

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 your GP, may be able to manage your illness themselves.
- **How do I choose a counsellor who is 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 would 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 several 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, 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 so do not be afraid to ask about this. You may qualify for funding help so ask what is 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.