



Counselling

How does counselling work?

Talking through what is troubling you with a trained counsellor can lead to a better understanding of yourself and the issues you are facing, as well as to help you find more effective ways of dealing with them.

Your counsellor will draw on a range of techniques and ideas to find a way of working that suits you.

Some approaches will take a longer-term view, gradually exploring past experiences to better understand how they may be affecting your current and future outlook.

Other approaches are focused more directly on the present and on helping you to develop tools to better equip you to manage your situation.

Whatever the approach, our aim is always to support you through what may well be a very stressful time in life, working with you to improve your self-understanding and to feel more able to cope.

PLEASE NOTE: Therapies should not be regarded as an alternative to medical treatment prescribed by your doctor.

What training and experience does a counsellor have?

All our counsellors at The Sara Lee Trust:

- Are fully trained and insured, holding a Counselling Diploma as a minimum qualification
- Regularly undertake additional psychotherapeutic training as part of their commitment to continuing professional development
- Belong to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and/or the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) to further inform them in their practise and to ensure they work to the required professional standards
- Receive monthly clinical supervision as a way of keeping you safe and better served and your therapy on track.

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Getting started

The first appointment is an opportunity for you to have a taste of what counselling might be like and to start to explore what you are having to deal with.

Most importantly, your counsellor will listen to you as you describe what you have been experiencing and how you are emotionally. They will probably ask you a few questions to better understand what you are going through, and what you hope to achieve through the counselling process.

At the end of the session, you might want to book another appointment, or your counsellor might suggest other appropriate therapies or services for you.

How long does a session last, how many will I have, and how often?

Counselling sessions last up to 50 minutes. For some people one or two sessions are all that's needed, for others ongoing weekly sessions might be recommended. The number and frequency of sessions is something you will decide with your counsellor and review together every few weeks.

Confidentiality

Please be assured that what you discuss with your counsellor is confidential. There are just two exceptions to this rule:

- At least once a month counsellors have 'clinical supervision' during which they discuss some of their client work with an experienced professional who is bound by the same ethical standards. This is in complete confidence and is necessary to help counsellors manage their caseload and improve their practice.
- If your counsellor is concerned about risk of harm to yourself or another person you mention, they may consider it is necessary to involve other professionals. Where this is the case, they would normally discuss the concern with you first.

Couples and family counselling

If you would like to have counselling with a loved one instead of on your own, couples and family counselling can be provided where, after discussion with you, this is agreed to be helpful.

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Bereavement counselling

For those needing support following the death of a loved one, please phone St Michael's Hospice Bereavement Service on 01424 456361 or by emailing <mailto:bereavement@stmichaelshospice.com>

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