

Understanding Counselling

What is counselling?

Central to counselling is a helping conversation with someone who offers understanding, acceptance, and honesty.

I am a humanistic counsellor, which means I believe all of us have the potential to lead full and rewarding lives. However sometimes we can get stuck, unsure which way to turn. For me, being a counsellor involves listening in a holistic way, fostering ways of living a fuller life, which is more in touch with both ourselves, and the relationships important to us.

What counselling isn't

Counselling isn't advice, and it isn't about providing solutions.

Rather it is a way of looking in detail at your problems to find your own solutions, and ways of going about things. Counselling involves trying new ways of looking at things, as well as new ways of doing them. Counselling is most successful when it also involves personal change.

What can I expect in a session?

Counselling is a relationship based on trust. In a good counselling relationship you will feel able to share your problems as well as your feelings. This ability to be able to share comes from feeling accepted and heard by your counsellor.

During a typical session you will be doing most of the talking; most counsellors say very little. Although this can feel daunting, most people find once they begin, a 50 minute session will fly by. At intervals during the session your counsellor may reflect something you have said, or ask you a question. These are invitations for you to

reflect some more on the problem you are exploring.

The lightbulb moment is quite common in the counselling room. It is these new ways of understanding which are the building blocks towards 'finding your own solutions' I talked about earlier.

What can counselling help with?

It can help if you are feeling,

- anxious
- depressed
- stressed
- angry
- low in confidence or self-esteem

Counselling can also help if you are having problems coping with,

- relationships
- bereavement
- traumatic experience
- self-harm
- life changes

Getting the most out of counselling

Being willing to make changes is the single biggest factor in how successful therapy is. Reflecting on what you talked about, and putting it into practice is time well spent.

What if I am not happy?

If you feel able, telling your counsellor about what you are unhappy with is usually the best way of dealing with this. In my experience, the people who have told me they were unhappy, have not only helped me work more effectively with them, they have also learnt and grown themselves.