

Frequently Asked Questions:

Counselling and Mental Health Providers

The following information is courtesy of the Mental Health Foundation and the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (visit www.mentalhealth.org.nz or www.nzac.org.nz for further information and contact details):

- **How to find a doctor or mental health professional**

If you feel unwell your best starting point is usually your GP (family doctor). GPs are trained to assess, treat and manage many mental health issues within primary care (the community rather than in a hospital). Your GP can refer you to your local community mental health service or elsewhere if needed. or they may be able to manage your illness themselves.

- **How to find a therapist or mental health professional**

There are several ways to access a counsellor:

- To find low cost or free counselling in your area, search the Family Services Directory, or contact your local CAB.
- Most GPs are part of Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) that run Government funded mental health programmes – often you can access free counselling sessions through these.
- If you are in paid employment you may be able to access free confidential counselling through your company's employee assistance programme – talk to your employer.
- You may be eligible for 10 free counselling sessions (or more if clinically indicated) and other assistance through a WINZ Disability Allowance.
- Free Youthline counselling for youth aged 12–25 years and their families. Available in various locations across Auckland and also Dunedin. Counselling for adults is available on a sliding scale.
- If you have experienced sexual abuse or assault you may be eligible for ACC support to pay for therapy with a clinical psychologist or psychotherapist: 0800 735 556. Ask your GP about making a Sensitive Claim.
- Local women's or men's centres often have counsellors on site or can provide recommendations, some of whom are low cost/charges are on a sliding-scale.
- Local DHB Community Mental Health Services provide community based support, psychological therapy, counselling and psychiatrist services. Services are for those who meet mental illness criteria and you will usually need to be referred by your GP. Contact details are in the front of the phone book under 'Hospitals and Other Health Service Providers'.
- Yellow Pages – look under Counselling Services, Psychotherapy & Psychology
- Talking Works Directory of counsellors, psychologists and psychotherapists.
- Colleges and professional organisations

- **How do I choose a counsellor who's right for me?**

Have a chat asking about time, place and cost. Let the counsellor know what you want to get out of counselling and check that they can provide this. You may also want to ask about the counsellor's qualifications, their professional membership and the way they work. You should get a sense of whether you'd be comfortable talking to this person.

- **What's the difference between Counselling and other forms of therapy, like psychotherapy?**

There is a lot of similarity between counselling and psychotherapy as they are both “talking therapies”. Psychotherapy recognises the importance of conscious and unconscious psychological processes and the relationship between the therapist and client to further the healing process. Counselling draws from a number of theoretical approaches and can include these aspects. It will focus on your difficulties and concerns helping you develop more satisfying and resourceful ways of living

- **What sort of things can Counselling actually help with?**

Counselling helps you explore and manage your emotions, thoughts and behaviour. It can help you plan and set goals and improve your relationships. Counselling assists you to address challenges in your life, get to know yourself better and to develop new ways of thinking and living.

Counselling helps with anxiety, depression, grief and loss, life changes and stress, relationships with family, friends and work colleagues, trauma and abuse, domestic and sexual violence,

- **What does Counselling cost?**

Each counsellor sets their own fees. Don't be afraid to ask about this. You may qualify for funding help so ask what's available in your area.

- **Can I get any Government assistance to help with these fees?**

There is funding available through ACC, Work and Income and some Primary Health Organisations/GP's. Ask your counsellor or GP if any of these apply to you.

If you require further information on these or other support services please see Community Networks website (www.communitynetworks.co.nz) or get in touch, ph. 03 443 7799.

