

What will it cost?

Because we are a not for profit organisation and our counsellors give their time for free or at a subsidised rate, we can offer a very cost effective service, particularly when compared with private practices.

Initial Assessment: Sessions cost £45, payable when clients book their first appointment.

Weekly counselling: Sessions are £35 for a 50 minute session.

Some people may be concerned about their ability to pay. If they are on a low income because they receive benefits, work part-time or have significantly high outgoings, we try to agree payments within their means.

Reviews: The amount clients pay will be reviewed on an annual basis.

We try not to refuse counselling for financial reasons, but everyone who uses our services is asked to pay something.



Postal and counselling address:

Alton Counselling Service,
Friends Meeting House, Church Street
Alton GU34 2DA

Telephone: 01420 89207

Email: admin@altoncounselling.org.uk

Or visit our web site at:

www.altoncounselling.org.uk



Member of the **Counselling Network**

Organisational member of the
**British Association for Counselling
and Psychotherapy (BACP)**

Registered Charity 279857



Providing counselling for the community

How We Can Help Information for referrers



A service you can trust

Alton Counselling service (ACS) is a registered charity set up in 1974 to help adults of all ages in the Alton area, who are experiencing emotional, psychological, spiritual and relationship problems, by offering high-quality, affordable counselling.

We are experienced providers of psychological treatment for those suffering from anxiety, depression and inter-personal problems. Over 75% of our clients are referred by their GP or other healthcare providers.

You can be confident about referring patients and clients to use our services because:

- **Our counsellors are supported by a professional and experienced clinical team**
- **We are an accredited centre with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)**

Counselling works

Improved access to talking therapies within the NHS is a major priority for the public according to a 2006 government sponsored survey.

Voluntary sector counselling is often thought to offer no more than tea and sympathy for the worried well. Recent research - using the well recognised CORE system of evaluation - shows that agencies such as ACS, who have appropriately qualified and experienced practitioners, work effectively with people who have mental health problems that are at least as complex or severe as those seen within the NHS.

- **We operate within the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice**
- **We are a member of the Westminster Pastoral Foundation (WPF) national network of counselling centres**

ACS offers a local, personalised service but is part of the much larger WPF network which sees over 6,000 clients per year at some 25 centres providing in excess of 65,000 counselling sessions each year.

Our main counselling approach is psychodynamic but our clinical staff has a wide range of training and experience including counselling in primary care, focused short-term work and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

NICE Clinical Guidelines stress that in all psychological treatments 'the strength of the therapeutic alliance is important in ensuring a good outcome'.

In psychodynamic counselling the relationship between the client and the counsellor is the central agent for change. Our open-ended counselling allows time for the relationship between the counsellor and the client to strengthen and for them to explore how present difficulties may be rooted in past problems. This is particularly valuable for clients who want to build on CBT or short term counselling.



Our clinical team

Counsellors: Our counsellors have been trained or are in further training with a recognised training organisation. Training includes personal therapy and our counsellors are committed to personal development.

Supervision: An experienced counsellor or psychotherapist trained and experienced in supervision work, supervises the work of our counsellors on a weekly basis.

Counselling Co-ordinator: We have a Co-ordinator who is an experienced practitioner

and takes overall clinical responsibility for our work, and is able to help with any queries or concerns you may have regarding our work or referrals.

Clinical Adviser: A senior psychotherapy practitioner who is not directly involved in our day-to-day work, provides consultative support.

Consultant Psychiatrist: We receive psychiatric support from a local consultant, who offers opinions, advice and psychiatric assessments, when needed.

How our service works

Assessment: We start with an introductory session to see whether counselling might help, and whether clients would benefit from short-term or open ended counselling. If we can help we will offer them a regular weekly session. If a counsellor is not available immediately we will offer to put clients on a waiting list.

Short-term: If clients have a particular problem they need to focus on, we can offer them six appointments.

Open-ended: With open ended counselling, the client and their counsellor can decide when they want to finish.

Interested? Clients can call, write or email us. We will contact them to arrange an appointment. They will then need to complete a referral form and return it to us with a £45 assessment fee.

Appointments? Sessions take place at regular times between 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. on weekdays and last for 50 minutes. Sessions will take place at the same time each week at our centre in Alton.

Waiting list: Sometimes because of demands for the service, we may have a waiting list. This can vary, but if you contact us, we can give you an idea of current waiting times.

Referrals: We encourage clients to contact us directly. Please let them have a copy of our **How We Can Help** leaflet and ask them to contact us. If you want further information before referring a client/patient please contact our **Counselling Co-ordinator**.