



COVID-19 CRISIS - COUNSELLING SUPPORT SERVICE

Key Information about ACC's Crisis Counselling Support Service

What is on Offer?

- Up to ten sessions of counselling on a no-fee basis
- From qualified counsellors* who are volunteering their service
- Either on-line or by telephone

*' As a reserve and where appropriate, student counsellors who are nearing the end of their training and have experience of counselling will be involved in bereavement counselling

Who is the Counselling for?

- People working in the NHS who are directly impacted by COVID-19, including frontline medical staff, but also those in ancillary roles in an NHS setting (e.g. nursing assistants, cleaners, porters etc)
- Paramedics and anyone working within the ambulance services who is directly impacted by COVID-19
- Anyone who has been bereaved during this time – whether or not the bereavement is due to COVID-19 infection.

How do I access the service?

- Download and complete the Self-Referral Form and email to CCSS@acc-uk.org.
- If you do not have access to an email, please telephone 0247 644 9694

What Happens Next

- ACC will contact you to acknowledge receipt of your referral form
- If you are eligible, we will do our best to assign you a counsellor within 7 days
- If the service is full, we will let you know and put you on our waiting list.

More Information

Who is managing and administering the scheme?

ACC (Association of Christian Counsellors) is managing and administering the scheme. We have been established as a professional counselling membership body for over 25 years and hold an accredited register of counsellors under the Professional Standards Authority.

Our members are professional counsellors who work in many different settings including schools, Universities, NHS, counselling centres and in private practice. ACC members are Christians who want to belong to a Christian organisation partly for the sense of fellowship, but also because they want to be available to people who specifically want to work with a Christian counsellor. All members work to our code of Ethics and Practice and respect the autonomy of clients. ACC counsellors work with people of all faiths and none and will not impose their religious views on clients.

The Crisis Counselling Support Service includes counsellors from all the professional bodies including BACP, UKCP, NCS – and these counsellors may come from many different faith backgrounds.

Why has it been set up?

The service was set up by the Board of ACC in response to requests for help from people directly involved in supporting frontline NHS staff and the bereaved. Not only are NHS staff witnessing distressing events associated with the infection, but they are also concerned for the well-being of bereaved families of former patients who do not have the normal rituals and practices that can help people in the early stages of grief. The situation is difficult for all involved – especially when meeting up and connecting with families and friends is not permitted because of self-isolation and/or lockdown.

ACC are well placed in terms of our knowledge and experience of counselling practice to design the service and put safeguards in place to ensure that it offers minimum risks to members of the public who wish to access it.

Why can't it be for everyone who is suffering?

ACC are aware that many people in the U.K. and beyond are in struggling emotionally due to the current situation with COVID-19. As a relatively small charity however we need to carefully manage our resources and there are limits on the number of the counsellors who are able to volunteer to provide the service. It is just not possible for us to open the Crisis Counselling Support Service to everyone in need of counselling. As we were first approached by people in the NHS who were concerned about their staff and the bereaved families of former patients – we decided that is who the service should be for.

Can I trust the service?

Yes – because all the counsellors offering their services on a voluntary basis are trained and insured. The vast majority will be qualified and experienced, and student counsellors will need the backing of their professional supervisor as well as over 50+ hours of practice to be registered as a volunteer. All will be working under their professional body's codes of ethics and practice. In the unlikely event that you have a concern or want to make a complaint about a counsellor there are well established processes for you to follow.

Yes- because ACC are managing and administering the scheme, and you will have named contact (a case manager) who be on-hand if you have any questions or concerns.

I am not eligible for the scheme – who can help me?

We know that there will be people reading this who would like to have counselling but are not eligible for this particular scheme.

If you can afford to pay for counselling please look at the 'Find A Counsellor' section on our website. Many of our counsellors and counselling centres have moved to working on-line and by telephone. There are other directories of counsellors on-line BUT please make sure that you chose a counsellor who is on a register of counsellors which is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority. If in doubt check that their professional body is listed on the Professional Standards Authority's website
<https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/what-we-do/accredited-registers>

Otherwise please contact your GP and/or local mental health charities to see what is available to you.

If you are feeling acutely distressed and/or suicidal make an emergency appointment with your G.P. or ring NHS 111 or 999, or go directly to an A&E department or call:

Samaritans – 116 123
Premier Lifeline – 0300 111 0101