

COUNSELLING FOR CARERS

Carers have an essential role in supporting family members, friends or neighbours who are unwell, disabled or living with a long-term condition. This can result in high levels of stress for the Carer and affect their quality of life including relationships, physical or mental health, social life and career.

Talking therapies

Talking therapies can help you, as a Carer, work out how to deal with negative thoughts and feelings and make positive changes. Talking about a worry can help you to work out what is really bothering you, discover patterns in your thoughts that it may be helpful to change and explore what you could do about it. Talking therapies can help you to take greater control of your life and improve your confidence.

You may often find it helpful to talk problems through with a family member or friend, but sometimes they cannot help and you may prefer to get support from a professional therapist. Talking therapies involve talking to someone who is trained to help you deal with negative feelings, explore your thoughts and feelings and the effect they have on your behaviour and/or mood. You do not need to have a diagnosed mental health condition to be offered or to benefit from a talking therapy.

Talking therapies include:

- Counselling.
- Talking treatment.
- Psychotherapy.
- Psychological therapy.

Counselling

Counselling is a confidential talking therapy that involves talking and listening and working with a counsellor who is trained to support you in a safe setting, so you can start to discuss issues causing concern. It can help you come to terms with your caring role, release painful feelings and see your options more clearly. Counselling can also help you to start caring for yourself, look after your own wellbeing and identify ways to overcome any negative feelings and difficult emotions you may be experiencing.

Counselling for Carers

Action for Family Carers offers a **free**, confidential counselling service where adult Carers in Essex can receive individual counselling sessions from qualified counsellors.

Carers come to counselling to discuss all kinds of concerns, including:

- Transitions – when the caring role begins, changes or ends
- Bereavement or other loss
- Illness accident or trauma
- Depression, anxiety, worries or stress about the past, present or future
- Isolation, loneliness or difficulties in a social setting

Our counsellors are experienced in dealing with the main issues Carers have, including anxiety, stress, anger, suicidal thoughts, relationship issues and guilt around the caring role.

Sessions take place via Zoom or telephone, or in a quiet, undisturbed and safe setting at a location that is convenient to you. Your counsellor will help you to explore your situation, see things more clearly and gain more understanding of yourself.

All counsellors working with us are members of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) or equivalent and work within their Ethical Framework.

How it works

You can refer yourself or ask to be referred by your support worker or other professional. Once we receive your referral, we will invite you for an initial assessment to find out what you need from counselling and tell you more about our service.

During your first meeting or assessment with your counsellor you can discuss your reasons for attending, see if counselling is right for you and see if you and your counsellor can work together. You will then be offered up to six sessions with each session lasting about 50 minutes with a counsellor who can offer a range of different counselling approaches. After the six sessions, there will be an opportunity to review your sessions to see if counselling is helping you and arrange further sessions if required.

A counsellor will not try and advise you or tell you what to do to fix your problems. A counsellor will work with you to help, support and encourage you to develop confidence in

your own ability to help yourself. In doing so, counselling may help you discover different ways of thinking, feeling and behaving.

How else can Action for Family Carers help you?

Action for Family Carers has a range of services for Carers to help you manage and maintain your caring role. This includes:

- ✓ **Befriending:** a volunteer-led befriending service aimed at Carers who may be experiencing loneliness or social isolation, or are looking for a regular catch-up chat with a volunteer.
- ✓ **GP Liaison Service:** a mid-Essex service which supports GP practices to develop their processes and systems to identify and signpost Carers to suitable services.
- ✓ **Carer and Family Response:** independent and responsive support for Carers and their families in Chelmsford District.
- ✓ **Activity Groups:** We hold Active Minds and Keeping Active groups in Harlow, Epping and Great Dunmow for people with dementia or memory loss.
- ✓ **Respite Day Centres:** We provide day care for older people in Maldon, which also provides a few hours break for family Carers giving them some precious time to call their own.

For further information or assistance please contact:

Action for Family Carers

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