

So, you have been referred to the MMG Counselling Service...

What is Counselling?

Counselling is a process in which a trained professional can help you to understand and deal with difficult emotions that you may be experiencing. These can be linked with previous difficult life experiences. People often seek counselling when they are going through challenging times in their lives. You may be feeling low or facing difficult choices or be anxious, depressed or stressed. The counsellor can help you make sense of what is happening and try to help you to find ways of dealing with the difficult emotions.

The counsellor will offer a safe place for you to explore your difficulties and help you to look at any changes that you might need to make. The counsellor won't be able to give you all the answers but may help you to find the solution most appropriate to you. Counselling can be a painful process as it can entail revisiting difficult previous emotional events of your life.

How often?

Usually people will have a 45-50 minute appointment once a fortnight, for six sessions. You can agree with your counsellor at your first appointment how often you would like to see them and for how many weeks. If it seems that you need longer-term work the counsellor will try to help you to access other local services who can offer this. If, after meeting your counsellor, you decide that you do not wish to go ahead with counselling, please let us know so your appointments can be offered to someone else.

Confidentiality

As essential part of counselling is that information shared is normally confidential to the client/counsellor relationship. There are however exceptional circumstances in which the counsellors have a duty to break confidentiality. This would include situations where a person disclosed information about their intent to seriously harm themselves or someone else. If this situation were to arise the implications would be discussed with you before anyone else (e.g. your GP) is approached by the counsellor. The counsellors are members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and are bound by the BACP's ethical framework.

Shared Information

Following your first appointment the counsellor will complete a Post Assessment Feedback Sheet, which will outline the therapeutic plan that you and your counsellor have agreed to. This is sent to the person who referred you and a copy will be kept in your medical record.

As part of our commitment to good service, an evaluation sheet will be completed at the end of counselling. This is a way of identifying areas covered through the counselling and provides feedback to your GP about how

useful this has been for you. This can be completed by yourself or in conjunction with your counsellor. If for any reason you decide to stop attending counselling then the counsellor will use his/her discretion in completing the evaluation sheet. This will then be filed in your medical record.

You have the right to request copies of either of the above forms – if you wish to do this please ask your counsellor.

Making appointments

If you need to cancel or change your appointment please give us as much notice as possible. Someone else may be able to use your space. If people do not attend booked counselling appointments it will lead to longer waiting times for the service. Re-booking of any cancelled appointments will usually be arranged with your counsellor. If you miss two or more appointments but feel you still require counselling you will need to go back to your GP to be re-referred to the service.

Seeking feedback

We would be very grateful for any feedback you can provide to us concerning the therapy you received. This will help us to continue to improve our service.