

Renal Counselling at the Sussex Kidney Unit



Patient information

There are four specialist renal counsellors and psychotherapists working at the Sussex Kidney Unit. We are fully qualified to post graduate level and accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Between us we have many years of varied counselling experience including trauma, post-traumatic stress, bereavement, working with young people, relationship counselling, arts psychotherapy, working with people with disabilities, within various community and NHS hospital settings over many years.

What does the Counselling Service offer?

Patients diagnosed with kidney failure may have to make a wide range of emotional adjustments. The counsellors aim to help patients, and their families and carers, explore feelings and anxieties experienced during any of the various stages of treatment.

There are many challenges in learning to cope with this diagnosis. It is normal to feel rather overwhelmed and to experience a range of difficult emotions, such as anger, frustration, helplessness, loss, sadness, anxiety and fear. These feelings come and go, but can reoccur at any stage, particularly if there are medical complications or other personal difficulties. Some people prefer to work through their feelings at their own pace, in their own way, within their own support network. Others may find it helpful to talk to a professional who is not personally involved.



What kinds of issues might we discuss?

Here are some examples:

- Treatment choices and options
- Transplants (donors and recipients)
- Depression
- Loss of independence and freedom
- Existential issues (death and dying)
- Relationship problems
- Sexual problems
- Employment changes
- Altered body image
- Self esteem
- Phobias and panic attacks
- Anxiety and fear
- Adherence to treatments, diet and fluid restriction
- Generally just 'needing someone to talk to'

These are some of the concerns often raised by patients. However, we are here to help with anything at all that is worrying you.

High levels of stress can make adjustments to renal failure and treatments more difficult. Some of the worries can be reduced to a manageable level by offloading this stress through talking to a trained counsellor in confidence. This can ease the distress or anxiety that can make treatment choices or experiences feel overwhelming at times.



Is counselling available for everyone?

The counselling service is available for couples and families as well as individual patients, carers, and partners. We recognise that kidney failure can affect relationship dynamics and we offer to help where we can. The patient's children can be seen if appropriate.



Counselling is free of charge. The number of sessions will be agreed between the counsellor and the client, as will the place and time, to make it as convenient as possible.



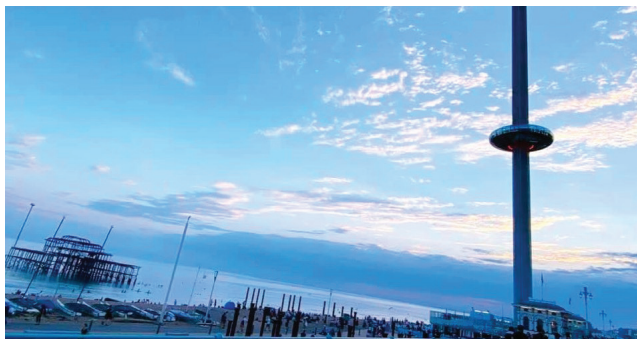


We offer counselling on Level 8 at the Sussex Kidney Unit, and on Level 9 on Trafford Ward. We have confidential rooms, or patients can be seen on dialysis, whilst an inpatient, or via video and phone calls. There is also access to one of our counsellors at each of the satellite clinics based in Worthing, Crawley, Bexhill and Polegate.

Counselling is completely confidential, unless (on rare occasions), the counsellor believes that the client poses a significant risk to himself/herself or to others.

Referrals can be made where necessary during the counselling for welfare advice and support, or other professional assistance.





How can I request counselling for me or my family?

You can access the counselling service directly by:

Please email us or leave a message on our answer phone.

Alternatively, one of the medical team can refer you.

There may be a short waiting time, but you will be contacted for an initial meeting as soon as possible. We can then talk about how counselling may be able to help you. The service is available on weekdays only, not at weekends.

Telephone: 01273 696955 Ext. 64097

Email: uhsussex.renal.counsellors@nhs.net



Further information

For further information or to make a referral for counselling please contact:

Renal Counsellors, Sussex Kidney Unit

Level 8, Royal Sussex County Hospital,
Eastern Road, Brighton, BN2 5BE

Telephone: 01273 696955 Ext. 64097

Email: uhsussex.renal.counsellors@nhs.net

All welfare enquiries (financial, social, benefits, housing etc) should be addressed to our Renal Welfare Officer:

Telephone: 01273 696955 Ext. 67886

Email: uhsussex.renal.welfare@nhs.net

The renal counselling team is not an emergency service. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis or need urgent help please call:

NHS

Telephone: 111

(select option 2 the mental health option)

Samaritans

Telephone: 116 123

(open 24 hours a day)



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in East and West Sussex

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