

FAQ's

Pathways to Hope

What is Pathways to Hope?

Pathways to Hope is a programme of one-to-one therapy and group wellbeing sessions that has been designed specifically by Trauma Healing Together. As part of Pathways to Hope, you will be offered 24 sessions of trauma-focused counselling and a series of group wellbeing sessions. These will run alongside each other, and you will be expected to attend both. As part of the group wellbeing sessions, you will be given the opportunity to engage in 3 or more different types of activities. These activities are focused on helping you to discover new interests and develop new coping strategies for your mental health.

Before you book your wellbeing modules, you will be provided with a full breakdown of what the activities will be. The reason we include different activities is that we understand that what works for one person, may not work for another. We don't expect people to like everything but simply ask you to be open to giving something a go and perhaps even having fun!

What is the purpose of offering group wellbeing sessions and counselling at the same time?

Therapy is only one part of the healing journey and while it can help you to process your trauma and reduce your symptoms, we want to make sure that you are equipped with resources which allow you to maintain your mental health once the programme has come to an end. We understand that for some people, being in a group can be challenging and triggering so we have designed Pathways to Hope to ensure that you always have a safe space to explore and talk about this. Your counsellor may also help you to consolidate and utilise the coping strategies you have learned during the group wellbeing sessions as a way to support you to process your trauma safely.

What happens after the Pathways to Hope has ended?

When you have completed your counselling, you will become a 'Graduate Client'. As such, you will still be able to book group wellbeing modules even though your therapy has ended. You can continue to do this for as long as you wish subject to a small annual fee.

Throughout your time with Trauma Healing Together, both as a client and Graduate client, you will have the opportunity to book a one-to-one check in session with Janine, the Project Officer. The aim of these sessions is to provide further information on modules and help you with onward referrals to partner agencies.

We also offer Graduate Clients the opportunity to train with us to become Peer Group Facilitators and use their experience of Pathways to Hope to support new clients. This can lead the way to further training and development such as mental health first aid.

Do I need to book wellbeing modules now?

Information on how to book modules is included in this pack and we recommend that you book 3 modules to begin with. However, if you are struggling to do this and need help, we will be able to assist you in your initial group session which you will be required to attend before starting the wellbeing sessions. Sometimes you may feel that the activities available aren't to your interests; we encourage you to give new things a go as this is a great opportunity to try new things for free.

Group Wellbeing Sessions

What can I expect on my first day of the group wellbeing session?

Before you start the wellbeing modules which you have booked, you will be required to attend 3 initial group sessions that are aimed at introducing you to Pathways to Hope. These sessions will provide you with practical information e.g. help to book modules if you are struggling, as well as giving you the opportunity to speak to our Peer Group Facilitators who have been through Pathways to Hope themselves. You will also have the opportunity to create a 'Safety Case/ Self-Care Kit' which can be used throughout your time with Trauma Healing Together, participate in some activities and get to know the team and some fellow clients.

Are the wellbeing sessions group therapy?

The sessions are not group therapy, and you will not be expected to share anything deeply personal. Some of the activities are designed to be reflective and prompt you to explore your feelings but this does not need to be shared with the group if you do not wish to. It is important to be mindful of the fact that talking about traumatic events in a group may be triggering for some. We have designed the sessions to be a safe environment where you can focus on building your goals and confidence and the counselling to be a place where you can safely process your trauma.

Will I have to talk in the group?

We understand that talking to group of strangers can be a very daunting experience for many, especially in the first few sessions. We have designed the sessions so that you will never be put on the spot and expected to speak. We may plan some group activities and icebreakers but within this, you can contribute as much or as little as you like. Simply turning up is the most that we ask of you, but we hope that by the end, we will have created a place where you can feel safe to comfortably express yourself.

What do I do if I feel overwhelmed?

If you feel overwhelmed, you are free to leave at any point. Just let the Peer Group Facilitator know that you need a break. If you don't feel you can come back, just either let them know this in person or send them an email. The Peer Group Facilitators are there to support you.

How many people will be attending the sessions?

We understand the importance of keeping the group small, so we have restricted the group to 10 people.

How do I contact you if I am not able to make a session or need to ask a question?

If you are not able to make a session, please contact our admin team at clients@traumahealingtogether.org or 01738 248283 who will pass on the message to your group facilitator. We understand that things come up and that you may not be able to attend some sessions but do encourage you to book and attend as many group wellbeing sessions as you can.

If you have any concerns about attending the group, please speak to Janine, our Project Officer who you will meet in your first session.

Contacting us in regard to your counselling sessions is a slightly different process and details of this can be found in your counselling contract.

Will my peer facilitator speak to my counsellor about what happens in the group and vice versus?

We understand there may be matters that come up in wellbeing sessions and counselling that you may wish to talk about with your counsellor, peer facilitator or a staff member of the charity. Some of the things you might like to disclose could include activities that you found difficult and/or triggering, practical issues, or conflict you have experienced with someone in your group or a member of staff/volunteer or workshop leader. If the worry or concern is related to a person, and if you feel comfortable to do so, we always encourage you to talk to the individual concerned in the first instance.

Regardless of what the concern relates to, whoever you choose to speak to about it will always ask you what you would like them to do with this information and whether you would like it to be shared. If you say no, then it will remain confidential, and no action will be taken. The only people it may be shared with is their supervisor who will ensure that it is not passed on. The only time we may need to breach this is if we consider it to be a safeguarding issue, but if this is the case, we will always speak to you in the first instance.

Counselling

Will I need to tell my therapist everything that has happened to me in the first session?

No. Talking about trauma can be overwhelming and scary, especially to a stranger. Your therapist will always go at your pace, and you get to decide when and what you tell them. For many, trusting people can take time to build up and there is never expectation from us that this should happen instantly.

What can I expect at my first session of counselling?

Counselling will take place at our offices which are in the basement of 5A Atholl Place, Perth, PH15NE. There is a sign that says Trauma Healing Together on the railings outside. Please go down the stairs and knock the door and your counsellor will greet you. They will start with going over any questions or concerns you have about counselling including the contract. They will also discuss any forms that are required to be filled in. You will work with your counsellor collaboratively to decide on the starting point. This starting point might even be saying very little, which is ok. It takes time to build up trust and your counsellor fully understands this and will never pressure you to talk about something that you are not ready to talk about.

How can I find out more information about my counsellor?

We have enclosed some information about your counsellor in this pack. Many of our counsellors are students and will be providing counselling to Trauma Healing Together as part of their course placement. Our recruitment processes are extremely rigorous ensuring that we only accept students who are highly capable. All counsellors whether student or qualified receive extensive trauma training before working with us.

Is it normal to be worried about attending counselling?

Yes, this is completely normal and it's very rare to ever meet someone who is not nervous to some degree. Attending counselling to work through your difficulties takes a lot of courage and taking the first step is always the hardest. Your counsellor knows this and will do everything they can to make you feel comfortable.

Will the number of sessions I have be reduced if I am sick, on holiday or have an emergency?

While it is important for clients to attend regularly, we understand that sometimes things happen which are unavoidable. If you miss a session and have a valid reason, you will still receive the number of sessions you are entitled to. If you continually miss sessions, we will contact you and discuss options or any adaptations we can do in order to make it easier for you to attend.

How will my counsellor contact me?

They will contact you via our counselling system which is called Kiku. You will receive an email asking you to sign up to it which is optional but is useful for managing your appointments and personal details. If you chose not to sign up to it, you will still receive Kiku messages sent to you by your counsellor directly to your personal email account. If you have given us permission to do so, you will also receive appointment reminders via email and text message. You can log on to your Kiku account at any point to amend your preferences. You can find more information on how to use Kiku in your information pack.

How can I contact my counsellor directly?

You can also contact your counsellor directly by logging in to Kiku.

Can you tell me about how you use WhatsApp?

We also have a specific WhatsApp community group for clients. Through this, you will be able to get information about your group sessions as well as any last-minute changes or cancellations to the sessions e.g. because of weather or sickness etc. When signing the contract with your therapist, you will have the option to opt into this. You will also get this information via email to ensure that it has reached you so there is no need to be added to the WhatsApp group should you not wish to. If you wish at any time to opt out, please let us know.