

About the counsellors

All of our counsellors have formal qualifications in counselling and have the training and expertise to support people facing fertility difficulties. Our counsellors are:

- Hayley McCann
- Sharon Campbell

They are members of:

- British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)
- British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA)

How can I access the counsellor?

Counselling is available on Tuesdays with Sharon and Fridays with Hayley. Please call NUH Life on 0115 970 9238 or email nuhnt.fertility.enquiries@nhs.net to arrange a counselling appointment.

Sessions are up to an hour long and can be face to face, or over the phone or video call.

Further information and support

Fertility Network UK
www.fertilitynetworkuk.org

The Fertility Alliance
www.thefertilityalliance.org.uk

Donor Conception Network
www.dcnetwork.org

British Infertility Counselling Association
www.bica.net

Human Fertilisation and Embryology
Authority
www.hfea.gov.uk

Data privacy

NUH is the controller of your information under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All individuals are entitled to access the information held about them by making a subject access request. Please see the NUH Life and NUH privacy notices for more information about how your information is treated and how to make an access request:

www.nuhlife.co.uk/privacy-policy
www.nuh.nhs.uk/privacynotice

Feedback

We are always looking to improve our services and your feedback is vital to this. You can feedback to us online via the QR code.



If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

Freephone: 0800 183 0204
From a mobile or abroad:
0115 924 9924 ext 85412 or 82301
E-mail: nuhnt.pals@nhs.net
Letter: NUH NHS Trust, c/o PALS,
Freepost NEA 14614,
Nottingham NG7 1BR

www.nuh.nhs.uk
www.nuhlife.co.uk

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NUH
LIFE

Counselling

Information for patients

NUH Life Fertility Services

This document can be provided in different languages and formats. For more information please contact:

NUH Life
A Floor, West Block
Queen's Medical Centre
Derby Road
Nottingham NG7 2UH

Tel: 0115 9709238
nuhnt.fertility.enquiries@nhs.net

www.nuhlife.co.uk



This leaflet is for all couples and individuals having fertility investigations and treatment. It explains the counselling service at NUH Life and how it can be helpful.

What does the counselling service offer?

Counselling is a routine part of fertility treatment. In counselling you can talk in confidence - face-to-face, online or by telephone - about issues that concern you. These could be directly related to the treatment you are having; difficulties in other areas of your life; or experiences you have had in the past that continue to trouble you.

Counselling is aimed at increasing our personal power and sense of control in life. This can be particularly important when we're going through a treatment that can make us feel powerless and out of control.

By talking through our thoughts and feelings, we can often gain more understanding of why we are feeling the way we are. Then we can explore ways of changing, or responding differently to, those things in our lives that are distressing to us. Counsellors are independent and impartial and will not judge you or give you advice.

NUH Life offers six free sessions of supportive counselling. Counselling is completely confidential and not part of your medical notes. You can attend with your partner or individually at any stage before, during or after treatment.

There are two types of counselling we offer at NUH Life:

- **Support counselling** for anyone and everyone undertaking fertility treatment
- **Implications counselling** for sperm donors and potential parents of donor conceived children, to discuss the specific implications of donation

You are invited to use our support counselling service at any point in your investigations or treatment. We see male and female partners together or individually.

If you are having treatment using donor sperm, we will schedule implications counselling as a routine part of your treatment pathway. See our information sheet *Using Donor Sperm* for more information about implications counselling.

What can counselling help with?

- Making decisions about treatment
- How to deal with family and friends
- Coping with stress
- Coping with the failure or success of treatment
- Relationship difficulties
- Deciding whether to end treatment
- Sexual problems
- Grief and bereavement
- Miscarriage, ectopic and still birth
- Low self esteem and lack of confidence
- Anxiety and depression
- Feelings of isolation, guilt, shame or anger around the loss of your own fertility or your partner's

What kind of issues do people bring to counselling?

Losing our fertility is by any standards a huge loss. If we cannot be parents, we cannot be grandparents, so it's like losing our future too. We're denied the joys – and the heartaches – of nurturing children and can feel excluded in a society that puts so much emphasis on families.

We may find that lots of feelings from the past are churned up again. Feelings of grief about past losses that we thought we'd dealt with can be triggered. This can leave us feeling confused and scared because we don't really understand what's going on.

People bring a whole range of issues to counselling, including:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Unresolved losses from the past
- Relationship problems
- Family problems
- Eating problems
- Issues around childhood abuse – physical, emotional and sexual
- Suffering from panic attacks
- Fears of losing control and going 'mad'
- Suicidal thoughts or feelings
- Loss of self-esteem
- Sexual problems
- Bereavement
- Specific feelings around being infertile or having an infertile partner
- And many more

For some people, longer term therapeutic counselling may be beneficial, if so, we can refer you for additional support.