Counselling

Royal Devon
University Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Fertility Counselling

Fertility Exeter

This leaflet explains what fertility counselling is and how you can access and benefit from it.

What is counselling?

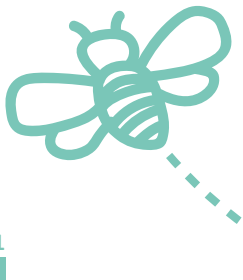
Counselling is a way of helping you to help yourself. It is an opportunity to talk about your experiences, thoughts, and feelings with someone who has the time, skills, and objectivity to listen attentively.

How may counselling be useful to me?

Counselling can help you to find for yourself more effective ways of coping. For many people, counselling is simply a helpful one-hour discussion, but for others it can become part of the whole process of infertility treatment, providing enormous support. We would encourage you to see counselling as an important and natural part of your treatment.

What is infertility counselling?

Infertility counselling offers you support before, during, and after your investigations and treatment. It provides you with a safe and private place to talk through your feelings about fertility. It allows you to consider the effect of infertility on yourself and your relationship with others. It enables you to discuss the implications of certain treatments.



What is implications counselling?

Implications counselling is an important part of the preparation for certain specific infertility treatments, and we are required to make this available to you. You will be offered implications counselling if you intend to have treatment with donated sperm or eggs, or if you want to donate your sperm or eggs to others for their treatment.

Counselling in these situations allows you to consider how the treatment might affect you, your family, and also any potential child/children that are born through the treatment.

What is supportive counselling?

We recognise that fertility treatment can be stressful; some people describe it as an emotional rollercoaster and others find that having fertility problems is very isolating. Supportive counselling can help you in dealing with difficult feelings such as grief, anger, jealousy, guilt, anxiety, and other difficult emotions.

How do I get counselling at Fertility Exeter?

You will be offered counselling at various stages in your treatment process, which you may accept, and an appointment will be made for you. However, you can make an appointment at any other time simply by asking any of the Fertility Exeter staff. A counselling session usually lasts for one hour.

- **Talking about your feelings may help you to deal with the stress of trying to conceive**
- **It may also help you with the process of fertility treatment**
- **An appointment can be arranged by emailing rduh.fertilitycounselling@nhs.net**

Will I have to pay to see the counsellor?

There is no charge for the first appointment to see the counsellor as a patient of Fertility Exeter having assisted conception treatment.

Who else will know what I discuss with the counsellor?

What you discuss with the counsellor will not normally be shared with the team. However, if you disclose something that gives your counsellor cause for serious concern and which might affect your treatment and/or your welfare or that of the potential unborn child, she will be obliged to inform appropriate members of the team. In such a case, this would normally be discussed with you beforehand.

Who is the fertility counsellor?

Francine Blanchet is an accredited member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and also an accredited member of the British Infertility Counselling Association with many years of experience. Francine is available at Fertility Exeter on Tuesdays, and appointments can be arranged by emailing **rduh.fertilitycounselling@nhs.net**. She is also a counsellor and a supervisor in private practice in Exeter, where you can make your own arrangements by calling her on **07881266788**. These can be flexible, including evenings and weekends to suit your needs.

Francine Blanchet

- **Our counsellor will also be able to give you information about other organisations that can offer support**

Feedback

Here at Fertility Exeter, we care about getting things right for our patients. As such we would welcome any feedback that you may have, to help us continually improve the services we provide. You can do this in a number of ways:

Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)
Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Wonford)
Barrack Road
Exeter
EX2 5DW

Direct Dial: (01392) 40 2093

rduh.pals-eastern@nhs.net

You can also provide feedback about Fertility Exeter directly to the HFEA by using their online feedback tool:
https://www.hfea.gov.uk/choose-a-clinic/rate-your-clinic/

"What went well could go better if ....."
Please complete a yellow card, located in our waiting room, and put it in the box provided. The box is sorted weekly and suggestions are acted on accordingly.

Alternatively:

Complete our Patient Surveys on our website **www.fertilityexeter.co.uk**

See our Patient Survey links in our emails.

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