



Supporting Someone in Counselling | a guide for parents and carers

Counselling is a process where from a safe and supportive environment the counsellor will help your child, or the person you care for, learn how to help themselves. It will help them work through their difficulties and develop coping strategies. As a parent or carer it is natural that you will want to be involved as much as possible and support that process. We have put this short guide together to help you understand how you can be involved in a way that will most support your child, or the person you care for.

Before the Counselling Begins

It is important that you explain to your child that they are coming to counselling at least a few days before their first session. Counselling is a voluntary process and to gain the most from it the person entering it should be aware of what is involved.

- Be mindful that counselling isn't always a quick fix solution. It is quite natural for things to seem not to change or to seem more difficult before they start to get better or easier.

The First Session

Bring your child along to the first session in good time and be aware that they may feel reluctant to go in. If it helps you can come into the first few minutes of the first session to make sure your child is settled.

About Each Session

The counselling sessions will be at the same time and day each week and will last 50 minutes. An average number of sessions would be between six and eight but the process will last as long as it needs to. You can also support by:

- Helping the young person to recognise the value of consistent attendance of sessions.
- Respecting their choice to attend (or to not attend) their session.
- Trying to let go of any expectations that your child will automatically, or wish to, tell you what is said or happens in their session.
- Letting CASY know if you are planning on missing a session, or if your child is unable to attend for some reason.



After the Session

Counselling is a private and personal relationship between the counsellor and the client. Some children or young people will want to talk about their experience and some won't. It is important to let your child decide what is best for them and respect their privacy. At times your child may seem more upset following a session, this might be that the session brought up difficult emotions. Show empathy and support but again, respect their privacy.

- Give the young person the space and time to share their thoughts and feelings if and when they are ready to do so
- Support them to express how they are feeling.
- It is important to trust the therapeutic relationship by trusting your child's counsellor and your child. It is completely understandable that you will want to let the counsellor know the issues that you are seeing at home but please remember that the person in counselling has to bring this to the session by themselves. The young person needs to feel that the sessions are a safe place to talk about what they want to talk about.

Take Care of Yourself

Be aware that you may find this process as hard as your child, or the person you care for, does. It is important to recognise that the issues affecting your child, or the person you care for, may have an impact on you. It can be a difficult and emotional time and children can often take it out on those closest to them.

You might even be blaming yourself or thinking you're a bad parent; you aren't! You have brought them along to counselling, it shows you love and care for them and want to help them.

More Information and Support

To support children and young people we know we need to support their parents and carers. We, therefore, offer a range of services aimed at supporting this group in helping to understand their children and the people they care for; and aimed at supporting them and their own emotional health and wellbeing. We deliver:

- 'What is Counselling' talks – that help you understand the counselling process and offer you the chance to ask questions about it
- 'Who Am I' workshop – this is a four week course that will help you build healthier relationships with those around you. It will help with self-esteem, assertiveness, listening skills and working with others.
- Counselling Service – we also offer a counselling service to the parents and carers of the young people we support.

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