

Renal Counselling Information for Patients

Renal Counselling

Information for Patients

Living with Chronic Kidney Disease, at whatever stage you are at can cause a mixture of feelings that can be hard to cope with, and often overwhelming. Strong emotions such as anger, fear, sadness, along with feelings of loss, loneliness, anxiety, and general low mood are all very normal responses to either having this condition or living alongside it if you are a carer or family member of someone with the condition. These feelings can come and go but at times can be persistent, overwhelming, and hard to cope with.

What is Counselling?

Counselling can offer you the space to discuss what is going on for you with a professional who is impartial and not directly involved in your care either personally or medically. It allows you to discuss the difficulties you might be experiencing in a way that is sometimes not possible with family, friends or medical staff already supporting you. There is no agenda within these sessions, and what you share in the counselling is entirely your own choice. It is simply a space for you to be in and share what you are experiencing, whatever that might be.

People come to counselling for various reasons but here are some common to those who are experiencing Chronic Kidney Disease:

- Getting used to life on dialysis or with a transplant.
- Treatment choices /options
- Managing anxiety, depression, and low mood.
- Work and family concerns.
- Managing changes in how you see yourself, including body image worries.
- Managing adjustments to lifestyle and diet.
- Relationships.
- Sexual difficulties.
- Loss and bereavement.
- Loneliness.
- Existential issues (life, death and dying and what all that means).
- Life in general.

How does it work?

Once you have been referred for counselling, the counsellor will be in touch to discuss a suitable meeting place and time for your appointments. A specific room set aside for appointments is preferable for privacy, but they can also take place whilst you are receiving dialysis. If required, appointments can also take place in the patient's home. You

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will usually meet on a weekly basis, but sometimes fortnightly, for up to an hour each time.

You will be offered up to 6 sessions initially with the opportunity to extend the number of sessions if this feels mutually appropriate to both yourself and the counsellor. Although the counselling isn't offered as an ongoing support, patients can re-refer themselves or be re-referred for counselling if further therapy is required.

How can it help me?

The Renal Counsellor can provide support for people to explore, make sense of and find ways of managing the issues they are dealing with. Counsellors do not usually give direct advice but can signpost you to useful resources and materials to use as well as providing one-to-one support as well.

Stress, anxiety, low mood, and the accompanying emotions make managing treatment more challenging and therefore can reinforce these feelings, making them worse. Counselling can be a way of offloading and coming to terms with some of what you're feeling, which can help put it all into perspective.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Anything you share within your counselling is confidential within the context of the care the NHS provides you. This means that only relevant information with regards to your care will be shared with your medical team, and only with your permission. This will further explained by your counsellor in the initial session you have.

If you think counselling might be helpful to you, please fill out the referral form at the end of this information sheet and give to a member or staff, or alternatively ask a member of staff to refer to the counsellor on your behalf.

Further help and support

Samaritans 116 123 for immediate telephone support

www.samaritans.org

Kidney Care UK (01420) 541424

www.kidneycareuk.org

National Kidney Foundation

Helpline for patients, family & carers open Mon-Fri 9-5
0800 1690936

www.kidney.org.uk

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Renal Counselling Information for Patients Renal Counselling Self-Referral Form

Name:

Date of Birth:

Patient number:

Patient Family/carer (Please circle)

Brief reason for counselling request:

Are you currently seeing any other counsellor/mental health practitioner? If so, please give brief details:

Please fill out all the above information and hand to your nurse or directly address to:
Catherine Atkinson, Renal Counsellor, Norfolk and Norwich Kidney Centre, Francis Way,
Bowthorpe Employment Area, Norwich NR5 9JA

