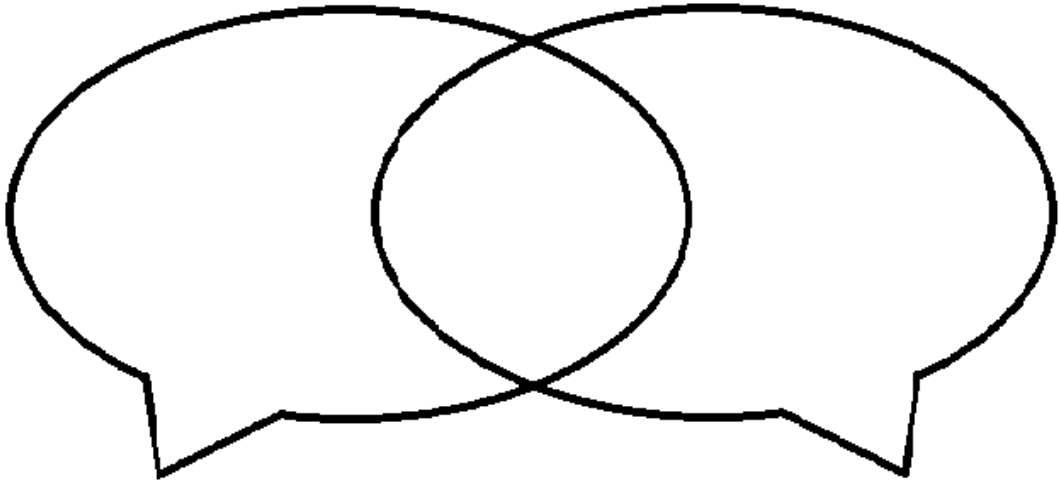


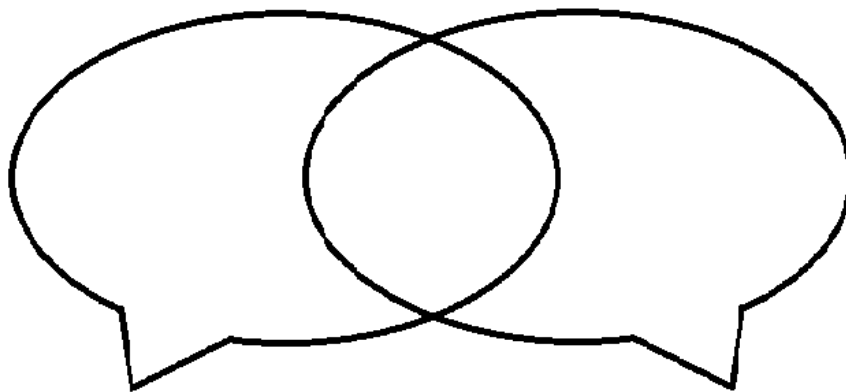


MHM WALES



TalkingConnections

A guide to counselling

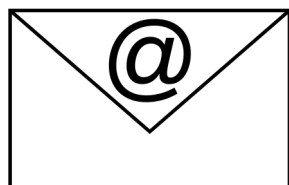


TalkingConnections

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Talking Connections adopts the Code of Ethics & Practice of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

bacp
British Association for
Counselling & Psychotherapy

What is Counselling?

Being self-aware and having the capability to think and feel emotions with clarity and understanding is part and parcel of being human. There is scope for the way we think to become a problem, however, and to affect our emotions. If we go back a few hundred years we can see that psychological issues were approached with fear and unnecessary invasive treatments.

Thanks to the progression of science and technology, we now have a much clearer understanding of the human brain, and are able to look at the issues in a different way.

Today, talking therapies such as counselling are used to help people to come to terms with any problems and difficulties they are facing, with the ultimate aim of overcoming them.

Counselling allows people to discuss their problems and any difficult feelings in a safe, confidential environment. The term can mean different things to different people, but in general it is a process people seek when they want to change something in their lives or explore their thoughts and feelings in more depth.

A counsellor is not there to sit you down and to tell you what to do. Counsellors will instead encourage you to talk about what's bothering you in order to uncover any root causes and identify your specific ways of thinking. The counsellor may then look to create a plan of action with you, to either help you reconcile your issues or help you find ways of coping.

Counselling can be useful for anyone who wants to explore their thoughts and feelings further, as well as for anyone experiencing a problem they are keen to resolve.

How can Counselling help?

The way counselling can help will depend on the person receiving the treatment. For many, just the fact that counselling offers a safe and confidential environment to speak in is all it takes. In life, what we say to others can sometimes have a knock-on effect, altering relationships and the way in which people see each other. Counselling eliminates this effect.

While counsellors may not give you concrete advice or a checklist of things to do to feel better, they will certainly help you to develop your own insight and understanding of your problems by providing you with the tools you need and the support to resolve them on your own.

In the majority of cases, a single session will not be enough to help you to overcome the issues you're facing. Counselling is a journey, and it takes time and effort to work effectively. Many people opt for regular counselling sessions to make the most of the process.

Counselling is empowering and can help you understand yourself and the way you think, which will ultimately help you to develop a clearer understanding of your problems. The more armed with information and insight you are, the easier it will become to navigate your way through any difficulties you're facing so that you can come out the other side feeling more positive .

Counselling can also help you to understand other people's point of view, which can shed light on how you deal with and interpret words and actions.

Common subjects addressed within Talking Connections Counselling sessions include:

Addiction

Wherever there is physical addiction to a substance or activity, there is likely to be a psychological addiction too. Counselling aims to relieve the psychological addiction by exploring the root cause while helping to develop new ways of thinking.

Bereavement

Losing a loved one is a difficult event in anyone's life. The loss can bring up a wide range of emotions including guilt and anger. Some people benefit from speaking openly to a counsellor about their feelings to help ease the process and resolve any remaining issues they might have.

Bullying/Abuse

Being the victim of any form of abuse, whether it's verbal or physical can lead to issues that may affect you all of your life. Counselling can offer victims the chance to seek help from authorities (if appropriate), as well as addressing the psychological repercussions in a safe environment.

Long-term Illness

Suffering from a long-term illness can turn anyone's world upside down. Counselling can help sufferers come to terms with their illness while offering emotional support and coping mechanisms.

Mental Health

Suffering from mental health issues such as Schizophrenia or depression can feel incredibly isolating. Counselling looks to discuss the feelings that arise in conjunction with these kinds of mental health issues as well as to overcome any personal challenges or frustrations.

Relationships

Covering all types of relationships, counselling can be used to discuss issues within families, friendships and couples. This could be anything from a poor relationship with a parent, child or sibling, or issues with domestic violence and abusive relationships.

Trauma

Whether you've been involved in an accident or you have been the victim of abuse, the psychological impact of trauma can last years after the event itself. In a counselling session, trauma victims are encouraged to explore their feelings regarding the incident and look into how these feelings could be resolved or changed.

Other

Feelings of stress, anxiety, low self-esteem are becoming all too common in today's society. Counselling can offer practical advice for overcoming these kinds of issues as well as allowing space to vent your frustrations and feelings.

Types of Therapy

Talking Connections Counselling offers a range of different therapeutic approaches. The type of therapy used will depend on your counsellor's preferences, the issues you are facing, and what needs you have as a person. Most counsellors won't decide on a therapy type until they have found out more about you and the way you think.

The following examples briefly outline some of the most commonly used therapies in counselling:

Behavioural Therapy

The principle idea behind behavioural therapy is that our behaviour is learnt and can essentially be unlearned. This leads behavioural therapy to focus more on the present as opposed to looking back to the past. This type of therapy is therefore best used with those looking to change their behaviour - for example, people with addictions, or those suffering with phobias.

Cognitive Therapy

The way we think often leads to changes in our behaviour, and cognitive therapy looks to address any skewed ways of thinking that may be occurring, eventually aiming to replace them with healthier, more positive thought patterns.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT looks to combine both cognitive therapy and behavioural therapy in order to tackle the thought process and the behaviour that results from these processes. Focussing on the present, CBT is a practical therapy that aims to break down problems into smaller, more manageable issues. This therapy is especially useful for those with more specific problems as it addresses each emotion separately.

Systemic Therapy

Systemic therapy focusses specifically on relationships. The quality of these relationships affects all aspects of our wellbeing, especially our psychological and emotional health.

In systemic therapy, the relationships we have - with family, friends, work colleagues and others - are viewed as systems of interaction. Some can be helpful and some can be unhelpful.

Beyond our immediate relationships, the political community, religious and cultural aspects of our lives are also seen as systems. All of these systems play a large part in shaping who we are and how we live our lives.

Humanistic Therapies

The Humanistic approach is holistic in style, looking at factors such as free will, creativity, and human potential. The therapy type encourages self-exploration, with many varieties focussing on the 'here and now'. Therapies that fall under this umbrella include:

Human Givens therapy, which originates from the belief that we are all born with innate knowledge programmed into us from our genes, and, whatever our cultural background, are the driving force that motivates us in whatever environment we find ourselves in.

Person-Centred therapy, an approach that deals with the ways in which the individual perceives themselves consciously rather than how a counsellor can interpret their unconscious thoughts or ideas.

Gestalt therapy, a psychotherapeutic approach that focuses on insight into gestalts (an organized whole that is perceived as more than the sum of its parts) in patients and their relations to the world, and often uses role playing to aid the resolution of past conflicts.

What to Expect from Talking Connections Counselling

If you have decided to try counselling, you might be feeling anxious about your first session.

Making the decision to get help and address the issues you are facing is an important first step and should be commended.

Knowing what to expect from a counselling session should help you feel more prepared and a little less nervous.

In your first session, it is likely that your counsellor will ask you some questions in order to gain an understanding of what's worrying you and the way you thought processes work. All of the information you give here will be used to help you in future sessions.

Some questions your counsellor might ask you include:

Why are you seeking counselling?

You will more than likely be asked what it is that has brought you here. This is your opportunity to discuss exactly why you are there and what you hope to gain from counselling.

What is your current situation and personal history?

It is important to let your counsellor know your current situation; this includes day-to-day issues you are facing and even your work and home life. Discussing your personal history will give your counsellor a chance to understand more about you as a person and why these issues may have occurred.

What symptoms are you experiencing?

Whether these are physical or psychological, it is important to discuss your symptoms with your counsellor.

It is best to be honest and open when answering these questions in order to get the most out of your sessions.

During your counselling experience you should aim to build a trusting relationship with your counsellor so that you feel safe and confident discussing your worries.

If for any reason you don't feel comfortable talking about your problems with your current counsellor, it is perfectly acceptable to look for another counsellor.

Your counsellor should establish some clear boundaries when you begin your sessions that will cover the following:

- **Dates and times of counselling sessions**
- **Confidentiality agreement**
- **Clarification of the professional nature of the counsellor/client relationship**
- **If, how, and when the counsellor can be contacted outside of sessions**
- **The counselling process**

Don't give up

The counselling process often requires you to discuss upsetting and painful memories. Bringing these things up can feel difficult to start with and can make you feel worse. This process is necessary to move forward and, in time, you should start to feel better.

To get the most from your sessions you should aim to make them consistent. Some sessions will feel more helpful than others, but it is important to realise that everything your counsellor is doing is designed to help you in the long run, even if it doesn't feel like it in the beginning.

It is also worth remembering that counselling is not a quick fix and that your counsellor will not be able to tell you what to do.

The process requires a strong relationship between you and your counsellor and a degree of effort on your part. These two elements together create a successful method to help you resolve your issues.