



Counselling: what to expect

What is counselling?

"Counselling is a place where you can just express all your feelings"

Secondary / high school student.*

Just like physical health, we all have mental health, and we need to look after it.

Most of the time we can look after our mental health by taking care of ourselves e.g., by getting enough sleep, or by getting support from family, friends or others in our lives. But sometimes we may need to see someone who is trained to help, like a counsellor. Counsellors are qualified professionals experienced in helping young people like you.

"It is helpful to just talk to someone who isn't a friend or family."

Secondary / high school student.*

Who goes to counselling?

"Even if you don't have any mental health issues, it is very helpful to talk to someone about what's on your mind. Especially since lots of teenagers these days deal with drama/problems at school, at home, etc. and even if they aren't serious, it's worth talking to someone for advice."

Secondary / high school student.*

Lots of young people have ups and downs with their mental health and see a counsellor. So going for counselling is common, and it does not mean there is something wrong with you. You can talk about anything in counselling – however big or small you think it is.

"I was very concerned about labels like "mad", but growing up I wish I went to counselling sooner. (...) Helping yourself doesn't make you mad at all, it makes you strong and brave."

University student.*

"We can be vulnerable when dealing with very particular problems whether that's having trouble with friends at school or not feeling great about how we look, and counselling becomes that space where you can bring any problem, no matter how big or how small, you are heard and valued."

University Student.*

How can counselling help?

Many young people feel better after counselling, especially if they have felt understood and supported by the counsellor. Counselling does not make everything ok but may help you to cope when things are difficult.

"...you are able to use the magic from counselling to help you cope with tough situations, the magic could be breathing exercises that your counsellor showed you or writing things down in a journal to unleash. While your problems may not be gone, you have the skills and techniques to help you cope a little bit better and I think that's beautiful."

University student.*



"You will still have the problems but you will know how to handle the problems."

Secondary / high school student.*

* Many thanks to all the young people that shared their experiences of counselling with us and allowed us to use their words to help create this document.

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