

Counselling at Working Well

This sheet is designed to answer your questions about counselling. If you are unsure about anything, please do ask. Knowing what to expect can help you make better use of your counselling, and lower any anxiety you may have about it.

How do I make an appointment?

Just phone Working Well on 01452 894480 or email us at workingwell@ghc.nhs.uk and say you want to book some counselling sessions. The receptionist will take your contact details and discuss your availability; you need to commit to 7 appointments at the same time and day every week for 7 weeks. The receptionist will not ask why you want to come.

How long will I have to wait?

The more flexible you can be over your appointment times, the sooner we will be able to see you. We are not an emergency service, so if you are feeling desperate you should contact your GP in the first instance. When you get in touch with us, our receptionist should be able to give you an idea of how long you'll need to wait. You can help us keep the waiting list low for others by telling us promptly if you no longer need your sessions.

Will what I tell you be in confidence?

The content of your counselling sessions normally remains just between you and your counsellor. There are, however, important exceptions to this rule. If your counsellor thinks there is a risk of harm, to you or to anyone else, then they may have to break this confidentiality agreement. They will usually attempt to talk to you before taking that step. In addition, it is important that all counsellors have clinical supervision – another counsellor with whom they can talk in confidence about everyone they see.

We do not feedback any information about you to your manager or your department, and we don't inform them, or anyone else, that you are attending counselling.

Your counsellor will be happy to show you the very minimal notes about you that we keep securely.

If you bump into your counsellor outside the counselling room, either during the counselling or when you have stopped coming, they may well not acknowledge you. This is to protect your confidentiality – you may be with someone and not want to have to explain who they are, or they may be with someone and cannot say who you are – so please don't feel offended!

What will we do in a session?

We will generally agree an agenda at the start of each session, so that we make sure we talk about the issues you really want to address. It's likely that we'll start the process by looking at how your problems are affecting you. You may not be able to change the problems themselves, but you can perhaps look at them differently and find new ways of managing them. At some point we'll put those problems into the context of the rest of your life, which will mean discussing your past history, but the main focus is on the present.

Will it work?

Most people who use the service do find it helpful. We believe counselling works best if you and your counsellor work together. We don't take the view that you have the problem and we have the solution – our approach is like that of a passenger in a car you are driving – we sit alongside you and help you explore avenues you may not have noticed or taken before; but *you* are always in the driving seat. It may well be that between your sessions there is work that you can do by yourself on the issues, and this will mean that your progress is faster than if you are relying on the sessions alone to make a difference.

How might the process affect me?

You should be aware that, initially, counselling may sometimes seem quite difficult, and even to be making things worse for you. This is because all of us are quite good at not focusing on things we know will bring up uncomfortable feelings for us. When you come for counselling, you are choosing to look at those issues, which can be unsettling. As you continue the counselling, you will normally get beyond that point.

How many sessions can I have?

2gether offers a 7-session block of counselling in any 12 month period to any employee who needs it, or to any member of their immediate family.

If, after you have had your 7 sessions, you feel strongly that you need more, and we feel this would be of benefit and that we are able to provide it, then we may be able to agree some more sessions for you. It may take some time to arrange this.

Before the counselling itself begins, our first meeting with you is an opportunity for you to see if you're going to be able to talk to us, and for us to see if we're likely to be able to help you. There is no obligation on you to continue with the following 6 sessions if, after this meeting, you decide not to go ahead.

What if I can't attend an appointment?

Because we try to keep our waiting times short and have a high demand for counselling, we are not able to be very flexible with your appointments. If you have to miss an appointment, it does therefore usually still have to count as one of the 7 sessions available to you. If you miss 2 sessions without agreement, your counselling will normally be considered to have ended, but you can get back in touch with us at any point if you want it to pursue it further.

Your counsellor will not normally be available to you outside of your sessions, but our admin team here is very friendly and efficient and will be able to pass on any messages.

Complaints

If there is anything about your counselling that you are not happy about, please do talk to your counsellor about it in the first instance, as we would like to be able to resolve it with you. There is also a comments box in reception for you to leave feedback, good or bad. If you wanted to lodge a formal complaint, however, you should speak to the Service Director at Working Well, or contact the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP House, 15 St John's Business Park, Lutterworth LE17 4HB Tel: 01455 883300) where we are registered accredited members.