

Information for Patients  
**Counselling Service**





## Counselling Service

Are you or your loved ones finding it hard to cope emotionally with your diagnosis or treatment? If so, counselling may be helpful to you.

This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions you may have about counselling and the service that is available in the cancer centre. People sometimes find it hard to talk about their difficulties but it is important to seek help and support. It's also important that you don't wait until your difficulties become too serious. We would much rather you told us of your concerns as soon as possible, and seeking counselling is about making a positive choice to get the help that you need.

Being diagnosed with cancer can be a deeply distressing time for you and those closest to you. There will be times when you feel you are coping well, but there will also be times when it feels too hard to cope or is taking too long for things to improve. Your emotions and feelings may even be interfering with other aspects of your life, making it more difficult to deal with day to day living.

How you are feeling can affect how you cope with your treatment and there will be particular times which may feel especially difficult such as at the start or end of a course of treatment.

It can also be difficult to talk to those closest to you about how you feel. Often we don't want to upset those we care about. Some people may feel they have no-one to talk to. It can therefore be helpful to talk to a trained professional. The counsellor in the centre may be able to help you with some of the things you are finding particularly troublesome.

Caring for someone close who has cancer can also be difficult and confusing and the need to talk about your own feelings can be important at this time.

## What happens in counselling?

- Counselling can give you the chance to talk about the issues that are troubling you in a safe and supportive environment. Your counsellor will try to help you focus and understand more clearly the specific problems or concerns you have.
- The counsellor's role is to offer you support and understanding and to listen and respond in a non-judgemental, non-critical way.
- Your counsellor will help you explore your feelings while respecting your values, choices and lifestyle.
- Counselling is something that you enter into voluntarily. It may be suggested to you by your doctor or other health care professional, however you do not need to take up this offer.
- You will play an active part in working with your counsellor in trying to deal with your emotions and difficulties. She will offer support in helping you to learn new ways of managing your problems and to make choices, decisions or changes that are right for you at this time.

## **What sorts of problems can be helped through counselling?**

Some examples of the types of problems your counsellor can offer help with are:

- Difficulties coping with the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.
- Unclear understanding of the facts relating to a cancer diagnosis and treatment.
- Fears of treatment and coping with the effects.
- Feeling frightened or anxious or angry about your illness and treatment.
- Feelings of loss of control or helplessness.
- Feelings of stress, anxiety or depression.
- Loss of confidence or self-esteem.
- Issues concerning poor body image.
- Relationship and/or family difficulties.
- Intimate relationship problems and sexual issues.
- Fears of the future and what might lie ahead.

## **Is the counselling service available to me?**

The counselling service is available to in-patients and out-patients and / or their immediate close relative. It is available before, during or after treatment. People are usually seen on their own, although a close relative might be seen too.

## **Appointment Information**

Your counsellor will try to arrange a time that suits you. Your appointment will last 50 minutes at the most. If you and your counsellor agree that counselling would be helpful you decide together how often and when it would be helpful to meet up. Often this may be weekly or fortnightly to begin with, but can vary as needed.

If you are unable to attend an appointment it is important you let us know as soon as possible, so that the time may be used for someone else. Please contact the counsellor's secretary on the number below.

**0141-301-7286**

## **How can I arrange to have counselling?**

If you think that seeing a counsellor may be helpful to you please ask a member of staff to put you in touch.

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