netherlands**  **Portugal**

 **Switzerland**

## Publications

 **Publications**

 **Publications**

## Cross-case analyses of school-based prevention and intervention measures

Different approaches schools adopt when providing individualised support to students. This study analyses the types of measures used by schools to provide one-on-one emotional and behavioural support.

Download the report [here](#).

 **Austria**  **Belgium**  **Poland**

 **Portugal**  **Spain**

 **United Kingdom**

## Natives and immigrants enrolled in Spanish intermediate vocational education and training: a comparative study

*Antoni Cerdà-Navarro, Francesca Salvà-Mut, Rubén Comas-Forgas & Mercè Morey-López*

This article looks at the differences and similarities between Spanish-born and immigrant students enrolled in the first year of Intermediate Vocational Education (IVET) programmes in Spain.

 **Spain**

 Publications

## Recommendations on inclusive education

*Based on the COFACE Disability S.H.I.F.T. guide for a meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families. COFACE Families Europe is a pluralistic network of civil society associations representing the interests of all families.*

According to article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), signed and adopted by the European Union and all its Member States, and of its General Comment No. 4, State parties must ensure the realisation of the right of persons with disabilities to education through an inclusive education system at all levels, including pre-schools, primary, secondary and tertiary education, vocational training and lifelong learning, extracurricular and social activities, and for all students, including persons with disabilities.

 Publications

## UNESCO's book "Safe to learn and thrive"

*Report advocating for ending violence in and through education*

The book addresses the critical issue of violence in educational settings. It highlights the prevalence and various forms of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological abuse, bullying, and neglect, and their impact on learners and educators.

**International**

## Quick wins

★ Quick win

### **Quick and easy referral to support measures**

Formal protocols for the referral of young people to specialist support services saves time for the VET provider, and facilitate a quicker response to the learners' needs.

 **Austria**  **Netherlands**

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Source URL: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/en/tools/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/intervention-approaches/counselling-address-barriers-learning>