

How can I refer a young person?

Young people can access counselling in two ways. Via referral from the school. Usually the Guidance Teacher or Class Teacher fills in the referral form which can be found [here \(asn-aberdeenshire.org/school-counselling/\)](https://asn-aberdeenshire.org/school-counselling/) and passes it though their DHT or HT to the counselling service.

Alternatively, young people aged 12+ can self-refer. Details how to do this are in the School Counselling for Young People's leaflet.

Where can I find more advice?

For advice on supporting young people's mental health:

- Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing Team website (asn-aberdeenshire.org)
- Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/

Anything else I need to be aware of?

- Young people aged 10 and above can access school counselling.
- Young people will be offered counselling in six session blocks, more than one block may be offered to a young person.
- Counselling sessions take place on a regular basis, usually during the school day, and last 40-50 minutes each.
- It is always a young person's choice whether to come to counselling and they should not be 'sent' to counselling for help or persuaded to come, even if school staff, parents/carers or other adults think they could benefit from talking to a counsellor.
- All our counsellors abide by the ethical framework of BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), a professional body which supports and regulates the profession.



School Counselling Information for School Staff



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 aim to build a trusting relationship to enable the young person to explore their thoughts, feelings and actions, so they can develop a better understanding of themselves and others.

Being really listened to, and having feelings, worries or thoughts understood, validated and clarified by an adult who is not directly involved in the young person's life can be very helpful. As well as listening, counsellors help young people to clarify their problems, see patterns in their relating, thinking and/or actions and how they may change these.

What is school counselling continued?

Counsellors do not give advice or tell young people what to do, instead, they help young people make their own choices to facilitate personal growth and self-awareness. While external conditions may not substantially change for the young person, their feelings about themselves and their ability to meet the challenges they face can be significantly enhanced by relational counselling.

How does this differ from other support in school?

School Counselling is an intervention delivered by a trained professional with recognised qualifications in counselling, who receives clinical supervision, works to a theoretical model and practices with accountability, confidentiality and continued professional development.

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.

School 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 work based on building a trusting and meaningful relationship. Counselling has a beginning, a middle and an end to help model relationships and how to use support services in future.

Is counselling confidential?

Counselling is a time for the child or young person to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere. The only exception to this is when the child or young person or someone around them are at risk of harm. The limits of confidentiality are discussed with the child or young person in the initial session. All counsellors adhere to Aberdeenshire Council's policies, including child protection and data protection.

Young people aged 12+ can self-refer to school counselling and keep it private from both school staff and parents. If the school was unaware the young person was attending counselling, sessions would take place outside school hours. However, counsellors always do their best to help young people engage the support of the adults around them.

Who might benefit?

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling sad, unhappy, anxious or lonely• Experiencing problems at home• Feeling angry• Experiencing relationship changes and loss• Feeling confused about their identity• Wanting to hurt themselves or others• Being bullied• Experiencing suicidal thoughts• Worrying about sex or relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having problems at school• Struggling with body image, weight or disordered eating• Questioning their sexuality or gender• Experiencing difficulties with peer relationships and friends• Experiencing school and exam stress• Dealing with traumatic events from the past• Struggling with substance misuse• Having difficulties 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 accessing mental health support from another professional
- is experiencing a one-off difficult day
- is experiencing the immediate aftermath of bereavement
- is experiencing a mental health crisis