

Renal counselling at the Sussex Kidney Unit



There are four specialist renal counsellors working at the Sussex Kidney Unit. We are fully qualified to post graduate level and accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Between us we have many years of varied counselling experience including trauma, post traumatic stress disorder, bereavement, working with young people, relationship counselling, arts psychotherapy, working with people with disabilities, and counselling in the NHS in various community and 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 treatment, diet and fluid restriction
- Anger management
- Generally just 'needing someone to talk to....'

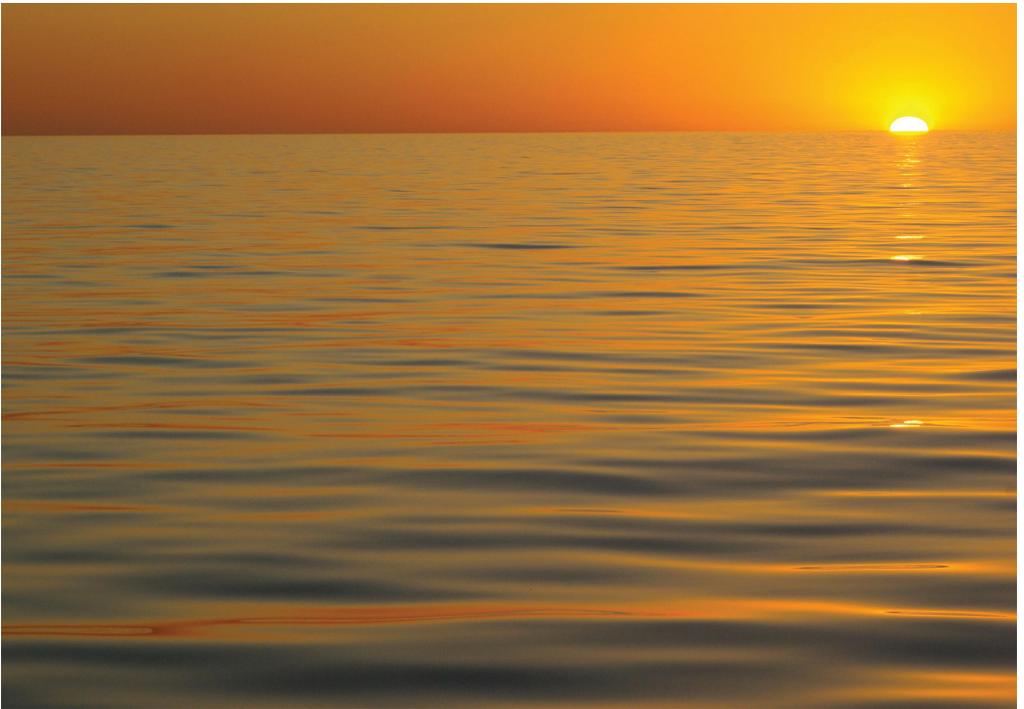
These are some of the concerns often raised by patients. However, we are here to help with anything at all that is worrying you.

High levels of stress can make adjustment 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 complicate relationships and offer to help where we can. The patient's children can be seen if appropriate.

Counselling is also available to potential kidney donors.



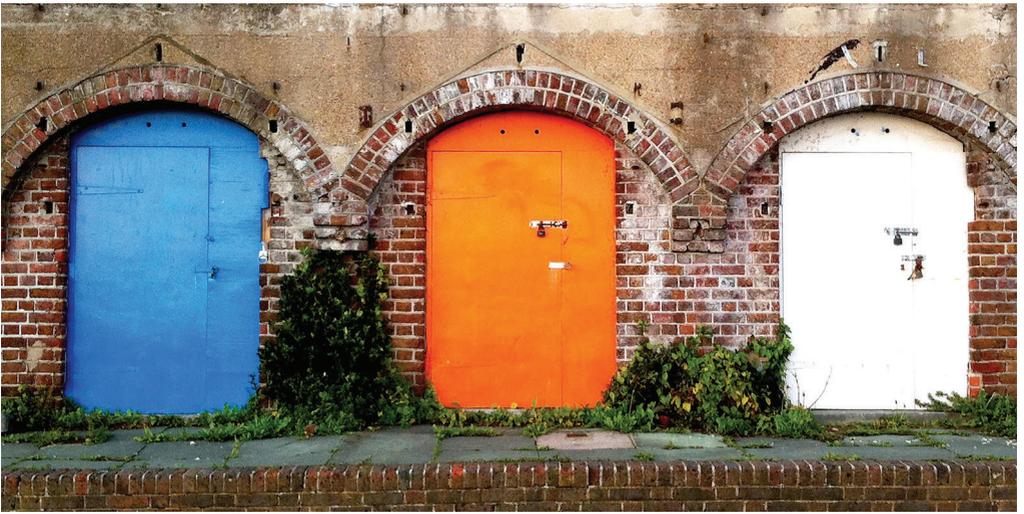


Counselling is free of charge and unlimited. The number of sessions will be agreed between the counsellor and the client, as will the place and time, to make it as convenient as possible.

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 or whilst an inpatient. 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 phoning the counsellors' office on **01273 696955 extension 64097**. Please leave a message if you get the answer phone, as the counsellors will not be able to answer the phone when with a client. Alternatively your doctor or nurse 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. The counsellors will try to offer early or late appointments when requested.

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 extension 64097

Email: renal.counsellors@bsuh.nhs.uk

All welfare enquiries (social, benefits, housing etc) should be addressed to Lee Hamilton, Welfare Officer.

Telephone: 01273 696955 extension 67886.

© Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust

Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

Reference no. 540.1

Publish Date: March 2018

Review Date: March 2020

