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Finding a Therapist or Counsellor

This factsheet will give some background to what counselling and psychotherapy are, and how to go about finding a counsellor or therapist on the NHS, through a voluntary organisation or private. The word practitioner will sometimes be used in this factsheet in place of counsellor or psychotherapist. You can also look up a list of counselling services and talking therapies by going to the Quick Search, at the top left of this site.

What are Counselling and Psychotherapy?

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) - finding the right therapist
A brief explanation of counselling and psychotherapy, and guidance on the first steps to finding a therapist.

www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist/right_therapist.html

National Mind - Online booklet 'Understanding talking treatments'

Answers some questions you may have about talking treatments including: What are the different types? Do they work? How do I get started?

www.mind.org.uk/Information/Booklets/Understanding/Understanding+talking+treatments.htm

How do I Find a Counsellor or Psychotherapist?

Your GP can refer you for **counselling through NHS**. This will be free. However there will be a waiting list. In Harrow, GPs can refer you to the Brief Intervention Counselling Service (BICS) for short term counselling, Harrow Psychological Services or Psychotherapy Service at Northwick Park Hospital (details of these services below).

There are a number of **voluntary sector organisations** with counselling services in Harrow, which offer low cost counselling or a sliding scale dependant on income. Again with low cost counselling there is likely to be a waiting list (details below).

For information on **private counsellors and psychotherapists** in your area visit the websites of

- The British Association For Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)
www.bacp.co.uk
- The UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)
www.psychotherapy.org.uk
- British Association for Cognitive Behavioural Therapies
www.babcp.com

Contact details are at the end of this factsheet. Private therapists usually have sliding scales, however the scale starts at a higher minimum payment than low cost counselling. A typical standard fee is £20 to £50.

Some employers have arrangements with agencies who provide counselling for their employees, often over the phone. If you have access to this, you may need to check that



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confidentiality is fully observed, with no details other than your name and the number of sessions passed on to the employer.

NHS Psychological Services in Harrow

Brief Intervention Counselling Service (BICS)

c/o Psychology Dept
Northwick Park Hospital
Watford Road
Harrow HA1 3UJ
Tel: 020 8869 2325

Service manager:
Ali Modaresi

The service is based in some GP surgeries and offers an assessment and 6-8 sessions for people experiencing emotional problems of mild to moderate severity.

Harrow Psychological Health Services

Northwick Park Hospital
Watford Road
Harrow
Middlesex
HA1 3UJ

Tel: 020 8869 2325/6

Service manager:
Heather Salt

This is a clinical psychology and counselling service. The opening times are 9am - 5pm. Other professionals who can refer individuals to the service are GPs and psychiatrists.

Northwick Park Hospital Psychotherapy Service

Mental Health Unit
Northwick Park Hospital
Watford Road
Harrow
HA1 3UJ

Tel: 020 8869 3602

Service manager:
David MacCrindle

This service provides psychodynamic consultation and psychodynamic psychotherapy both short and long term. The service is for individuals with significant mental health issues. The opening times are 9am-5pm. Referrals can also be made by psychiatrists, social workers, GP's, psychologists and nurses.



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Older Adults Psychology Department

Mental Health Unit
Northwick Park Hospital
Watford Road
Harrow
HA1 3UJ

Tel: 020 8869 3510

Service manager:
Marie-Claire Mendham

This service is for people over 65 years old experiencing mental health problems, including dementia. Referrals from GPs, psychiatrists and Community Mental Health Teams.

Harrow Community Drug and Alcohol Service

For residents of Harrow who are concerned about their own drug use, or the drug use of a friend, relative or partner.

Tel. 020 8869 4500

Voluntary Sector Counselling Services in Harrow

There is more information in this directory about each service, if you look up the Advanced Search.

Harrow Counselling Centre

Provides affordable professional counselling.

Tel. 020 8423 8454

Communicare Counselling Service, Uxbridge

Counselling service with sliding scale according to clients means up to £30 per session

Tel 01895 256056

EACH (Ethnic Alcohol Counselling Hounslow/Harrow)

EACH has a service in Harrow. The service offers counselling for problem drinkers, their partners, families and significant others. EACH also has a counselling service for anyone experiencing Domestic Violence.

Tel 020 8861 3884

Relate

Counselling for couples and relationship difficulties.

Tel. 020 8427 8694

Women's Centre Harrow

Women only space with counselling service.

Tel. 020 8422 1100

Yakeen Counselling Service

Counselling service for Asian Women

Tel 020 8427 6796



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Harrow Churches Bereavement Visiting Scheme

All people in the Borough and Anglican Deanery of Harrow
Tel 020 8427 5720

Jewish Care

For Jewish people experiencing mental health difficulties and their carers, family.
Tel 020 8922 2222 (out of hours helpline 020 8922 2000)

Brook in Harrow

Confidential sex advice for young people under 25
Tel 020 8861 5858

Carer's Support Harrow

Counselling for carers known to the Carer's Support Centre
Tel. 020 8868 5224

If you have a diagnosed mental health problem

Some counsellors or psychotherapists will work with you if you have been diagnosed with mental health problem such as schizophrenia or manic-depression. They say that the diagnosis is not the most important factor in deciding whether or not to work with you. You need to discuss how you want to work together. You may find you want someone supportive to talk to, who can help you cope better on a day-to-day basis, or you may want longer-term help to explore some of your difficulties. If you are on prescribed psychiatric medication, you need to discuss this with your counsellor and your doctor.

What if I have problems with Alcohol or Non-prescribed drugs?

If you want to see a counsellor or psychotherapist and you have a problem with drug or alcohol abuse, the counsellor may refer you to a specialist service. See contact numbers for EACH and Harrow Community Drug and Alcohol Service above.

How do I Choose a Counsellor or Psychotherapist?

In choosing a counsellor or psychotherapist as well as financial and practical issues which will affect choice, you may also have other considerations such as, different approaches used by counsellors and psychotherapists, whether you want a practitioner who will understand your ethnic background, culture, or sexuality.

Some Questions to Ask

Some of these questions should be covered by the practitioner, these questions may be ones to consider.

- Will it be confidential?
- Do they subscribe to a Code of Ethics?
- Do they belong to a professional organisation?
- How long have they been practising as a counsellor/psychotherapist?
- Have they been in therapy/counselling themselves? (This is one of the requirements for many types of training)
- What sort of training have they had?
- Do they have supervision? (They should)



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- Do they specialise in any areas, e.g. sexual abuse, race or cultural issues? (If not, this does not necessarily mean they cannot work with these issues?)
- How long do the sessions last?
- How often are the sessions?
- Is there a set number of sessions offered?
- What happens if this is not enough?
- What are the fees, and is there a sliding scale?
- Will there be a contract?

Services for Specific Groups

If you feel that a general counsellor may not understand your ethnic background or culture, there are organisations which offer counselling especially to black people and people from minority ethnic communities. There are also counselling organisations which offer counselling for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and who work specifically with women. (See Voluntary Sector Counselling Services in Harrow above or try the directory Advanced Search).

In addition there are services which are specific to people with certain disabilities. People with learning disabilities for instance have traditionally been ignored. It is now possible for people with learning disabilities to obtain counselling for personal problems, and for help in gaining more control of their lives. Contact the Harrow Learning Disability Team on 020 8424 1019.

Confidentiality

As a general rule, anything discussed in the counselling or psychotherapy session is kept confidential by the practitioner. The only exception will be the practitioner's supervision, where the therapists work with clients is discussed. However your anonymity will be kept. Confidentiality may only be broken if a client discloses a risk to themselves or others. The issue should be discussed with you and the practitioner first before the information is shared.

Code of Ethics

Any counsellor or psychotherapist should observe a code of ethics of which confidentiality and non-exploitation are a basic part. If they belong to a professional organisation such as the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) www.bacp.co.uk/ethical_framework/ or UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) www.psychotherapy.org.uk, the organisation will have a published code of ethics.

Abuse/Exploitation in Therapy

Unfortunately situations have sometimes occurred where clients have been abused by therapists or counsellors. A therapist may use her/his position to exploit the client emotionally, financially or sexually. Betrayal of confidentiality, or carry out research on new techniques without the consent of the client, are also unethical.

It is unethical in any circumstances, and even destructive of the work of therapy, for the client and the therapist or counsellor to have a sexual relationship, even if one or both parties want it.



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Complaints

If you are not feeling confident about what is happening in counselling or psychotherapy (bearing in mind that it is often emotionally painful and you may sometimes feel negative about it), start by discussing the difficulty with the counsellor or therapist. You may often find that this helps you work with the issues further. You are also free to discuss it with anyone else you choose.

If, after discussion with the therapist, you still feel that you are being treated in a way that abuses or does not respect you, you may decide to make a complaint.

- Many counsellors and psychotherapists are accredited by, or members of, either the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) or the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP). Both these organisations have written complaints procedures.
- If the counsellor or psychotherapist works through the NHS, this too has a written procedure for complaints.
- There is also an independent organisation, Witness (formerly known as POPAN) which offers support, information and advocacy to victims of abuse by health care professionals and clergy.

See contact details for all the mentioned organisations below:

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

BACP House
35-37 Albert Street
Rugby
Warks CV21 2SG
Tel: 0870 443 5252
Web: www.bacp.co.uk

United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy

UKCP
2nd Floor
Edward House
2 Wakley Street
London EC1V 7LT
Tel: 020 7014 9955
Web: www.psychotherapy.org.uk/

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP)

The Globe Centre, PO Box 9, Accrington BB5 0XB
Tel. 01254 875 277
Web: www.babcp.com/
Full directory of psychotherapists available on the website

NHS Services

PALS NW Hospitals
Contact: Tehmina Masud
Tel: 020 8869 5118



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Witness (formerly known as POPAN)

Support, information and advocacy to victims of abuse by health care professionals and clergy.

Delta House

175-177 Borough High Street

London SE1 1HR

Helpline: 08454 500 300 (opening times, Monday 1.30pm-4.00pm and 4.30pm - 7.00pm,
Tuesday and Thursday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm - 4.00pm)

Email: info@witnessagainstabuse.org.uk

Web: www.popan.org.uk

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