

## ***Is therapeutic counselling and/or CBT for me?***

Many people have pre-conceived ideas about therapy but people from all walks of life have successfully received help from a counsellor at some point in their lives. Life is full of challenges, including work pressure, financial issues, family problems and personal issues. Even with support from family and friends, it can sometimes be helpful to talk with a counsellor who can help you work out what's right for you, in an empathic and confidential setting. Here are some of the common myths surrounding counselling:

**Myth: Therapeutic counselling is only for people with serious mental health conditions.**

**Reality:** No! Many people attend counselling when they arrive to a point in their lives when nothing seems to be seriously wrong but they don't know which way to turn. Some people access counselling and/or CBT when they are struggling with a specific situation or problem in their life. Other people use it as a means of personal or professional development.

**Myth: Only weak people go to therapeutic counselling.**

**Reality:** This is also not true. Sometimes life throws you a problem that you find difficult to manage on your own. It takes inner strength to acknowledge that there is something that you need help with. It takes self-awareness to recognise this and courage to be willing to proactively face these challenges.

**Myth: Therapeutic counselling is only for serious issues.**

**Reality:** While therapeutic counselling and/or CBT can help people facing serious problems, most people who access counselling are looking for assistance with everyday problems such as stress, anxiety or achieving a work-life balance. You don't have to wait until things are out of control before you seek support – counselling can help prevent problems from becoming too serious.

**Myth: How can a stranger possibly help me?**

**Reality:** Discussing your concerns with an impartial counsellor is one of the reasons why therapy is so effective. Counsellors have the training and skills to provide you with unbiased insights and support which may enable you speak more freely about your situation without fear of being judged or criticised. This can then enable you to make the right decision for you. Counselling can often give you a new perspective which can be extremely motivating.

**Myth: Counsellors just sit there and don't say anything.**

**Reality:** This is a stereotypical view of counselling and is far from reality. Counsellors and CBT practitioners are proactive and engage in a two-way therapeutic process, to help you focus on what you want to achieve.

**Myth: Therapeutic counselling is endless.**

**Reality:** Therapeutic counselling, trauma therapy and CBT are often based on a short-term, focused model. This enables you to explore the problems you're facing, set a goal or focus to give you direction, and develop strategies and skills to improve your situation. Counselling sessions last for 50 minutes and are usually on a weekly basis. They continue only until you have attended the agreed number of sessions required or you have achieved your goal or focus.

**Myth: A counsellor can fix my problems for me.**

**Reality:** Counsellors work with you to help you work through the challenges you face but their role isn't to fix things or give you advice. They will listen, guide, support and ensure you stay focused. They can help you identify and draw on your own resources, as well as learn others. Ultimately this can enable you to make choices and decisions in a safe and supportive environment. The counselling process can help you feel empowered and in control of your life by talking through situations, feelings or concerns that might otherwise be keeping you feeling stuck, helpless, sad, angry or frustrated.

**Myth: I've tried counselling and/or CBT before and it didn't work.**

**Reality:** There are a number of reasons why you may feel this way but as long as you are open to the counselling process, you can have a different and more positive experience each time around. On rare occasions the fit between you and your counsellor might not be right. This is one of the reasons why we complete an assessment of your needs from the very start.