



Welcome to Action for ME Counselling for young people

Thank you for choosing Counselling with Action for ME. This leaflet explains what counselling offers, how sessions work, what you can expect, and how we support accessibility and confidentiality. It's written in plain language to make things easy to follow.

More information is also available [on our website](#).

Please note, we are not a crisis service and may not be able to offer therapy if you are having therapy with another service.

About our Counselling service

Counselling is a safe space, based on trust with your counsellor, to talk about you, your feelings, your life, your situation, your aspirations.

It's an opportunity to talk to someone outside your family or friends where you decide what you want to talk about.

Counsellors don't give advice, share opinions, or prescribe medication. Your counsellor will provide you with the support you need, to nurture your wellbeing and empower you to manage your feelings.

Before starting counselling, you'll have a free assessment call with our Lead Counsellor, Jenny. This helps you and us check that our service is right for you.

Jenny and your Counsellor will discuss what you'd like to focus on during your sessions your assessment call and then first session. If there are limits to what your Counsellor can offer, they will guide you to other helpful services.

These might be services provided by other organisations, or Action for ME' services such as our:

- free [Young Person's Community](#) including online forum where you can connect with other young people with ME
- free [Information and Support service](#), to help you find information and resources
- [Doctor and Physiotherapy services](#), open to people with ME aged 13 and over.

Our Counsellors

All our counsellors are registered and/or accredited with the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) or UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP).

This means we are governed by and work to their Ethical Framework, professional standards, guidelines and complaints procedure. Copies can be supplied on request or are available via the [BACP website](#) or the [UKCP website](#).

Counsellors also work within Action for ME policies and procedures, including safeguarding, complaints and quality assurance.

How to get in touch

Our Young People's Counselling service is available for young people with suspected or diagnosed ME. There are three ways you can access our support:

1. You can complete our [self-referral form](#) (please note: If you are under 16, your parent or guardian must complete Section C)
2. Your parent or carer can refer you on your behalf.
3. You may already be receiving support from other professionals. With your consent, they can refer you to us if they think we can support you further.

After we get your referral form, our Lead Counsellor, Jenny, will be in touch with you within two weeks to arrange an assessment call. After that, your Counsellor will be in touch by email to book your first session.

What to expect from sessions

Every counsellor works a little differently, so your first session will include time to talk about what to expect, and what the sessions will focus on, They will also talk about practical details like contact outside sessions, confidentiality, personal boundaries, emergency contacts, and how to cancel sessions. This is called a Counselling Agreement.

Sessions are usually 30 or 50 minutes, and every one, two or more weeks. We will agree this together.

You can choose phone or Teams. We will discuss what format works best for your energy levels and symptoms. If your symptoms change, we can discuss options to support your health.

Ending counselling

If you decide to end counselling with us, we encourage you to have a final session. The importance of a good ending is a key part of counselling.

Complaints and feedback

We welcome feedback. If you are unhappy with any part of the service, we will provide a clear process to raise concerns and resolve them fairly. You can also read more about our process [on our website](#).

About our Healthcare Services

Counselling is part of Action for ME's Healthcare Services offering client-led, individually tailored, whole-person care.

That means we seek to support you in whatever way is right for you as an individual physically, emotionally or spiritually. As well as listening and caring for the needs of the whole person, we offer encouragement and support to your family and carers.

Our values

Our shared values of collaboration, empathy and equity are very important to us. These guide how we work with you and your family, along with all our supporters and partners. They show the attitudes and behaviours we expect from each other, and form the foundation of our approach and culture.

Collaboration We will work collaboratively and inclusively with others to take action and achieve change.

Empathy Most of our Trustees, and many of our staff team, have direct experience of ME themselves. Our collective, deep-rooted empathy is at the heart of our work.

Equity We believe that everyone deserves fair and just access to resources, services, and opportunities. We are committed to identifying and addressing barriers that contribute to inequalities experienced by people affected by ME.

If you need help contacting us or would like this leaflet in an alternative format such as large print, plain text, audio, or easy read, please just ask.

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