

iOH Peer Support Line

The iOH Peer Support Line is a confidential, free-phone helpline for individuals at any stage of their Occupational Health career to call and discuss their problems with an experienced, empathetic peer who recognises the pressures of Occupational Health practice.

Our confidential professional support service, run by a team of volunteer Occupational Health professionals and advisors from different professional sectors, is the first port of call for all members' enquiries. We focus on supporting health professionals in their daily practice and professional development by providing practical, pragmatic and evidence-based advice.

You will be able to talk through your problems in a dedicated non-judgemental space, so you can start to feel some relief, clarity and control over the issues affecting you. Support will be given, where relevant, to help you reach a resolution or take action. This support may include sound boarding, signposting, constructive criticism and an opportunity to evaluate risks and benefits of potential courses of action.

Self-referrals will indicate the general topic or theme to be discussed and initially be responded to via email, with volunteers scheduling an appointment for a telephone or skype call.

Calls are completely confidential in line with health care professional codes of conduct.

We can assist with many types of enquiries including:

Calls can be on a range of issues including workplace pressure, bullying, ill health, financial worries, bereavement or anxiety about exams. No issue is too trivial.

- Continuing professional development (CPD)
 - Advice and support on recording CPD entries and opportunity to carry out reflective practice and participatory CPD
 - Practice related feedback from an experienced colleague including an event or experience in your professional practice or an instance of CPD
 - Facility to gain participatory continuing professional development hours via a 121 discussion with a professional colleague
- Building and maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders
 - Professional support with day to day practice and dealing with professional colleagues and customers, e.g. HR
- Overcoming human resources issues
- Occupational Health careers support - whether you are just starting out in your career in Occupational Health returning to practice and changing your sector of practice.
- Support for online services - help with using the iOH website, virtual networks and local practice forums.
- Registration support - help with accessing resources, advice on how to build your portfolio and how to prepare for your Professional Revalidation or Assessment.
- Curriculum & Practice knowledge

- Occupational Health practice - current and best practice as well as new areas of Occupational Health practice and service developments.
- Occupational Health legal and ethical issues – peer support when exercising professional judgement and dealing with ethical dilemmas and professional issues
- Clinical aspects of Occupational Health - clinical enquiries (in line with the relevant professional codes of conduct NMC & HCPC), hazard identification, risk management & travel advice
- Interpretation and implementation of policy.

Support service volunteers:

- Masters level qualification or equivalent with documented prior experiential learning and practice (APEL) in Occupational Health
- Verified professional qualification or equivalent APEL
- Interview via inbox exercise
- Problem solving skills
- Active listening skills
- Coaching skills

Bibliography

Optometrists, A., & Today, O. (2019). AOP Peer Support Line - helpline for optical professionals. Aop.org.uk. Retrieved 21 April 2019, from <https://www.aop.org.uk/advice-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/peer-support-line>

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FAQs

Why did we launch the Peer Support Line?

The Peer Support Line has been developed in response to iOH member feedback that increasing work pressures are causing higher levels of stress and anxiety in the Occupational Health profession. Members cited a need for a greater focus on mental wellbeing and confidential support to help those in the profession avoid feeling overwhelmed by practice life.

The line is available to individuals at any stage of their Occupational Health career and launched on 2 May 2017.

What are the aims of the Peer Support Line?

Our vision is that Occupational Health students and practitioners never feel alone in a time of need.

Our mission is to provide a confidential and dedicated space for individuals at any stage of their Occupational Health career to talk through their issues, feelings and emotions with an empathetic, non-judgemental, listening peer.

Who are the Peer Support Line volunteers?

The Peer Support Line volunteers are experienced iOH members who are dedicated to supporting and strengthening our community of Occupational Health professionals. Many of our volunteers applied for the role based on their own experience of needing or using this kind of listening support in the past. All our volunteers understand the benefits of having someone listen to you who is impartial and has no personal agenda.

Do I have to be an iOH member to call the line?

Yes. Your email will need to correspond with the email registered with your membership.

How long are the calls?

The calls will continue for 20 minutes per call to give the caller the opportunity to consider, reflect on, own and self-manage their issue.

Can users leave feedback?

Yes. They can leave feedback about their experience here. If callers wish to leave feedback about the service, this is also anonymous and no personal details are requested.