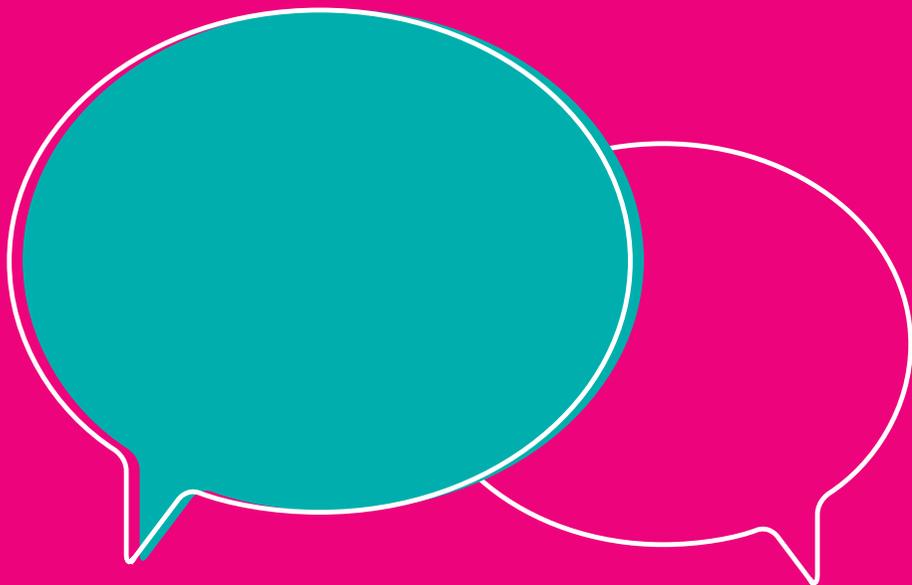


Someone to talk to

Sight Loss Counselling Team



RNIB

Supporting people
with sight loss

About us

We are a team of counsellors with extensive experience in supporting people impacted by sight loss.

We will offer you:

- time to talk about your situation and how you're feeling
- one-to-one telephone and online counselling as well as telephone support groups, facilitated by a counsellor.

Our Sight Loss Counselling Team is committed to a working practice that values equality and diversity. Sight loss does not discriminate and neither do we.



Introduction

If you have lost or are losing your sight, you may be worried about how you will cope. Or you may feel depressed about the changes you are facing. Perhaps you are experiencing feelings of sadness, anger or anxiety and this is affecting you on a day-to-day basis. Or maybe it's causing you to worry about the future.

During these times, many people find it helpful to talk through their feelings with someone outside their usual circle of family and friends.

If you are supporting a person with sight loss, you may also experience these feelings and need someone to talk to.

Our Sight Loss Counselling Team offers confidential telephone and online counselling to help you get through these times.

We support people of all ages, including children and young people from the age of eleven.

Telephone counselling

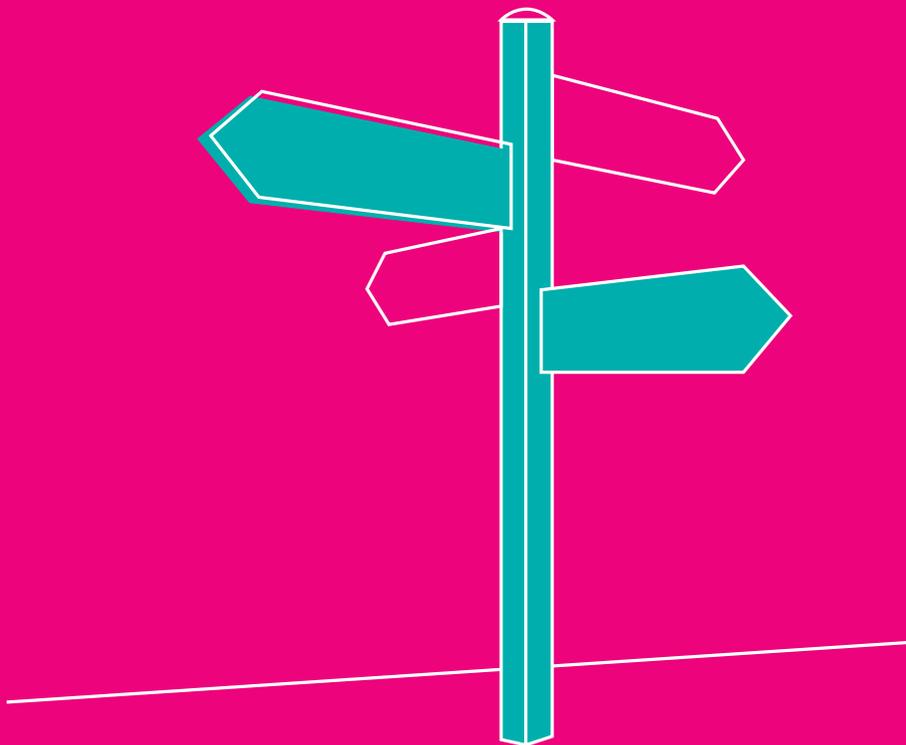
Your counsellor will discuss and agree the number of sessions with you – commonly up to eight.

Once we have your details, we will contact you to arrange a telephone assessment with one of our counsellors. We aim to make contact with you within five working days of receiving your details, although it may take longer at busy times, or if it is difficult to contact you.

The first assessment offers you an opportunity to talk about your situation and to explore what further support you might find helpful.

If you go on to have counselling from our service, these appointments will be arranged at mutually convenient times and will always be with the same counsellor. Your counsellor will call you at appointment times so there is no cost to you for the call.

Although we do not have a crisis line, or offer befriending or face-to-face counselling, we can give information about other services and help in contacting them. If you need to speak to someone urgently, Samaritans are available 24 hours by telephone on **116 123** or you can email **jo@samaritans.org**.



“At the beginning I felt as though I was going round and round a roundabout and couldn’t find the way off. By the end of counselling, I had found an exit on to a road I wanted – I had taken back control of my life and am in charge of my own decisions.”

Nigel

Online counselling

With online counselling you can access the support you need via your laptop or smartphone. You will be able to talk with your counsellor in one of the following ways:

Email

Email gives you the opportunity to reflect on the pertinent issues that you need to bring to counselling. You will have the flexibility of sending your email whenever you want, day or night, and will receive a reply from your counsellor at a set time and day every week.

Video Conferencing

Video conferencing will offer you the option to engage in real time counselling via your computer or smart phone and see your counsellor/be seen by them. It is similar to platforms like Skype and Facetime.

Instant Messaging

With Instant Messaging you will be able to have a real time, text based conversation with your counsellor. It is similar to when you enter a chat room and talk with your friends by typing your messages in a live conversation.

However you decide to work you can usually have up to eight online sessions, lasting up to fifty minutes each.

You can self-refer for online counselling by going onto our website **[rnib.org.uk/counselling](https://www.rnib.org.uk/counselling)** where you will find more information. Our online counselling agreement will need to be sent back to us in order to initiate the process.

“It was great. I have some residual vision and very much appreciated being able to have counselling and see my counsellor without having to leave home.”

Paula

Telephone support groups

Sometimes you might find it helpful to explore ways forward in your life within a small group of people in a similar situation. In a supportive setting, you will be able to:

- talk about the way you feel
- share your experiences with others in similar circumstances
- explore what is not working for you and how to make it work
- improve and learn ways of dealing with difficult feelings related to sight loss.

The support groups usually run for eight weekly meetings over the phone. There will be a maximum of five people participating and each session will last about an hour.

One of our counsellors will be your group facilitator and will help you to share and explore your experiences in a safe way. Every week the facilitator will get in touch with each participant over the phone. Once everybody is contacted the meeting will begin. Your phone number is confidential to the Sight Loss Counselling Team and no one else will have access to it.

Although we do not offer long-term support or befriending, if you want to join a telephone social group we can direct you to the befriending scheme run by our Talk and Support Service. If you would like to join one of our support groups, you will be contacted within a week to book an initial assessment with a counsellor.

This assessment will be a chance to discuss your individual circumstances, ask any questions you may have and establish whether this type of support is appropriate for you.

“It has been a wonderful experience. I hope other people will have a chance to participate in these groups so that they will know they are not the only one and you can talk it through with others.”

Mary

Confidentiality

Our service is completely confidential. This means that what you say to us will remain within the Sight Loss Counselling Team and will not be passed on to anyone else without your consent.

As part of our commitment to the BACP Ethical Framework for Counselling Professions, our counsellors review their work with their clients with another counsellor in supervision. Clients' anonymity is protected during this process and identifying information is not revealed.

The only reason why confidentiality might be breached during the work with your counsellor is if we have very serious concerns about your safety or that of others. In such exceptional circumstances we might need to ensure your safety, but would strive to discuss this with you and assist you in seeking emergency support.

We adhere to the BACP Ethical Framework for Counselling Professions and comply with the Data Protection Act.



Getting in touch

You can get in touch with our Sight Loss Counselling Team and make a self referral by calling the Helpline on **0303 123 9999**. Your contact details will be passed on to us. Alternatively you can email us directly at **counselling@rnib.org.uk**. We aim to contact you within five working days.

Both the online counselling and telephone counselling are provided free of charge.



Further information

RNIB Helpline

Our Helpline is your direct line to the support, advice and products you need. We'll help you to find out what's available in your area and beyond, from RNIB and other organisations.

0303 123 9999

helpline@rnib.org.uk

Sight Loss Counselling Team

counselling@rnib.org.uk

rnib.org.uk/counselling

Other contact details

Samaritans

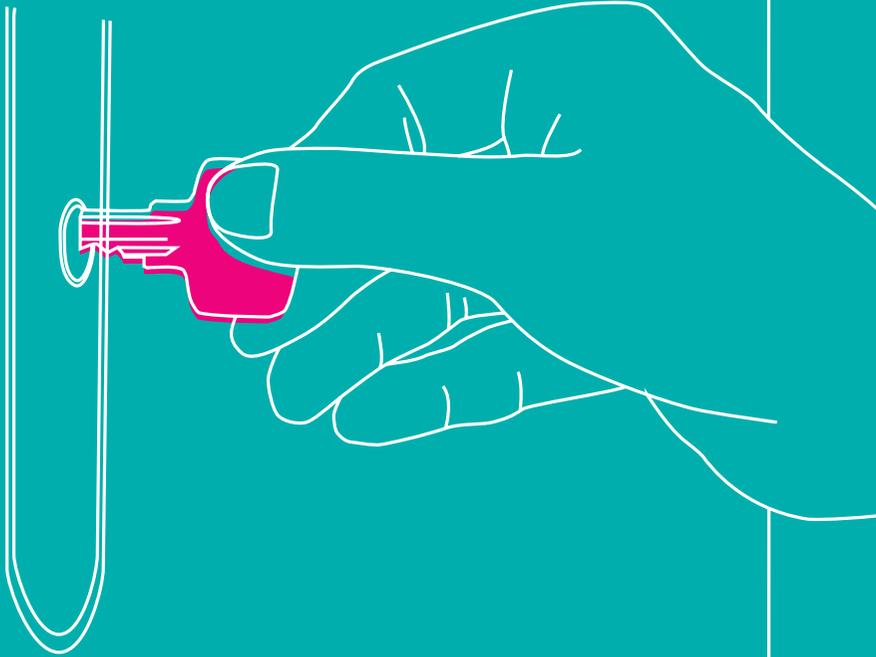
116 123

jo@samaritans.org

British Association for Counselling and
Psychotherapy

01455 883 300 (general enquiries)

bacp.co.uk



“I’m amazed at what I could tell him, but I have no regrets. He provided a catalyst to deeper thinking – like having been locked in a room and then opening the door onto a fresh room.”

Nicola

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