



Lister Fertility Clinic

Counselling service

Our counselling service is a free, independent and confidential service for all patients attending the Lister Fertility Clinic for treatment.

You can make an appointment to see a counsellor at any time before, during or after your treatment. If you choose to see a counsellor, they'll support you in exploring difficult or stressful issues within a secure and confidential environment. Sessions are available via Microsoft Teams or telephone, and a number of face-to-face appointments are available on request.

What is counselling?

Counselling provides a safe supportive time and place to talk about your thoughts and feelings, explore emotional challenges, gain new perspectives and develop coping strategies. It's available to individuals, couples and groups.

Why have counselling during fertility treatment?

Assisted conception treatments can sometimes cause levels of stress and anxiety and, sadly in some cases, loss that are uncomfortable and distressing. Although friends and family can be supportive, some people may be undergoing treatment alone, and others may prefer to keep treatment a private matter. Counselling offers a safe environment in which to explore and process feelings, and consider coping strategies and options that may be difficult to talk to others about.

Here at the Lister Fertility Clinic, we believe that having counselling benefits our patients' health and wellbeing both during treatment and beyond. Some patients may not wish to have counselling, but other patients, like those donating or receiving treatment

with donated eggs, sperm or embryos and those involved in surrogacy arrangements, will be invited to attend implications counselling before proceeding with their treatment.

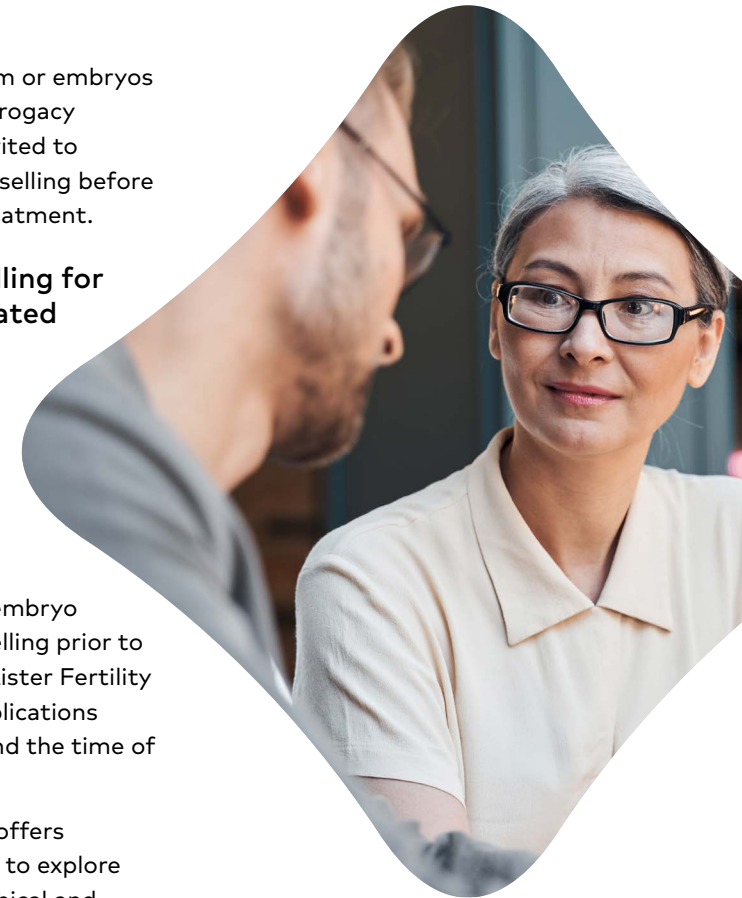
Implications counselling for treatment with donated eggs, sperm or embryos

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) recommends that all couples and individuals receiving egg, sperm or embryo donations receive counselling prior to their treatment. At the Lister Fertility Clinic, we arrange an implications counselling session around the time of your initial consultation.

Implications counselling offers patients the opportunity to explore the longer-term legal, ethical and social implications of treatment decisions, for themselves, their wider network and most importantly any child conceived as a result of treatment. Counselling provides an opportunity to discuss being open with children about how they were conceived, in addition to other aspects of bringing up children born as a result of using donated eggs, sperm or embryos. If you're in a relationship, it's important that implications counselling is attended as a couple,

although additional appointments can be attended individually.

Some people come to the clinic knowing they need a donation to create a family and feel ready for this, whereas for others, the transition to donation may involve feelings of grief and loss and lots of questions. The counselling team is here to provide appropriate personalised support for all.





Implications counselling for egg, sperm or embryo donors

If you're a donor, our clinic's policy requires you to receive an implications counselling session prior to treatment. Counselling will enable you to discuss any concerns you may have and ensure that, as an egg donor or sharer, you acquire an understanding of the processes involved in donation. You'll have time to explore the short-term and longer-term legal, ethical, social and psychological implications of donating eggs, sperm or embryos, including implications for your own fertility journey and any children you may have now and/or in the future. If you're in a relationship, implications counselling sessions are for you and your partner.

Implications counselling for surrogacy

HFEA also requires all those following the route of surrogacy to create their family, both the couple or individual, and the surrogate and their partner (if in a relationship), to attend counselling individually with any partner first, followed by a group counselling session. We'll arrange the first session around the time of your initial clinic appointment. The sessions provide the opportunity to consider the short, medium and longer-term social and legal implications of this route to parenthood for all involved. They

also give the opportunity to consider everyone's roles and the collaborative approach and communication expectations specific to each individual and the group. Please be assured that we'll aim to make your fertility journey feel as supported and stress free as possible. Further sessions are available for those who wish to spend more time considering their plans.

Support/therapeutic counselling

The feelings associated with the diagnosis of fertility problems, management of an ongoing treatment, negative treatment outcomes and coming to terms with no further treatment can be complex and difficult. Research shows those going through fertility treatment, both women and men, can experience a range of feelings including stress, anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, anger, jealousy, envy and trauma. Feelings from the past may be re-triggered, some people may experience lower self-esteem, and others can experience reduced sexual confidence and other more complex emotional presentations.

For many, the loss of pregnancy, even in the early weeks, raises feelings of numbness, loss and emptiness. Sharing the experience can be helpful. We provide time and space to talk to a counsellor about the loss of pregnancy

and an opportunity to explore what comes next.

All Lister Fertility Clinic counsellors are highly experienced in working with individuals and couples throughout their fertility treatment and beyond, through the clinic's no-charge, open-door counselling provision. Our counsellors draw on their own experiences and modality in their treatment approach. The team will refer patients on to other specialist services or for more long-term support where this is beneficial.

Information

Whether you have implications or supportive/therapeutic counselling, a resource list of useful groups, agencies and organisations is available from the counselling service.

Counselling sessions can be arranged by contacting your consultant's PA or your Donation/Surrogacy Co-ordinator.

Alternatively, please email **SecretaryGroup@lfclinic.com** or telephone **020 7881 2000** to book your counselling appointments.

We look forward to meeting you,

**Lister Fertility Clinic
counselling team**

Meet your counsellors



Caroline Spencer
Lead IVF Counsellor

MSc in RE&CBT, Accred BICA, BABCP, AREBT, Certificate in Supervision

Caroline is a cognitive behavioural psychotherapist for couples and individuals, clinical supervisor and lecturer. She has a special interest in donor conception and originally trained as a nurse. Caroline is accredited by the British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA), the BABCP and the Association of Rational Emotive Therapy (AREBT), and is a member of the BICA Executive Committee.



Deborah Howe
Fertility Counsellor

Higher Diploma in Person-Centred Counselling, Relationship Counselling, Creative Counselling. Level 7 in Psycho-Spiritual Care. Diploma in Supervision.

Accredited Member of BACP and BICA.

Deborah is a fertility counsellor who offers therapeutic support to individuals and couples going through their fertility journey. She is an accredited member of the BICA and the BACP. Deborah is also a member of the BICA Executive Committee and BICA Training Team.



Mary-Anne Singh
IVF Counsellor

BA Hons, Higher Ad.Dip Counselling/ Psychotherapy, Cert Supervision, Accred BICA and BACP

Mary-Anne is an integrative counsellor and psychotherapist for couples and individuals, life coach and clinical supervisor. She is accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA)



Tracey Sainsbury
IVF Counsellor

HND Integrative Counselling, Accred BICA, NCS, RMBACP

Tracey is an integrative counsellor for couples and individuals, writer and trainer. She is accredited by the BICA and the National Counselling & Psychotherapy Society (NCPS), and is a Registered Member of the BACP.

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Connect with us



Our Group

The Harley Street Clinic

The Lister Hospital

London Bridge Hospital

The Portland Hospital

The Princess Grace Hospital

The Wellington Hospital

HCA UK at University College Hospital

The Harborne Hospital

The Wilmslow Hospital

The Christie Private Care

Laboratories

Primary Care

Sarah Cannon Research Institute

Leaders in Oncology Care

