



Garry
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Therapy
Services

What Is Counselling and What Can I Expect?

'Counselling', 'Therapy' and 'Psychotherapy' are umbrella terms that are used to talk about a range of talking therapies. Many people have an idea of what they think counselling or therapy is all about, but often the reality is something different. Many clients finish their course of therapy and say that it was nothing like they expected it to be. This guide not only provides some information about counselling but will also, hopefully, challenge some myths.

In this guide, I explore important questions about what counselling is but also, what it isn't. For many people who haven't experienced counselling or therapy, the idea can seem quite alien or mystifying. With this in mind, I take some time to explain what your counsellor will and won't do, but also what might happen inside the counselling room.

It's usual to feel a sense of apprehension when starting a course of therapy. I hope this guide helps answer some of the questions you might have.

Counselling Provides...

- ✓ An opportunity to meet with a trained and experienced professional in a structured and boundaried way, to talk about your problems, thoughts, feelings and behaviours. This can help you understand why you feel or behave like you do and why you might respond in the way you do.
- ✓ A safe, confidential, therapeutic relationship based on trust, empathy, acceptance and non-judgemental respect.
- ✓ Structured appointments that are dedicated to you alone. This is regular time just for you, to explore the issues you want to. In this way, talking to a counsellor is not like talking to a friend, where you might find yourself talking about each other's experiences.
- ✓ An opportunity to explore ways of coping with different demands in your life and also to explore any changes you might be looking for.
- ✓ A chance to say whatever you want to, in a way that you want to, whilst knowing that what you say is confidential.

Your Counsellor Won't...

- Give you their advice or tell you what to do.
- Criticise or judge you for thinking, feeling or behaving in a particular way.
- Prescribe, or give advice about, drugs or medicine.

What Sort of Problems Can You See a Counsellor for?

People see counsellors for a wide range of different issues including bereavement and loss, anxiety, depression and stress. Many people go to see a counsellor because they feel 'stuck' or unhappy in their lives without necessarily understanding why. For some people, counselling can help you make sense of your thoughts and feelings around major life events such as a career change, starting a family or starting or ending a relationship.

What is a Counselling Session Like?

Counselling sessions are held in a private room (this could be a physical room or online) where you can't be overheard. Your counsellor will

work hard to make sure you are comfortable both physically and emotionally so that you feel able to talk openly. Unlike some popular media images, most counsellors won't ask you to lie on a couch, usually, you sit in comfortable chairs.

At the beginning of the session, most counsellors will ask you how you are feeling or how your week has been. As you talk, your counsellor will ask questions and respond to what you say, to help you understand where your thoughts and feelings come from and possibly make connections with events from earlier in your life. This can be an empowering experience as it can lead to greater self-awareness.

During the session, you might also explore techniques and strategies for helping you cope with what's going on in your life. This work can often bring about reductions in stress and anxiety quite quickly.

As well as talking about the issues that brought you to counselling in the first place, you might find yourself talking about:

- ✓ Relationships with family and friends.
- ✓ Things in your life that make you happy, sad, or that cause you stress and anxiety.
- ✓ Your career and your current job.
- ✓ Your experiences growing up and your relationship with your parents or siblings.
- ✓ What you want to do in the future.

Above all, you won't be forced into talking about something you don't feel comfortable talking about.

Seeing a Counsellor Isn't a Sign of Weakness

Your mental health is really important. Accepting that you might need some help getting through something that life has thrown at you, is a sign of huge emotional intelligence and strength. After all, most people would agree that if you had recurring bad headaches, you should see your GP. Why should your mental health be any less important?

About the Author



Garry Newman is a psychotherapeutic counsellor based in Wokingham. He provides therapy services face-to-face, online and on the telephone.

Offering a safe, confidential and non-judgemental space for clients to work through their issues and explore the changes to their lives that they are looking for.

For more information or to contact me for a free initial consultation, follow the links below.



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