



## Email counselling

Email counselling at Lifecentre follows the same basic principles as face-to-face counselling but uses a different medium. It is available throughout and beyond the UK. This gives it some additional benefits, but it is important to be aware that it does limit some helpful aspects of counselling too.

### Read our FAQs to find out more:

#### 1. What are the potential benefits and limitations of email counselling?

Benefits of email counselling may include being able to access a specialist service which is dedicated to supporting sexual abuse survivors, with extensive experience, without the need to travel. It gives you a choice of when to write and may feel like a safe place to begin to share the impact of sexual abuse on your life.

The limitations of the email service may include misinterpretation of the written word, not having the visual and auditory clues that enhance our feeling of being heard and understood. You may also find that being alone as you share difficult memories leaves you feeling less comforted and not so supported as you might with someone in the room with you.

You may find it frustrating to wait for a reply as we write at different times. We encourage you to be aware that communication may be interrupted if the technology lets us down, though we will do our utmost to keep consistent in our support. Please be very aware of the limitations of privacy and confidentiality through this medium. We recommend that you read our suggestions for Online Safety.

#### 2. What will it cost?

Our email service is free to use but we would ask you to consider making a voluntary donation towards the costs of your counselling if you are able to. It costs Lifecentre £112 per month to provide email counselling for one person.

#### 3. How often should I email and how often will you reply?

You can email us once a week using no more than 500 words and we will reply once a week at an agreed time. We ask you to commit to sending us your email 48 hours before our scheduled reply time.





#### 4. What happens if I do not hear from you?

Occasionally technology can let us down, and it may be that we have not received your email. If you have not heard back from us as expected, please email us to let us know. You can also contact our office should you wish.

#### 5. Who is email counselling suitable for?

**Email counselling is only available to people aged 18 and over.**

Under 18s can use our telephone or text helplines and come for face-to-face counselling.

Email counselling is not suitable for everyone. To help us ensure that you get the best possible support, we have an initial assessment to make sure email counselling is right for you. See below for more details.

If there is any likelihood of a court case for the abuse you have suffered, we advise our clients to wait until any proceedings have been settled before starting email counselling. This is to ensure that nothing written to each other about a client's experiences could be used to jeopardise a client's case. (For information on this please see our pre-trial therapy policy).

#### 6. What if I just have a few questions I want to ask via email?

If you just want a factual question answered or some information about our service or other services, then please contact the Lifecentre office.

#### 7. How does Lifecentre maintain my privacy and how do I maintain my own?

Before counselling starts, we will ask you for a password. This is because we will send our replies to you as a password protected word document. This means that no-one will be able to read our reply to you unless they have your password.

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Your personal details will be stored separately from your email correspondence to further maintain your privacy. We work within a strict Confidentiality Policy.





## 8. How do I register my interest in having email counselling?

Fill in and submit the referral form on our website and indicate that you are interested in email counselling. You will be asked for some information about yourself and why you would like email counselling.

## 9. How will I know if email counselling is right for me?

Before counselling begins, we ask you to fill in a referral form. We then invite you for a telephone initial assessment to make sure email counselling is right for you. If it is not, we might signpost you to one of our other services.

## 10. What happens next if we both agree to go ahead with email counselling?

We ask you to read through and sign our email counselling contract and return it to us in the post. The contract provides us with a framework within which to work together. We will notify you of the regular time that you will receive your email reply from us, along with some tips on looking after yourself when having email counselling. Then all you need to do is send us your email 48 hours before that time.

## 11. What if I have any concerns or complaints about email counselling once I have started?

We ask you first of all to seek to clarify anything that may have upset or offended you or given you cause for concern with your email counsellor. If you are still unhappy with their response, then you can phone the Lifecentre office or put your complaint in writing. This will then go through our complaints procedure.

## 12. How long will email counselling last for?

Email counselling is offered in a block of 9 weekly sessions. A review will take place towards the end of the 9-week block. This will allow time for you and your counsellor to assess whether the counselling has reached a desired end point, or if a further block of 9 sessions would be helpful to continue progress.

"I love your site, it brings a sense of hope that anything can be overcome if you try."

