

Emotional impact of sight loss

Support throughout central vision loss

The biggest cause of sight loss in this country is macular disease. Coping with your emotions can be hard.

**No one need face macular degeneration alone.
For information and support call 0300 3030 111.**

More than half a million people in the UK have a macular condition. The most common is age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Many areas of life are affected by macular disease such as reading, writing, watching television, driving and recognising faces. It is natural that this can have a significant impact on the way people think and feel about themselves and the changes to their everyday life.

One of the first feelings many people have is that of isolation.

Shock, anger and disbelief are also common emotions. This can be followed by feelings of low self-esteem or depression. In extreme cases people can even experience suicidal thoughts.

Some commonly expressed worries include:

- **“I don’t want to be a burden to my family and friends”.** Senior members of the family, who are more used to giving help and advice can suddenly find themselves needing support.

They sometimes struggle to come to terms with this.

- **“People will think I’m stupid”.**

Poor vision can affect even simple tasks. People can become more accident prone and may worry about how this is seen by others.

- **“I feel a fraud”.**

While macular disease can cause serious sight loss, to other people the person affected looks completely normal.

The impact of central vision loss is often not fully understood.

This is partly because peripheral vision is not affected and so people with macular disease may still be able to see things “out of the corner of their eye”. However, being described as ‘blind’ can make some people feel very uncomfortable.

Family and friends of a person with macular disease can also be affected by significant changes in emotions.

Many people appreciate being able to talk about their feelings in a safe and confidential way to someone outside their immediate family or circle of friends.

The Macular Society has a range of services to help you share your feelings and, where appropriate, explore future possibilities and new perspectives.

Helpline

Our specialist staff will listen, offer support and provide information and advice about any aspect of central vision loss. Calls are confidential.

**Call 0300 3030 111
Mon-Fri 9-5.**

**help@
macularsociety.org**

The helpline can tell you about our other services too:

Befriending

A one to one telephone service available to anyone living with macular disease. Your volunteer befriender will call regularly for a social chat offering a friendly listening ear.

Local Groups

Friendly, local self help groups meet regularly across the country. They are led by experienced and dedicated volunteers. There are also groups

especially for younger, working age, members. Come along and meet the experts in living with macular disease!

Telephone Counselling

People experiencing significant distress can use our confidential, free telephone counselling service. Our counsellors are fully qualified and are members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

Find out more from our helpline. If you ask to be referred to the counselling service you will receive a call

from the service co-ordinator for an informal assessment.

Membership

Many people join the Macular Society so that they can make a difference.

Your support enables us to provide our services and helps us fund research into a cure so that one day we can overcome macular disease.

For more information on membership call 01264 350551 or email info@macularsociety.org

If you've found this leaflet useful please consider making a donation to support our work.


Macular Society

Support throughout central vision loss

Macular Society

PO Box 1870

Andover

SP10 9AD

01264 350 551

www.macularsociety.org

info@macularsociety.org

Registered Charity Number 1001198.

SC042015 in Scotland. Macular Society is the trading name of the Macular Disease Society.

© Macular Society 2013. MS021