

Spaces and Places within Maternity Services



Counselling Room
Letterkenny University Hospital



Pregnancy Loss
Research Group



National
Women & Infants
Health Programme

What is the Counselling Room?

A space was identified and designed to provide a non-clinical counselling room sensitive to the needs of people being diagnosed with a pregnancy loss or fetal anomaly in the Antenatal/Fetal Assessment Clinic.

The Antenatal Clinic / Fetal Assessment Unit are completely separate to the Maternity and Gynaecology Units. Previous to this the Fetal Assessment unit was on the Gynaecology Ward. The development of the new unit provided us with an opportunity to include a counselling room from the beginning of the project.

We furnished the room with two tub chairs, a couch and carefully selected artwork and plants. We wanted to create a warm environment for parents where they had privacy when receiving bad news. It provides them with a safe space to take some time for themselves after receiving bad news.

This room is also used for women continuing a pregnancy with a known anomaly where they may not want to sit in the main clinic waiting area. It provides a private space where the Bereavement Midwife can meet people when attending clinics to provide support.



What prompted this development?

Feedback from service users in relation to having nowhere private to gather themselves following a poor prognosis or diagnosis of a loss and people continuing a pregnancy with a poor prognosis not having a private place to wait when attending clinics prompted the development of this space.

The redesign of the Fetal Assessment Unit/Antenatal Clinic here in Letterkenny afforded us the opportunity to create a space for a counselling room which is in close proximity to the Fetal Assessment Unit Department. Its location also ensures that parents do not have to go back through the waiting area when leaving the clinic as there is a separate exit.

The project included the construction of a new separate modular building specifically for the Antenatal Clinic and Fetal Assessment Unit.



What does this space achieve?

This was needed to afford people a private safe space where they could take some time when they had received news of a pregnancy loss/fetal anomaly.

Who was involved?

Service user, Director of Midwifery, Assistant Director of Midwifery, Midwives, Fetal Assessment Unit Department, Health Service Executive Estates Department, Business Manager, Chaplaincy Department. There was no difficulty with buy in as all were involved from the beginning and understood the rationale for the need for this room.

Feedback received

Feedback has been very positive. Parents have voiced that having the room gives them the privacy to take some time before leaving the clinic. They have also have commented on how nice the room is and how it is nice that it is non-clinical.

Learning from this project




Involvement of all stakeholders from the beginning of the project. Thankfully we had no issues with buy in. Once everyone understood the rationale for providing a space for the needs of bereaved parents there was no issue with buy in. It can be harder once a project is started to try to bring people on board.

Project funding

Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit Innovation Grant. The application process was simple. We had to provide three quotes from three different furniture shops. They have since changed that. If the quote is under €5,000 there is no need for any further quotes which will make it easier going forward. The grant covered the complete cost of the furniture and furnishings, i.e. chairs, couch, paintings, nest of tables, plant and lamp.

More information

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