

Counselling support



Counselling for trauma or loss
during pregnancy and birth

This service is available to support:

- loss of pregnancy
- miscarriage or recurrent miscarriage
- stillbirth
- trauma/depression following delivery
- poor or fatal fetal diagnosis
- fear of pregnancy/birth
- decision-making regarding termination of pregnancy
- neonatal death
- IVF anxiety
- antenatal anxiety
- phobic responses to antenatal care

The counsellors are all fully registered and have undergone specialist training to attain 'Petals approved' status; this guarantees a high standard of experience and expertise in the field of perinatal counselling care.

Petals can offer you up to six, one hour counselling sessions free of charge.

How counselling helps

Attending counselling provides a safe space to talk about your feelings, to express fear, anxiety, guilt, shame, anger and resentment. It is contained within the hour, so that after the session you can re-enter everyday life and pressures, feeling a little more able to cope.

Your counsellor will steer you through your own emotional process whilst providing guidance and support to help you understand this. As the relationship between you and your

counsellor develops, your sense of isolation and helplessness will lessen. Slowly you learn how to manage this new experience, you realise it is possible to control your anxiety or reconcile your feelings of loss so that you can trust and believe in your future.

How do I arrange a counselling session?

Your midwife, consultant or GP can refer you to Petals and may well suggest this during a consultation, or you can telephone Petals on 0300 688 0068, or email counselling@petalscharity.org

Your call will be answered by a member of the Petals team who will have counselling training and will be able to help you in an understanding and informative way. On some occasions you may go through to a voicemail service. If you leave a message giving your contact number or email address, a Petals team member will call you back within a few hours. Any email received will be responded to on receipt.

What will you need to know when I call you?

All calls to Petals are dealt with by members of the team who have counselling training and are committed to confidentiality. You will be asked to give your name and contact details, followed by the reason you have decided to call. The team are very mindful that this can be difficult for you to explain and will therefore listen carefully and patiently, and help you through this. If you are comfortable with the call, they will then go on to ask you some more questions related to your health and the circumstances that have led to the call, in order that they can provide the most suitable support for you.

What happens if I can't explain myself clearly?

This is a common concern for callers but one you don't need to worry about. The team are trained to help you and will provide the support you need during the call.

How long will I have to wait to see a counsellor?

Petals are aware that most people contacting their service need support quickly. Therefore they endeavour to provide an initial counselling session within 10 days. Subsequent sessions will then be arranged either weekly or fortnightly after this, dependent on assessment.

Will I be able to have counselling during evenings?

All Petals approved counsellors will endeavour to be flexible with session times and aim to provide at least one evening per week when sessions are available.

What happens if I don't like the counsellor or can't get on with them?

Whilst this situation is uncommon, it is inevitable at times. If you have any concerns regarding your relationship with your counsellor, please do not hesitate to inform the Petals team and alternative arrangements will be made for you.

I would like to try counselling but my partner doesn't want go?

Petals fund up to six counselling sessions for either individuals or couples. This is a flexible arrangement and you may commence counselling sessions on your own, and your partner may decide to join you at a later session. This can be discussed with your counsellor at the initial session.

I know I need help but I am afraid talking about it all will just make me feel worse

This is a common concern and one that prevents people exploring counselling when they really could benefit from it. Whilst re-visiting traumatic events or expressing painful emotions can feel scary, the reality is that people feel great relief once they have. Your Petals approved counsellor will be highly experienced in helping you to do this and will support and encourage you, rather than judge you.

I have supportive friends and family, how else can counselling help me?

The support that a series of counselling sessions provides you with is different; it is independent of any emotional attachment to you. Your counsellor will be supporting your psychological health and guiding you through your individual process of healing, helping you to understand your own methods of coping and suggesting possible new coping strategies.

I am worried that coming for counselling means I am weak or mentally ill?

This is a common misconception of counselling and a reason why many people who may benefit from counselling never seek it. Far from being a sign of weakness, engaging in counselling is a sign of strength as you are taking control of your situation and actively seeking help. Emotional distress is a normal response to painful or difficult experiences in life; it does not mean you are mentally ill.

What happens after my sixth session?

Petals provide up to six funded counselling sessions for you. Your counsellor will work with you to prepare for the ending of those sessions and discuss with you options available if further support is required.

Can I come back to Petals later on if I need more support after my

counselling has ended?

Petals will be very pleased to hear from you at any time before, during or after your counselling. The team will discuss with you your support needs at that time and always endeavour to help you.

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