

## Counsellors are specifically trained to counsel

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### About Counselling

Counsellors are specifically trained to counsel, that is, the primary focus of their training is the *application* of therapeutic processes to a particular situation.

Counsellors are purposely trained in using interpersonal communication and interviewing skills to facilitate change in clients, utilising a variety of therapeutic techniques.

Whilst Psychologists and other mental health workers are trained to diagnose problems and treatments, they often have to take further training in counselling practices; applied counselling methods are not always part of psychological training.

Counselling is a process that psychologically empowers individuals to seize back control of their lives, whilst working through issues and problems that have caused them to lose self-esteem, a sense of personal power, as well as confidence in their own abilities.

Counselling increases self-awareness and a sense of well-being, and is often the first step people take on their path to discovering a more positive life. We all encounter difficult or challenging situations and experiences in our lives. At certain times, in order to get relief from our distress, we may need more skill and understanding than our usual support networks can provide. At other times we may simply want an opportunity to review how to live a more balanced and meaningful life.

### Sharing and Caring

Sharing thoughts and concerns in a safe, confidential environment, and with an impartial counsellor, allows an individual time to explore feelings and limiting beliefs. Gradually you open up and focus on the changes you want to make in your life. Sessions usually take place on a weekly basis.

Research has shown consistently that if you seek psychotherapy and counselling when faced with a difficult emotional or life problem that you will be better off than 80% of the people who don't seek help – and that the benefits last.

### Counselling & Psychotherapy:

- **Helps you to identify problems** and crises and encourages you to take positive steps to resolve them
- **Will help you understand** your feelings, thoughts and actions more clearly
- Helps you to identify emotional issues as well as physical, mental and social connections to an issue
- **Supports you to reach out** to others and get objective feedback and ideas about your issue
- **Helps you to discover new life skills** and inner resources to find solutions to your problems
- Counselling looks beyond symptom alleviation and focuses on the whole you.

### What should look for in a counsellor:

With a good counsellor, you should feel listened to and that the counsellor is genuinely trying to understand your unique personality and life situation. You should feel respected, and not judged or patronised - even if the counsellor does not agree with the way you live.

However, keep in mind that you may not always feel comfortable in therapy, and expect your therapist to challenge you in constructive ways.

There are many paths to becoming a counsellor, so as well as professional counselling qualifications, counsellors in Australia are required to participate in regulated development activities.

If you have a problem that is affecting the quality of your life, interactions with others or sense of well-being, counselling is worth exploring.