

Counselling at Living Life

Entering a counselling relationship is an important decision. In order to help you with that decision we have put together some information about counselling which we hope will be helpful.

WHY PEOPLE COME FOR COUNSELLING

People seek counselling and psychotherapy for many reasons. Usually it is because individuals have problems which they would like to talk about with someone other than family or friends. People coming to counselling may be experiencing over-whelming emotions e.g.

anxiety and depression, anger and resentment, or may have low self-esteem. The range of difficulties is very broad and may include stress, relationship problems, bereavement, depression, family issues, alcohol and drug misuse, sexual abuse etc.

AIMS OF COUNSELLING

The aim of counselling is to provide time and attention to help the individual to define for themselves the nature of the problems they are facing. In doing this they can make decisions about what they can do to reduce the impact of these problems on themselves or those around them. It can also help to bring about the confidence and skills needed to make a change. In the safety of a trusting relationship with someone who is neutral, counselling also helps with working out unhelpful or distressing patterns. It is also about identifying unmet needs and through the supportive relationship with the counsellor working to meet those needs.

Counselling involves talking with someone who can help you find your own solutions to your own problems or empowering you to find more satisfying ways of relating. Counsellors do not give advice. The counsellor's role is that of facilitating change. In addition to talking and listening, counsellors work in different ways and may use different techniques, e.g. journal writing, goal setting, working with the body and with dreams, role play, drawing and art, play with children etc. depending on the needs of the client and the training of the counsellor.

WHAT HAPPENS IN COUNSELLING AT LIVING LIFE?

Counselling takes place in a confidential setting in an environment of respect and trust. It usually happens once a week lasting 50 minutes, on a specific day at an agreed time, thus providing a regular structured time for the work. In counselling the client is expected to attend regularly and participate as fully as they can in the process. It can be short term - 1 to 2 months or longer with a maximum time of 6 months. The length of time depends on the needs of the client and is usually agreed between client and counsellor after an initial period, usually 4 to 6 weeks. Further ongoing reviews will happen to determine the need. Our counsellors can work with an individual or a couple. Some counsellors also work with children and teens. In a general sense, counselling focuses on the here and now and

is often solution-focused and may work with the connection between thinking, feeling and behaviour. *Psychotherapy* is more about looking at deeper patterns and unconscious connections with important life events and relationships from our past and at how they influence the present. Many counsellors nowadays integrate these differing ways of working into their practice.

Our counselling staff will explain the way we work when you meet. Sometimes it happens that the match between the counsellor and client does not work out or that the issue presented is outside the scope of our service. When this happens, it may be necessary to refer out to another counsellor or mental health service.