

# Kent Oncology Centre: Counselling Service

## Information for patients

### What is counselling?

It is having time for yourself to help you explore your thoughts, feelings and behaviour in a safe place with a professional counsellor. This is a confidential service.

### How can counselling help?

A cancer diagnosis can be frightening. From diagnosis, during treatment or after treatment, your thoughts and feelings may be overwhelming. Feeling more anxious or low when you are also dealing with physical challenges can make life even more difficult.

You may experience loss of self-confidence with feelings of isolation, even within a supportive family. You may be wondering how you will be able to cope and find your usual ways of coping don't help.

Talking to others about how you feel can be difficult. This could be for a variety of reasons: such as not knowing how you are feeling, not wanting to worry others, not wanting to upset them or not wanting to get upset yourselves.

Talking to a trained counsellor who is not personally involved can give you the space to share your experiences and explore your thoughts and feelings in a safe environment.

Your counsellor can help you to make sense of what is happening and help you to build up your sense of psychological well-being.

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## Who is the service for?

We recognise that a diagnosis of cancer can impact on the whole family. As well as patients, we accept referrals for individuals, couples and other family members too.

Unfortunately, we cannot accept referrals for people under the age of 18. However, we can help you to think through how to talk to children about the illness and its effects.

For people who do not meet our criteria we suggest that they contact their GP who will be able to refer them to an appropriate counselling service in their area.

## Where would you have counselling?

The Oncology Counsellors have their own comfortable, private room within the Oncology Centre. We are also able to offer counselling at Tunbridge Wells Hospital. In addition, we offer counselling virtually via telephone or video platform where appropriate. Unfortunately, we are not able to offer home visits.

## How do I make an appointment?

You can ask your consultant, any clinical nurse specialist or any member of staff to refer you to counselling. We also accept self-referrals. One of the counsellors will contact you to arrange an assessment session with you at a convenient time.

At the assessment we can help to identify your needs and any difficulties for which you may require help; counselling sessions will then be based on your individual needs.

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**This Service is provided Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm**  
**Our counsellors are working towards Accreditation or**  
**BACP Accredited**

**Maidstone Hospital**  
**(Kent Oncology Centre)**  
**Hermitage Lane**  
**Maidstone**  
**Kent**  
**ME16 9QQ**

**Further information and advice can be obtained from:**

**Oncology Counsellors**


 **01622 224982**

**Kent Oncology Centre Website**

[www.kentoncologycentre.nhs.uk](http://www.kentoncologycentre.nhs.uk)

**NHS 111**

**NHS Direct online**

 **111**

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

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**MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.**

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

**Telephone:** ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

**Email:** [mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net)

**or visit their office** at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: [www.mtw.nhs.uk](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk) or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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