

REBECCA WELLS

Integrative Counsellor

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Information for parents/guardians about counselling

Counselling provides the opportunity to talk about things that are of concern, in confidence, with a qualified Counsellor. What is spoken about will depend on the individual, but common themes are stress, relationships, change, loss, and distressing, traumatic events. I am a professionally qualified BACP Integrative Counsellor with 20 years experience of working with children and young people, with a range of complex needs. I adhere to BACP's ethical guidelines and I hold relevant insurance. I am trained to listen without judging and to help children and young people explore their thoughts and feelings about whatever is concerning them.

Few of us are able to work well when we are stressed or unhappy. The impact of distressing or difficult situations can be felt even more acutely by children and young people than by adults. My experience is that young people find counselling useful in the same way as adults. If children and young people are able to receive emotional support from a qualified professional, they will have greater opportunity to fulfil their potential. Counselling may be for a few sessions, or longer term, each session lasting 50 minutes. It is reviewed every 6 weeks between the Counsellor, young person and parent or guardian where appropriate.

Just because your child is accessing counselling does not mean that you have failed as a parent/guardian. We all experience occasions when it feels hard to speak to those closest to us about things which are bothering us. Often this can be because we don't want to worry those we love best, or because we want help thinking things through with someone unbiased. The Counsellor will not be judging you or your child, but looking to help them find their way through whatever is troubling them.

An essential feature of counselling is that the information disclosed is treated confidentially, unless there are concerns that your child or young person may be at significant risk of harm, or someone they know may be at risk of harm. Confidentiality enables the young person to open up and share feelings without fear of blame or reprisals. It is also a time when it is acceptable to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere. This includes not discussing the work with parents, unless the young person requests or gives consent for this. I acknowledge that this isn't an easy situation for parents, and it is quite natural for you to feel anxious about what may be being said in the sessions, but ensuring the confidentiality of the work is crucial for establishing trust so that the young person feels confident to speak openly and freely about what is concerning

them. I hold a review every 6th session where one or both parents/carers are invited into the end of the session, this is an opportunity for us to give each other feedback and discuss next steps.

Sometimes I will identify the need for a piece of information to be shared which may not be surrounding a significant risk but it could make a difference to the child or young person if their parent or carer knew. In this instance I will first empower the young person to say for themselves, if they don't feel able to do this then I will seek permission from them to share the information appropriately instead.

My experience shows that the most helpful thing a parent can do is to show an acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful activity, and to show an interest if their son/daughter wishes to talk about it, but not to press them if they don't.

All information about the counselling work undertaken is kept on a secure electronic record keeping system, in line with current data protection regulations, which can only be accessed by the Counsellor. Notes of the sessions are also kept on this system but only the Counsellor has access to these. This information will be held for 7 years and then disposed of in an appropriate manner that ensures the preservation of confidentiality. All records and information remain the property of the counselling service. The service works within the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP). If there is any cause for complaint, you or your child are welcome to contact the BACP at any point.

Here are some comments made by young people who have been to counselling:

"Having counselling has helped me a lot. I have been able to discuss my problems instead of locking them away, which is what I used to do. It has been a very big help to me." "It helped me to understand my problems and to overcome them." "It really helped me to talk more to my family and people around me that I could talk to." "The counselling has helped me to feel confident in myself." "I don't feel ashamed to admit that I need help because now I know that I am not the only one that needs support sometimes".

If after reading this you would like more information, please feel free to contact me on the contact details below.

Kindest Regards

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