

Women's Health Counselling Service

Information for women and their families

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust offers a counselling service to women and their families. The following outlines the service provided and how you can be referred, should you think that this service would help you and/or your partner.

What is counselling?

Counselling offers the opportunity to explore issues in private with someone who has no other role in your life.

Our counsellors are specially trained practitioners who will work with you over a short period of time to help improve and maintain your mental and emotional wellbeing. They will use counselling skills, EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) or psychosexual skills to help you understand or explore your grief, trauma, or mental wellbeing. If you need any further information on any of the treatments listed above, please speak to a member of the centre for women's health counselling service.

Women's Health have two counsellors both Accredited Members of the British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapy (BACP) and as such are bound by the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice and the Professional Conduct procedure within it. This offers a framework for best practice and can be found here:

www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions/

How can I be referred to the counsellors?

Our counsellors will take referrals from staff within maternity and gynaecology departments, antenatal clinics, community midwives, GPs, health visitors, and other therapists/agencies. Gynaecology referrals must always be made by a Consultant Gynaecologist and/or Clinical Gynaecology/Oncology Nurse Specialist.

The Centre for Women's Health Counselling Service can also take self-referrals **via the email address or telephone number** on the back of this leaflet for antenatal support or from patients within 4 months of discharge from the hospital postnatally.

Can anyone be referred?

No. The person or persons referred need to be currently under the care of the Trust or have been so within the past 4 months.

Is the service confidential?

Yes. Confidentiality is an essential part of the counselling process. No personal information will be shared with anyone outside of this service without your consent, unless the counsellor believes you or someone else is at risk.

How much will it cost?

The service is free to NHS patients and their partners who are known to Women's Health.

What issues will the counsellors deal with?

- Following the loss of a pregnancy at any stage from early pregnancy to birth.
- Emotional distress following gynaecological/obstetric surgery or diagnosis.
- After a traumatic birth experience.
- Issues related to anxiety during pregnancy; patients that may be affected by previous birth trauma, loss of a pregnancy, or stillbirth. This service is not for those who have long-term panic attacks, long-term anxiety, or long-term depression. These may be referred to TALKWORKS, the Maternal Mental Health Clinic or the Perinatal Mental Health Team. Please discuss with a member of staff which service would be most helpful for you.
- Parents of sick babies in the Neonatal Unit.
- Parents distressed by ultrasound findings such as fetal abnormalities.
- One-off decision-making sessions in relation to termination of pregnancy.

How long is each counselling session?

Each session is normally 50-60 minutes.

Can I bring someone with me to my appointment?

Yes, if your partner also needs support we work with both parents.

What if I still need counselling support after I have completed my sessions with the counsellor?

If this happens, our counsellors will attempt to signpost you to other psychological services or back to your GP to refer you on.

What if I need to cancel my session?

Please give us a minimum of 48 hours' notice if you need to cancel your appointment. This gives us enough time to offer your appointment to another patient instead.

Who are the counsellors?

- Julie Lee (works Monday – Thursday)
- Louise Swiggs (works Thursday and Friday mornings)
- New referrals
email: rde-tr.cwhcounsellors@nhs.net
Telephone: 01392 406678

If you have any questions about the counselling service, please contact the Centre for Women's Health Counselling Service or speak to a member of staff/person referring you.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by Royal Devon staff undertaking procedures at the Royal Devon hospitals.

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