

ascend

Common Questions:

1. “Who will know that I am having counselling?”

We recognise the need for confidentiality when it comes to considering counselling support. The pastoral team will be aware when they refer you and arrange payment, but no names are put on invoices and this information is not shared beyond the pastoral team. Your counsellor/therapist does not feedback any information about your sessions to Faith Nurture at any stage.

2. “Do I need counselling/therapy?”

There is a common notion that counselling or therapy is only for those whose life is ‘in pieces’, and the result is that often we wait too long before seeking therapeutic support. There are many valid reasons for seeking counselling support and these include:

- Feeling sad and angry more often than you want to
- Losing interest in the things you used to enjoy
- Loss of a loved one – either because of bereavement, relationship breakdown, substance abuse etc
- Loss of something else significant eg role, money,
- Experience of abuse whether that is physical, mental, emotional or spiritual
- Experienced a major trauma – traffic accident, personal attack, natural disaster
- If you or someone you love is struggling with depression, anxiety, other mental ill health

The above is not a comprehensive list and there are many other reasons why people choose to engage in counselling.

Reasons why now might be a good time to consider counselling:

- **You often feel overwhelmed** - often we are not even sure why we feel stressed every day but yet the sense of overwhelm is increasing. Counselling is not just for when we feel sad, it can also really help with stress and anxiety.
- **You feel you are not making good choices** – damaging behaviours are often connected to deep-seated beliefs we have about ourselves. Counselling can help us recognise these core beliefs and find ways to change them.
- **You feel stuck in a rut** – often we find ourselves stuck in a loop that might not be terrible, but at the same time is not what we want either. Counselling can give you space and time to explore unhelpful patterns and help you understand what is causing these.
- **You feel no one understands** – feeling misunderstood can lead to alienation and loneliness.
- **Your emotions are increasingly out of control and you show disproportionate responses** – when our emotional responses are not a match to what triggers them it is often because we

have suppressed emotions that are fighting to come to the surface and be dealt with. These can be unpacked with the help of a counsellor.

- **You crave a new perspective** – a counsellor can provide an unbiased perspective and is not invested in anything but helping you find answers that work for you personally.
- **You just need to feel listened to** – In ministry it is easy to find yourself in situations where we are struggling with problems we can't talk to others about.
- **You want to understand why you do the things you do, think the things you think, and feel the things you feel** – working with a counsellor can be like having a clear and fresh looking glass and can provide an opportunity to get to know yourself again.
- **You want to increase your self-esteem** – counselling can help you identify what is stopping you from feeling good about yourself.
- **You suspect your relationships could be better than what they are** – these might be relationships with spouses or partners, with colleagues, children etc.
- **You feel fine a lot of the time but are prone to low moods** – deciding to get counselling support before you hit rock bottom can be a good idea as often you can catch yourself before the danger of falling to pieces.

There isn't an exact or right time to seek counselling support, just as there is not one single reason to go. We are all unique, and emotional and mental stress is as individual as we are. If you want to talk about this further please do contact the pastoral team for confidential advice.

3. "How do I know what type of counselling/therapy is best for me?"

Counselling can seem daunting, and it can be difficult to know what is best and what to expect. It can help to know what the different types of counselling therapies are and how they work to help you. Below we will describe the 3 main approaches, how they work and how they may be useful. Although these are three of the most common types of counselling therapies, we are able to offer more specialist support depending on the situation.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)

The main focus of CBT is to address and work with dysfunctional emotions and behaviours through goal-orientated and task-based work. This work is based on the premise that changing negative or maladaptive thinking can facilitate changes in behaviour. The therapist will work with the client to aid them in changing thought patterns and beliefs such as catastrophising (the irrational thought that things are much worse than they actually are), magnification of the negative aspects of everyday life and over-generalising with more adaptive, realistic and positive thoughts and actions. This approach to therapy follows a structured model whereby specific techniques and concepts are presented during each session. Also, although this kind of therapy is directive the therapist will not tell you *what* to do, but will show you options of *how* to do it.

What issues can CBT be useful for?

In work with adults CBT has been shown to be beneficial in working with a range of presenting concerns such as:

- Anxiety disorders (Phobias etc.)
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Substance misuse
- Personality disorders

CBT is widely available throughout the UK and often involves interactive computer-based tasks in conjunction with face-to-face work with a therapist. CBT tends to be briefer and more time-limited than some other options.

Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

Psychodynamic psychotherapy draws on theories and practices of analytical psychology and psychoanalysis. It is a therapeutic process which helps patients understand and resolve their problems by increasing awareness of their inner world and its influence over relationships both past and present. It differs from most other therapies in aiming for deep seated change in personality and emotional development.

Psychodynamic therapy aims to help people with serious psychological disorders to understand and change complex, deep-seated and often unconsciously based emotional and relationship problems thereby reducing symptoms and alleviating distress. However, it is not limited only to those with mental health problems. Many people who experience a loss of meaning in their lives or who are seeking a greater sense of fulfilment may be helped by psychodynamic psychotherapy.

Sometimes people seek help for specific reasons such as eating disorders, psycho-somatic conditions, obsessional behaviour, or phobic anxieties. At other times help is sought because of more general underlying feelings of depression or anxiety, difficulties in concentrating, dissatisfaction in work or inability to form satisfactory relationships. It may benefit adults, children, and adolescents. It can help children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties which are evident at home or school. These can include personality problems, depression, learning difficulties, school phobias, eating or sleeping disorders.

Psychodynamic psychotherapy provides an effective treatment for a range of psychological disorders, both as a treatment in its own right and as an adjunct to other forms of treatment. It can contribute significantly to an individual's mental and physical health, to their sense of well-being and to their ability to manage their lives more effectively.

Person Centred Therapy

This approach is mainly focused on the therapeutic relationship formed between the counsellor and client with the therapist aiming to provide that person with an environment and opportunity to develop a sense of self. This environment is a comfortable and non-judgemental place where the client can engage with another person in a non-directive manner and be aided in finding their own solutions to their problems. In this approach the counsellor will not give you tasks to do, or direct you in any way, the emphasis is on talking through feelings and experiences in order to gain clarity and insight into what it is that has brought the client into therapy. Person-centred therapists believe that a free and equal relationship exists between client and counsellor and each person's perception of the other is important to the work, the counsellor is not the 'expert' the client knows their own feelings and emotions better than anyone. Therapists that work from this approach aim to offer a true empathic response rather than sympathy for the client's situation, whereby the counsellor aims to see the concerns discussed in the sessions from the clients perspective.

What can Person-Centred Therapy be useful for?

Person-centred therapy is a widely used approach both in organisations and institutions as well as in private practice and has many applications, these include:

- Low self-esteem
- Relationship issues
- Depression
- Body-image issues

There tends to be no assumed length of work when working with a person-centred therapist although the approach is less structured than some others and scheduling can be adjusted according to the client's expressed needs. The client determines when the work ends and this usually occurs when they feel they can cope better with the difficulties they initially faced.

A final point to remember is that although the type of therapy may be important, arguably one of the most important factors in a good therapeutic outcome is the quality of the relationship that develops between yourself and the therapist.