

# Counselling Patient Information

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## Introduction

This leaflet provides information about counselling and how this may help you during and after your fertility treatment at the Agora Gynaecology and Fertility Centre

It aims to answer some of the common questions people ask about counselling and what services are available to you.

If you have any further questions or would like to talk to someone then please speak to a member of staff at the Agora.

## What is counselling?

The difficulties associated with trying to conceive, and a diagnosis of infertility, can often be a major life crisis. Many conflicting feelings and strong emotions arise and often their strength and intensity are greater than those we are used to dealing with

Counselling starts from addressing immediate issues in your life, including fertility that may cause you confusion, uncertainty or anxiety. It is important to have the opportunity to ask questions, access information and generally feel prepared for whatever lies ahead. Counselling can provide you with time and a quiet space where you can explore and consider the things that are worrying you.

## How can counselling help?

Essentially, the process of counselling enables you, either individually or as a couple, to explore your thoughts, feelings and beliefs in order to develop a better understanding of your present situation.

You may discover ways of coping and living more satisfactorily and begin to feel more in control of your life and the direction in which it is going.

You may decide to make changes to your life or come to terms with things that cannot be changed.

Often such decisions are easier to make with clarity when the situation is talked through with an objective outsider.

Counsellors are not there to judge you or give advice. What they do provide is a secure, confidential environment in which to explore any problems you feel you have and to help you to deal with situations.

Your discussions with the counsellor will remain confidential at all times and they will only divulge what you have discussed with them if you give permission for them to do so.

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## Who can it help?

There are times when many of us may feel unable to cope and there are many reasons for seeking help.

It is recognised that within the context of infertility the prospect of childlessness, together with all the investigations and treatment, frequently leads to feelings of anxiety, stress and depression. This can become very debilitating and tensions and conflicts within close relationships are common.

Counselling may be helpful if you are uncertain at any stage about the options open to you.

This may include specific considerations such as continuing or postponing treatment, use of donated eggs or sperm or long term freezing and storage.

Other issues for counselling include the implications of treatment, the needs and welfare of a future child as well as those of any existing children and the legal, moral and ethical issues that may concern some people.

In addition, there are likely to be times when important decisions have to be made, like withdrawing from any further treatment. Sadly, not everyone who starts treatment will become pregnant and deciding when to stop is not easy, particularly when there appears to be no clear reason for the lack of success.

For some individuals letting go and moving on can bring a profound sense of relief but for others the experience may be traumatic. A skilled counsellor can support you through this period of grief and major emotional adjustment and will be able to explore alternatives with you when you feel ready to do so.

## Why do we provide counselling?

The importance of counselling is recognised by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), which has stipulated that by law, counselling must be available at every licensed treatment centre. It states in their code of practice that counselling should be clearly distinguished from giving of information and should consist of three types:

### **Implication Counselling**

To enable individuals to understand the implications of any proposed treatment/course of action for themselves, their family and any children born as a result.

### **Support counselling**

To give emotional support at times of particular stress, such as when there is a failure to achieve a pregnancy.

### **Therapeutic counselling**

To help individuals cope with the consequences of infertility and treatment and resolve the problem these may cause.

At the Agora we regard the provision of counselling as a vital and integral part of the overall service we offer.

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### Will the counsellor be able to give me information about my treatment?

Any medical information is provided by the doctors and fertility nurses at the Agora, who are available throughout your whole journey through fertility treatment.

Our counsellor can give vital support to enable right choices to be made, whilst ensuring the emotional well being of those facing difficult decisions. He is a part of the fertility team but works independently, so you can talk in confidence. He will discuss issues such as ways of coping with your work whilst undergoing treatment or the stress related to particular stages of your treatment.

### When can I see a counsellor?

Anyone at any stage, before, during or after treatment will be seen if they wish and in most situations the agenda is entirely up to the individual needs of the patient.

### How long does the counselling last?

A single session lasts approximately one hour. You may feel a single session will meet your needs but sometimes a further one or two sessions may be beneficial. These will usually be made at the end of your initial session. You may use the counselling service as often as you feel you need during, or after your treatment has finished.

### Fees

Counselling sessions are charged at approx £55 per session

### How do I make contact?

Our independent counsellor is called Rory Singer; he is based at a clinic in Brighton:

28 New Road  
Brighton  
BN1 1UG

Please contact Rory or a member of his team directly on Tel: 01273 681333 to arrange your appointment.