

Can I support the counselling work?

Yes, and we welcome parental support. The most helpful thing parents can do is show acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful activity. Young people may wish to share with you what happens in their counselling sessions, but it is helpful if you do not press them if they don't. Counselling may lead to greater openness with parents and families about the issues worrying a young person.

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, or because we want help thinking things through with someone else outside the family. The counsellor will not be judging you or your child, instead we will look to support your child in finding their way through whatever is troubling them.

Is it confidential?

The counselling relationship is between the young person and the counsellor. Therefore, it is important that the information discussed in the counselling sessions is treated confidentially. Counselling is a time for the child or young person to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere. This includes not discussing the work with parents, unless the child or young person requests or gives consent for this. This can be hard for parents to accept at times but ensuring the confidentiality of the work is crucial for establishing trust so that your child feels confident to speak openly and freely about what is concerning them.

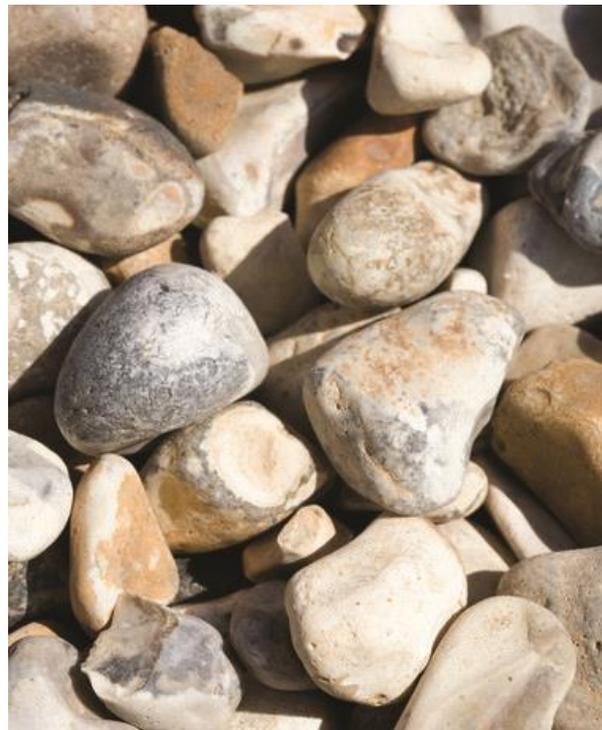
All counsellors adhere to the Aberdeenshire Council's child protection policies. The only time confidentiality would be broken is when the counsellor feels your child or another person around the child is at risk of harm.

Contact us

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Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL 

SCHOOL COUNSELLING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & CARERS



From mountain to sea

What is counselling?

Counselling provides a safe and confidential space for young people to talk to a trained professional about issues and concerns they face. The counsellor will help the young person explore their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours so they can develop a better understanding of themselves and of others.

A counsellor will not give young people their opinions or offer advice. They will help the young person find their own solutions – whether that's making effective changes in their life and relationships or finding ways of coping with their problems.

How does this differ from other support in school?

CAMHS work with severely unwell young people and Pupil Support Workers may work with emotional distress that requires a skilled listening service and / or a defined programme of support. Counsellors fit into the space between these services. Counsellors work with young people facing more entrenched mental health challenges that do not meet the criteria for CAMHS referrals. Counselling is not an ad hoc or one-off intervention during an emotional or behavioural crisis, but longer-term (in blocks of 6 sessions) work based on building a trusting and meaningful relationship between the young person and the counsellor.

All our counsellors are professionally trained and have training and experience specifically related to working with young people. All our counsellors belong to the professional body BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) and abide by their ethical framework. They attend regular clinical supervision and practice with confidentiality, accountability and continued professional development.



Who is counselling best for?

For counselling to work the most important element is that your child wants to work through the things that are worrying them. It is important that the child is not pressed to attend. Coming to the first session will give them the chance to decide whether they actively choose to continue working with the counsellor.

Some examples of when counselling may be helpful for a young person:

- Feeling sad, unhappy, anxious, or lonely
- Challenges in the family
- Feeling angry
- Confused feelings about identity
- Wanting to hurt themselves or others
- Being bullied
- Suicidal thoughts
- Worrying about sex or relationships
- Having problems at school

- Issues with body image or weight
- Questions about sexuality or gender
- Issues with peer relationships and friends
- School and exams stress school
- Traumatic events from the past
- Substance misuse
- Difficulties with attending school

When might counselling not be appropriate?

There are challenging life experiences we all go through where it is natural to experience difficult emotions. This does not always mean that a young person needs counselling, with some time and if a supportive family structure is in place, many will be able to work through difficulties on their own. At other times an alternative intervention to counselling is more appropriate in meeting a young person's needs.

Some examples of when counselling may not be appropriate include when the young person:

- does not wish to attend
- is attending CAMHS
- is offered support from another professional in the school
- is experiencing a one-off difficult day
- is experiencing the immediate aftermath of bereavement

How can my child access counselling?

Please speak to your child's guidance teacher or class teacher and discuss if counselling may be helpful.

Counselling is currently available for secondary school children only but will be opened up to primary school children aged 10 and over in the future.