

Contact US

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Complaints

If something goes wrong, please tell us so we can improve our service.

The complaints process is found on our [website](#).

Privacy Notice

The services privacy notice is found [on our website](#).

Further Support

For advice on supporting your child:

- Additional Support Needs (ASN) Aberdeenshire, Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing ([asn-aberdeenshire.org](#))
- Young Minds [www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/](#)

How can my child access counselling?

School counsellors work with young people aged 10 and above.

If you feel your child might benefit from counselling, please speak to your child's guidance teacher or class teacher. Young people aged 12 and above can self-refer for counselling. Information on how to self-refer is in the counselling leaflet for young people. QR codes and email addresses for each secondary schools are found on [our website \(asn-aberdeenshire.org\)](#) so young people can request information on counselling or a meeting with the school counsellor.

How can I support my child's counselling sessions?

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.

School Counselling Information for Parents and Carers



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.

Counselling has a beginning, a middle and an end to help model relationships and how to use support services in future.

How does this differ from other support in school?

Young people experiencing significant and persistent mental health challenges may be referred to CAMHS 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 and work with young people facing more entrenched mental health challenges. 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, belong to the professional body BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), abide by BACP's ethical framework and attend regular, independent clinical supervision.

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 and that they are 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
- Feeling confused about their 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 a supportive family structure, 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 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
- is experiencing a one-off difficult day
- is in the immediate aftermath of bereavement

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 to happen. This can be hard for parents to accept at times but ensuring confidentiality is crucial for establishing trust so that your child feels confident to speak openly and freely about what is concerning them.

Young people aged 12+ can self-refer to counselling without parental consent. However, counsellors always do their best to help young people engage the support of the adults around them.

All counsellors adhere to Aberdeenshire Council's child protection policies and confidentiality would be broken if your child or another person around the child is at risk of harm.