

ACHD Psychology Resources:

How to access counselling and psychological services in Wales

Living with a health condition can be difficult, and can evoke a wide range of strong emotions. You may feel angry, anxious or sad about your personal situation and your health, or you may find yourself getting angry, anxious or sad about things that you wouldn't usually feel so strongly about.

Having strong, difficult feelings at times of threat or uncertainty, is a normal, understandable, human experience. However, if you notice that your emotions are causing you or others distress, you might benefit from learning new ways of coping. This is something you can speak to your cardiac team and your G.P. about. They will be able to refer you to appropriate support if needed. We have also created a list below of resources that might be useful.

Useful resources:

- Ask to speak to your Cardiac Specialist Nurse about psychological or emotional support services available. (*Contact nu : 02920 744 580 / 07966 982 995*)
- There is an ACHD Network psychologist available for patients who live in South Wales and South West England who your ACHD team can refer you to.
- The ACHD Charity 'The Somerville Foundation' offer a free Mental Health and Well being service. They offer 1:1 telephone and email support, have a wealth of information on emotional and mental health issues, and can help put you in touch with local resources and services.

(*Contact via: admin@thesf.org.uk or via helpline 0300 015 1998.*)

- The British Heart Foundation – offer a 'Heart Helpline' and can provide you with information and support on anything heart-related

(*Contact via 0300 330 3311 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm).*)

- Silver Cloud' Online psychological therapy:

'Silver cloud' is an online cognitive behavioural therapy programme that can help you with feelings of anxiety and depression. It is now available free of charge for any Welsh NHS patients

<https://uk.silvercloudhealth.com/>

- Your GP should be also able to refer you to local counselling/psychological services

- For more persistent or severe mental health issues, your GP can refer you for assessment by your local Adult Mental Health Service

- Mind Charity – have a wealth of support, information and resources and offer free NHS talking therapy/ counselling sessions (through referral from your GP).

<https://www.mind.org.uk/> Tel: 0300 123 3393

- **Local council and voluntary/charitable organisations that may provide counselling:**

- *Youth Counselling Services:* Based in your local area, sometimes run by the local authority or by a charity. These vary across the country and in the age group that can access the service. Quite often young people can refer themselves
- *College or University Student Support Service:* Based at the college or university attended. Your local Council usually lists local agencies that provide counselling on their website, alternatively, telephone them or ask at the local library.
- Your GP practice will also be aware of local council voluntary/charitable organisations

- If you are able to pay, there are many counsellors and psychotherapists that work privately. It is important to check out that the counsellor/therapist is properly qualified. Here is a list of organisations that you can use to find counselling services in your area:

- **The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)** publishes directories of individual counsellors and counselling organizations through the UK. Call 0870 443 5252 or email BACP
- **British Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP)** provides information on how to find a therapist in your area. BABCP also produces information on depression, anxiety, panic attacks and phobias. Call 0161 797 4484
- **British Psychological Society** provides a searchable database of chartered psychologists in the UK. Call 0116 254 9568

Tips on improving wellbeing

When we are under times of stress/high threat, it is important to make time to engage in activities that calm or soothe us. This is different for everyone. It might be having a nice bath, going for a walk or cooking something new. It could be calling a friend for a chat, or working on a new project. It's about finding what works for you. These activities are often the things we stop when life is busy or difficult, but they can help us to cope with any challenges we face.

Mindful activities

One thing, that some people find helpful is engaging in mindful activities. These are activities that help us to focus on the present, rather than focusing on the past or worrying about the future. This can involve listening to recordings, but you can also go for a mindful walk or engage in mindful activities such as cooking, gardening or drawing. Sometimes, we can find being mindful uncomfortable. Don't do more than you feel you can manage, and if it feels okay, try to do it every day. Please see our separate resource on 'mindfulness'