

A close-up, high-angle shot of a woman's face, focusing on her eyes and nose. The image is heavily overlaid with a warm, orange-toned filter, giving it a soft, ethereal quality. Her hair is light-colored and appears to be blowing in the wind, adding a sense of movement. The lighting is soft, highlighting the contours of her face.

restoring
wellbeing
through

Contact



what is Contact?

Contact is Northern Ireland's leading independent Regional Counselling Service, committed to free counselling provision for all at times of crisis.

We created and lead Lifeline the regional suicide prevention crisis response helpline and wraparound counselling service, funded under the DHSS&PS Protect Life Strategy.

Contact was established in 1977 as a registered charity. We offer a number of counselling projects throughout Northern Ireland including:

- **Lifeline Crisis Response Counselling**
Free-phone 0808 808 8000
- **Local Community Based Counselling**
- **Further Education College and Schools Based Counselling**
- **Creative Therapies**

Independent Counselling offers a confidential relationship where you are offered a safe place to talk to a qualified counsellor, sensitive to your needs and interests.

The counsellor will listen to you and support you to explore choices.

This could help you to...

- Find new ways of doing things

- Feel better

- Feel less confused or worried

Counselling helps you slow life down, gain a better understanding of yourself, your relationships and what's going on in your life. Counselling offers the chance to explore new options.

The counsellor will not tell you what to do or assume they know better than you about your life.

**what is
independent
counselling?**



why talk to a counsellor?

People choose counselling for lots of reasons. Sometimes it's due to relationship problems, domestic violence, bereavement, family conflict or breakdown, eating disorders or panic attacks, unable to sleep, stress, anxiety or having difficulty at school or work, or getting into trouble at home, in the community or with the police. Some people may be self-harming, using substances and constantly feeling down or suicidal. There may be no obvious reason for feeling hurt, sad or down, or sometimes feeling confused, rejected, angry or hopeless.

Counselling will help you to:

- _ Understand what you think, feel and do
- _ Weigh up alternative options
- _ More confidently make your own decisions and act upon them

***Counsellors do not have magic wands...
we do have time and patience to
help you find and try out your own
best solutions.***

when & how long?

When you first meet with your counsellor, you discuss and agree together how you will work. This agreement will include how often to meet, the day, when, where, how long each session will last and when you will review or update your agreement.

If you arrive late, the session will finish at the agreed time. Most people stay in counselling for 4-6 sessions while some need a little more.

Everything discussed in counselling is confidential between you and your counsellor. However, the counsellor regularly talks to a supervisor to discuss their work. They will not use your name in these discussions.

Notes are kept of sessions identified only by a client number. These notes are filed in a locked cabinet. Counselling notes belong to Contact Youth as a support to your counsellor's memory, helping them to help you.

Confidentiality will only be broken to protect you or someone else's safety, such as when:

_ You tell your counsellor the name of someone hurting another person

or

_ you tell the counsellor you are going to hurt yourself or someone else



how to receive counselling

Counselling is always a voluntary activity. If you or someone you know are interested in counselling, here's how you can go about it:

Lifeline

To see a Contact counsellor just call Lifeline on:

0808 808 8000

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Lifeline calls are answered by experienced counsellors who can arrange for you to see a counsellor face to face or organise telephone counselling.

Lifeline is always there to help when you or someone you care for is in crisis.

Online

You can also see a counsellor by completing our online referral form on our website:

[contactni.com](https://www.contactni.com)

A Contact counsellor will call you back within 48hrs, usually sooner.

Informed Consent

If you are 14 or less we may need, with your permission, a brief talk with your parent/guardian, seeking their support for counselling.

we will get in touch

After we receive a referral, a counsellor will get in touch with you, usually within 48hrs, depending on how you contact us, through Lifeline, our website or other agency.

The counsellor will carry out a telephone assessment, or arrange a suitable time where they ask you some questions before deciding which project and counsellor will benefit you most. They will then arrange a time and place to meet or speak on the phone, usually within 7 days. During this first meeting, you can reflect on what's happening in your life right now and assess how counselling might help.

Don't worry if you haven't all the answers, the counsellor won't either!

While you are waiting to see a counsellor, between sessions or when you feel you need support you can speak to a counsellor on **Lifeline 0808 808 8000**, Contact's confidential Crisis Response counselling helpline free to all callers 24/7 including mobiles.

about Contact

Contact employ professionally qualified counsellors who have extensive experience of working with people facing a wide range of problems.

We also have volunteer counsellors on clinical placement all of whom are also qualified or working towards qualification.

We recognise how difficult it is for people to access independent, confidential counselling close to home. Contact has access to many community sites across the country allowing us to reach out to as many local communities as possible.

- ***- We strive to help people help themselves, especially when life seems too much to cope with alone.***

- ***- Contact counsellors always welcome feedback from clients, parents, carers and referrers.***

- ***- Contact's services are free to everyone.***

- ***- As Contact is a charity donations are always welcome.***

our projects

Contact currently offer four major counselling projects:

Lifeline

Telephone counselling service for people in crisis or despair. Lifeline also offers free face to face and telephone counselling, mentoring, befriending and complimentary therapies.

Community-based counselling

Confidential counselling for people of all ages, based in a safe, local environment.

Further Education College and Schools Counselling

Some Further Education Colleges and Schools have invited Contact to provide counselling to students and staff. Check it out where you study, we may have a clinic on your campus. Contact can also provide whole agency or small group critical incident support on request.

Hard to Talk? Specialist Counselling

When it's hard to find the words to express how you feel we can provide Creative Art Therapy, Music Therapy, Drama Therapy or Play Therapy as well as more specialist support for minority groups such as same sex attracted young people, care leavers or young people involved in the justice system, or from ethnic minorities or victims of violence or abuse.

Lifeline

If you, or someone you know is in distress or despair, no matter what your age or where you live in Northern Ireland, Lifeline is here to help you.

Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to listen and give you the help and support you need, in confidence.

We are experienced in dealing with issues such as suicide prevention, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression and anxiety.

You'll get immediate help over the phone. We can arrange an appointment for face-to-face counselling or complimentary therapies in your local area within 7 days. You may decide to choose telephone counselling.

Lifeline can also put you in touch with follow-up services to ensure you receive the best possible response to your needs.

Lifeline provides crisis support and guidance to families and carers, concerned friends, health professionals, teachers, youth workers, clergy and communities.

Just call Lifeline

calls are free from all landlines and mobiles





community based counselling

Do you feel confused, hurt, angry, no one is listening and no one cares? We care, and will listen.

Contact offers confidential counselling to people of all ages, in a safe environment, in local community sites, where you and your counsellor can take time to explore the issues that are troubling you. You may be worried about trouble at school, home or work, maybe a bereavement, drug or alcohol abuse. We will listen and support you with any issues.

We have experience of supporting thousands of people restore their sense of wellbeing. We will never tell you what to do with your life, or think we know best. We will offer support and new ways to help you recognise your strengths and achieve your goals.

“Just being able to talk to someone who will give support and listen was fantastic” 14 year old, Belfast

Hard to Talk?

specialist counselling

Sometimes it can be hard to find the words to say how we feel.

Contact's team of Creative Therapists offer art, music, play and drama to express feelings and develop understanding of painful and difficult experiences.

You do not have to be good at art, music or drama to work with a Creative Therapist. Your creative work will never be judged.

Your Creative Therapist may help you:

- Discover what you are communicating through your use of art, music, play or drama

- Develop a better understanding of yourself and your situation

- Develop an understanding of how you relate to others around you

Creative Art Therapists work with groups or individuals and with young people under 25 and older people who may find it hard to talk.

Working alongside the Creative Therapy team, our most experienced counsellors and psychotherapists support young people through the care and youth justice systems. We also provide therapy for young people whose parents or friends may have issues with their sexual identity, or who may themselves have concerns about sexuality. We also work a lot with young people who have survived bullying, violence and abuse, and young people who may be new residents to NI or from ethnic minorities.

So even if you feel unable to talk about issues that are very distressing, we will make every effort to make sure you feel understood.

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