

Each counselling session typically lasts 50 – 60 minutes.

Where are the counselling sessions held?

Counselling sessions are provided weekly in Douglas, Peel, Port Erin and Ramsey.

What if I am unable to attend an appointment?

If you are unable to attend a scheduled counselling appointment, please contact your counsellor in advance. If you cancel more than one appointment you may be discharged, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Notes:

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A copy of this document is available in large print or audio format upon request

Counselling Service
Department of Health and Social Care
Ballakermeen Road
Douglas
Isle of Man
IM1 4BR

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Counselling for mild to moderate depression

Department of Health and Social Care

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What does it feel like to be depressed?

It would be an unusual person who said that he or she never felt "depressed." Mood fluctuations are normal and help inform us that something is missing in our lives and that we should consider changing things.

The feeling of clinical depression is deeper, longer and more unpleasant. There are a variety of symptoms, such as: loss of energy, loss of interest in activities, sadness, loss of appetite and weight, difficulty concentrating, self-criticism, feelings of hopelessness, physical complaints, withdrawal from other people, irritability, difficulty making decisions, and suicidal thinking. Some people experience a few symptoms that occur some of the time, others experience a large number of symptoms, that are frequent and long-lasting.

Why does it happen?

Circumstances: depression is often triggered by difficult life situations. You are more likely to become depressed if you are alone, socially isolated, stressed, or experiencing conflict.

Physical Illness: chronic health problems, particularly if they cause substantial pain or disability and have a limited response to treatment are likely to negatively impact on your mood.

Personality: some of us are more vulnerable to depression than others. This may be because of our genes, early experiences in our life, or both.

Alcohol: one of the reasons that people take street drugs and drink alcohol is that they sometimes make them feel better – temporarily. In the long run they can make problems worse as: (a) problems are avoided rather than dealt with, (b) performance at work, home and social situations is impaired, (c) psychological and/or physical dependence may develop and (d) physical health may be impaired.

When should I seek help?

Depression is hard to diagnose on your own, as our mood affects our judgement of ourselves. However, it may be time to seek help if (a) your feelings of depression are worse than usual and don't seem to get any better and/or (b) your feelings of depression affect your work, interests and feelings towards your family and friends and/or (c) you find yourself feeling that life is not worth living, or that other people would be better off without you.

How can counselling help?

Counselling offers an opportunity for you to express concerns, difficulties, or distress you are experiencing, in an environment where you can talk freely and openly.

By exploring aspects of your life, you may begin to better understand your difficulties, feelings and behaviour. Together with your counsellor, you may be able to find an area where it would be possible to initiate change. The counsellor may help you to look at the options open to you and help you to decide the best one for you. Counselling is a way of enabling choice, change or of reducing confusion. It does not involve giving advice or directing you to take a particular course of action.

How to access Counselling

Counselling for mild to moderate depression is available for people aged 17 and above.

Access to the Counselling service is by self referral.

If you would like to access the Counselling service please call the Counselling service secretary and request a screening appointment.

Telephone number: **642540**

One of the counsellors will then call you back and offer you an appointment for telephone screening.

If counselling is suitable for you, you will then be offered an appointment.

If counselling is not the most effective form of support and treatment for you, you will be offered one or more of the following:

- Signposting to other services
- Provided with /directed to psychoeducation material
- Redirection to your GP

How many sessions will I need?

Initially, your counsellor will agree a certain number of sessions with you. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines recommends 6-10 sessions over 8-12 weeks of counselling for persistent mild to moderate depression. However, this will be reviewed regularly and revised accordingly.