

Information about counselling

'In the moment support'

Talking about our mental health and getting support when we need it is something that is spoken about more today than ever before. We hear about counselling all the time in the media, but what actually happens in a counselling session? This article is designed to give someone considering counselling an idea of what to expect.

What is counselling?

Counselling can be helpful for a wide range of life experiences and issues, and each person considering counselling will have their own reasons for doing so. For some people it may be to work on ways to cope with issues such as depression, stress, anxiety and low self-esteem. For others, the aim could be to enhance their understanding of themselves or others and improving or influencing change in a relationship. Sometimes we experience challenging life events and find it difficult to talk to friends, family or loved ones, so having someone impartial to explore this with can be very effective.

Many of us have never had the experience of being properly listened to and heard. This alone can be powerfully supportive and affirming.

While clients needn't be in a crisis to benefit from counselling, people often seek counselling because they are experiencing painful emotions such as anger, sadness, guilt, shame or regret to the extent that these feelings are impacting on day to day life, or perhaps feel overwhelming. It can be tough to talk about personal feelings and it is normal to feel vulnerable or even a little scared. Sometimes clients believe they should be able to cope with what they are experiencing, as they compare themselves to others who seem to be able to manage without difficulty. Every person has their own unique life history and while we will all encounter situations we find challenging, the specific challenge for each individual will be as diverse as those individuals themselves. Taking the step to engage in counselling when we encounter a challenging situation is a courageous thing to do.

The focus of counselling will be the issues the client has chosen to share and work on. The counsellor will not impose a predetermined agenda, instead they will respond to what the client has expressed they wish to work on and support the client to maintain a focus on their chosen goals.

Our counsellors are professionally registered and qualified, with a wealth of experience. They have all worked with a wide range of people who are navigating and making improvements to their lives. Our counsellors provide safe, non-judgemental and confidential spaces for our clients to explore their concerns as openly and honestly as they wish.

Confidentiality

We place the highest priority on protecting the confidentiality and privacy of our clients and believe this is essential for building a trusting and effective therapeutic relationship. Everything discussed in counselling is confidential and our counsellors are bound by strict codes of professional ethics.

In the rare event a client discloses that they intend to harm themselves or someone else, the counsellor will explore this with the client and may feel it is necessary to involve another person or organisation, such as the client's GP or other relevant support, in order to ensure their safety. In the event a client in a safety critical role discloses information that has the potential to impact their capacity to carry out their duties, this will be reported to their organisation. Unless it is an emergency situation, the counsellor will discuss their concerns with the client before involving anyone else. The client will be made aware of any information that would be passed on.

In the highly unusual situation where a client discloses information regarding terrorist acts, drug trafficking, abuse of a child/vulnerable adult or being involved in a hit and run motoring offence, counsellors are required by law to disclose information to a relevant third party. In this extreme situation, the counsellor may be legally bound to not inform the client in order to protect public safety.

Single session counselling support

This takes the form of a single counselling session to provide support in the here and now.

The first step is to call our Support Line, where you can talk to a counsellor – it may be that a counsellor is immediately available, or we will arrange to call you back at a time that is convenient to you. During the conversation, the counsellor will listen carefully and explore the course of action that may be most useful to the client at that point. The counsellor may provide the client with helpful information, direct them towards additional resources or discuss strategies or techniques to help them cope with current challenges.

The counsellor will help the client to identify and use their existing skills, coping strategies and ideas - focusing on strengths rather than the problem itself. The approach is concerned with supporting a client to find more effective responses to the issues they bring to counselling.

After the initial counselling call, the client may feel it is helpful to arrange a follow up call with the counsellor a few days later to review how things have gone and consider how to move further forward.

Where it is not possible to completely resolve an issue, for example, personal loss or significant change outside the client's control, counselling can really help to process our feelings and help us consider ways of coping with and planning for the future.

Whatever your personal goals or challenges, we encourage you to contact the clinical services team to see how we may be able to support you directly, as well as help you identify further resources that may also be of help for the longer term.



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