

Therapies

Acupuncture | Art Therapy | **Counselling** | Healing Imagery | Massage | Meditation and Mindfulness Music Therapy | Nordic Walking | Physical Activity Qigong | Reflexology | Relaxation | Shiatsu | Yoga



Counselling is a type of talking therapy, where a relationship between therapist and client is built on trust and understanding. Counsellors help people who need support for a variety of emotional and personal issues and can help them to deal with these issues in a positive and appropriate way.

Specific to people with cancer, research has shown counselling may be beneficial for wellbeing, anxiety, depression and helping with the sexual side-effects of cancer. Penny Brohn UK supports counselling for people with cancer.

Information on counselling

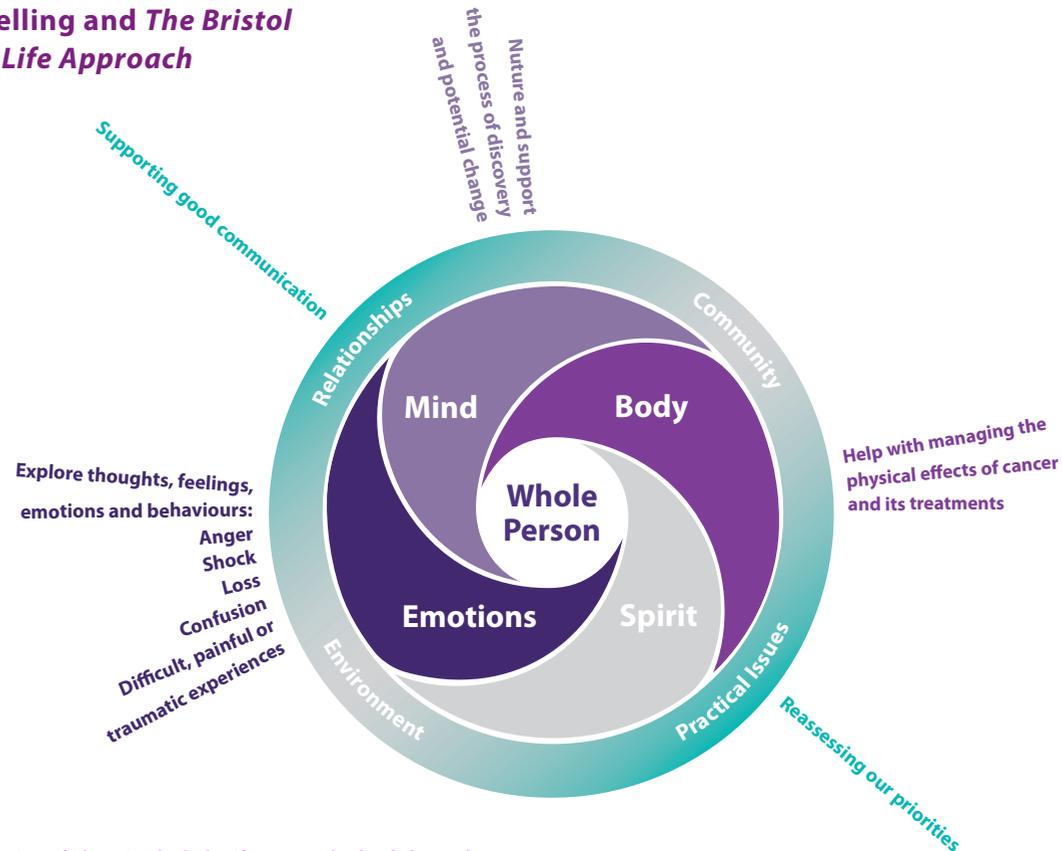
This evidence-based information sheet aims to provide clearly sourced and reliable information to help you make informed choices about counselling, one of a range of treatments available to support people with cancer. If you would like more information on how to access the range of services Penny Brohn UK provides, please contact our Helpline on 0303 3000 118. We are able to provide our services free of charge, thanks to the charitable donations and voluntary contributions which fund our work.

What do people who have tried counselling say about it?

Research studies known as qualitative studies ask people about their experiences. They can provide information from a personal perspective, but can't tell us if a therapy is likely to work for everyone.

Following breast cancer, women reported that counselling helped them to get back in touch with themselves, process strong emotions and solve problems. After attending a counselling group, women with gynaecological cancer reported benefits including a feeling of togetherness and understanding. People who have had counselling also mention benefits, such as having time and space to talk about their feelings, understanding their feelings, and support with their fears surrounding death.

Counselling and The Bristol Whole Life Approach



This adaptation of The Bristol Whole Life Approach wheel shows the areas that counselling can help with, according to providers.

(Please note that these are not the claims of Penny Brohn UK.)

What happens in a counselling session?

- Clients will have an assessment before seeing a counsellor.
- Counselling sessions normally take place on a weekly basis, on the same day and time each week. Sessions are usually one hour.
- Generally sessions are offered over six and up to ten weeks. It is a good idea to commit to the block of sessions, so that you get the most from them.
- At Penny Brohn UK, counselling sessions focus on issues arising from the impact of a cancer diagnosis. Your session may also pick up on some issues relating to previous life events. Your counsellor will facilitate you in talking about whatever is concerning you.
- Everything that is discussed in a counselling session is completely confidential.
- The relationship between you and your counsellor is an

important aspect of your time together, in creating a safe place to explore your feelings.

- If it is thought you need further support, your counsellor will guide you in finding the most appropriate setting for this. For example, if you need help with other things such as medical, legal or financial issues.

What is counselling?

Counselling is a well established discipline, which originated in the early 18th century when there was a significant shift in the way society responded to people's problems. There began a focus on 'the self' and a move away from more traditional approaches, where problems were typically dealt with from a religious perspective.

Counselling did not become a recognised and distinct profession until the 1950s and, in many ways, was an extension of the already established discipline of psychotherapy. There is a recognised overlap between counselling and psychotherapy, however, counselling is distinct from psychotherapy in a number of ways. Psychotherapy works with unconscious processes (psychoanalysis) and usually more in-depth and longer-term than counselling.

Counselling is usually a one-to-one relationship, where the counsellor helps the client to explore their emotions, relationships and other personal issues, in order to help them resolve problems and cope with life's difficulties in a positive and practical way. The availability and popularity of counselling has grown considerably in the UK and the US in the past 30 years, and many different kinds of counselling are now available. Some common types of counselling include:

- Individual counselling
- Group counselling
- Couple's counselling
- Peer counselling
- Telephone/Videophone counselling
- Online counselling
- Couple's counselling
- Peer counselling
- Telephone/Videophone counselling

Is counselling safe?

Counselling is considered safe when provided by a trained professional and used alongside conventional treatments for cancer. It may not be appropriate for those with psychiatric problems. Where this is the case, the counsellor should refer their client to another professional for further help.

Are there any legal issues?

While there are no legal requirements for a counsellor to hold a professional qualification, counsellors are members of professional bodies such as the BACP (see below), and be accredited if they have the required qualifications and experience.

What is the evidence on counselling?

Research looking at the effects of counselling for people with cancer has found that it may be beneficial for well being.

A full list of references and an extended summary of the research literature is available upon request from our Helpline.

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Contact us

Helpline: 0303 3000 118
Weekdays 9.30am to 5.00pm
(24-hour answerphone)

Email: helpline@pennybrohn.org.uk

Penny Brohn UK
Chapel Pill Lane, Pill, Bristol BS20 0HH

Statement

Our information and research is designed to help you make informed choices about the services that we provide. From time to time, for illustrative purposes, we may make reference to commonly available products (such as relaxation CDs and popular self-help books). We do not endorse or advertise the use of any specific product.

Disclaimer:

While we make every effort to use up-to-date and reliable sources, we cannot accept liability for errors in the sources that we use and also cannot guarantee to find all the information relevant to your enquiry or request. All responsibility for interpretation of and action upon that information rests with you. This information and advice is offered on the understanding that if you intend to support your treatment with complementary or alternative approaches, then it is advisable to consult your medical team to ensure that they have a complete understanding of your situation and the complementary or alternative approach that you are considering.

Organisations that offer support and information for people with cancer

Cancer Research UK Tel: 0808 800 4040
www.cancerresearchuk.org

Macmillan Cancer Support Tel: 0808 808 0000
www.macmillan.org.uk

NHS 111 Tel: 111
www.nhs.uk

More information on complementary therapies

NHS Evidence www.evidence.nhs.uk
CAM Cancer www.cam-cancer.org/CAM-Summaries

Organisations that represent counselling

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk www.bacp.co.uk

Tel: 01455 883300

National Counselling Society

www.nationalcounsellingsociety.org

Tel: 01903 200 666