

# Counselling

## Counselling at The Hewitt Fertility Centre

Fertility problems and their treatment can leave you feeling stressed, anxious or depressed and affect your close relationships. It's quite common for people in this situation to have feelings of guilt about themselves, anger and jealousy towards others, and to feel a lack of control over what is happening. It can be difficult to share your thoughts and feelings with family and friends as they may not understand what you're going through, or they might not be aware that you have a fertility problem. Relationships between partners can become strained if trying for a much-wanted baby is unsuccessful.

If any of this applies to you, it may help to talk things through with one of the Centre's counselling team. We aim to provide you with a safe environment where you can freely explore your thoughts and feelings. We can also offer simple ideas for coping with stress and anxiety. The team is led by Patricia Lambert, our Senior Counsellor. We are all trained in counselling and are members of the British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA). We are not medical staff, but we do have an understanding of fertility problems and the various treatments provided for them. Counselling is available before, during and after treatment, regardless of the outcome. Counselling sessions usually last for an hour. The number of sessions you have will be decided between yourself and your counsellor; there is no pressure to continue with sessions if you feel they are not helpful. Some people just attend one session, some attend as and when they feel they need to and others have more regular appointments. Counselling is available for individuals or couples. We will be as flexible as we can with our appointments and try to arrange them at times to suit you. We can offer face to face or online sessions.

You may be worried that seeing a counsellor before your treatment starts or during a course of treatment will reflect badly on you and affect your ability to continue. This is not the case. We are not here to judge your suitability for fertility treatment. With very few exceptions (for example when someone is at risk of harm) counselling sessions are confidential and we do not share the details of them with anyone, including other members of clinic staff. We make notes of our sessions, but they are kept separately from clinic notes and no-one else sees them. We can explain more about confidentiality when you meet us for the first time.

If your treatment is funded by the NHS, there is no charge for counselling. Self-funding patients have two sessions of counselling included in the cost of their treatment; any further appointments are subject to a fee. For most of our patients counselling is an option they can choose to take up if they wish. Under certain circumstances you may be required to see a counsellor before your treatment continues, for example if treatment will involve the use of donated sperm, eggs or embryos or surrogacy. This is to ensure you understand all the implications of this course of action, both for yourselves and any children who may be born as a result.

You can ask any member of staff at the Hewitt Fertility Centre to refer you to the counselling service. You can also contact us directly to make an appointment or find out more about what we can offer by calling 0151 702 4075 or email: [hewittcounsellingservices@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:hewittcounsellingservices@lwh.nhs.uk)

This leaflet can be made available in different formats on request. If you would like to make any

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suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at [pals@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@lwh.nhs.uk)

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