

Haemato-oncology Counselling Service



Information for patients

You are welcome to use our counselling service if you have a blood cancer or a bone marrow failure disorder. It is also available to your relatives and carers. This leaflet explains the support our haemato-oncology counsellors provide, what we can help you with and how to be referred to us.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

What can the counsellors help me with?

Blood cancers, bone marrow failure disorders and their treatments, such as chemotherapy and bone marrow transplants, affect the whole of you and not just your body. Many find the emotional aspects of their illness the most difficult to cope with and say that it feels like they are on an emotional rollercoaster. Your relatives and carers can also be affected by your illness.

The effects of these illnesses and their treatments vary from person to person. They can include:

- feelings of depression, anxiety, shock or anger
- having to cope with the symptoms of the illness and the side effects of the treatments, such as tiredness, infections, sickness and lowered fertility
- having to cope with long periods in hospital and in isolation
- having to get used to a number of changes and losses in your life
- difficulties with making decisions after your diagnosis
- managing the demands of home and family life while caring for yourself
- difficulties in your relationships because of changes in roles and expectations.
- feeling unhappy about the way you look or how the illness is affecting your sexual activity
- coping with the effects of your illness and treatment on your self-esteem and sense of self.

Many people learn to cope in their own way, using their own resources. But it can sometimes be helpful to discuss things in confidence with someone who is not a family member or a close friend.



What do the counsellors offer?

Our haemato-oncology counsellors, Philip Alexander and Surabhi Chaturvedi, are trained psychotherapists. This means they provide a range of 'talking' therapies, including Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT).

All talking therapies aim to support you to understand, reflect on and work through your concerns, in confidence. CBT is a form of psychotherapy which helps to improve specific psychological difficulties such as depression, anxiety and panic by helping you to understand the link between your thoughts, feelings and actions and to look at things differently.

Seeing a counsellor or psychotherapist gives you the chance to talk with a professional who is trained to support your emotional wellbeing. It does not mean that you are weak or mentally ill. Our counsellors will aim to help you develop useful ways of coping with your difficulties.

They are accredited by professional bodies including the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) and the British Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP).

What happens at my first appointment?

Your first meeting will be a chance for you to:

- get to know your counsellor
- discuss the problems you would like help with
- see if you would like to meet again.

It usually takes 30-60 minutes. Your counsellor can see you on your own, or with your partner or other family members – the choice is yours.

The number of sessions you have depends on your needs.

In these sessions your counsellor will aim to help you to:

- acknowledge and express your feelings and concerns
- find ways of coping with them
- improve your general well-being.

How do I make an appointment?

If you feel able to discuss your difficulties with your doctor, clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or any other member of the medical team, they will be able to refer you to this service.

Or you can refer yourself by contacting the counsellors directly.

Philip

Tel: **020 3299 5761**

Email: **palexander1@nhs.net**

Surabhi

Tel: **020 3299 5103**

Email: **Surabhi.chaturvedi@nhs.net**

Please feel free to get in touch with one of our counsellors if you are unsure about counselling or have any questions about it.

Other support at King's

Macmillan Information and Support Centre

Ground floor, Cicely Saunders Institute, King's College Hospital

Tel: **020 3299 5229**



PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleden Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net**

You can also contact us by using our online form at

www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.



