

What is Therapy and Counselling?

Therapy offers you a safe, confidential place to talk about your life and anything that may be confusing, painful or uncomfortable. It allows you to talk with someone who is trained to listen attentively and to help you improve things.

The Counseling Process

The counseling process is a continuous, cyclical model in which the counselor and client collaboratively set goals, formulate actions plans, and assess progress toward the goal(s). Throughout the process new information is integrated, the counselor-client relationship is developed, and progress toward counseling goals is reassessed.

The counselor must develop an overall awareness of the entire counseling process across a number of interviews. In consultation with the supervisor, students will be asked to approach the model presented here by concentrating on particular points in the model during each semester, and relating these to the overall process.

The model presented below represents a series of overall goals and expectations for the counselor as he/she progresses through a series of interviews with a client.

1. Counselor structures the initial interview, helping the client to define problem(s), and develops initial hypotheses. This format is continued to some extent in each interview,
2. Counselor demonstrates care and strives to develop a trusting collaborative relationship with the client.
3. Counselor tests hypotheses; develops an interaction between problem definition and information elicited from client.
4. Counselor and client seek new information: includes additional testing, campus and community resources, career information and opportunities, college bulletins and psychoeducational materials.
5. Counselor and client make decisions about desired behavior change.
6. Counselor helps client to set goals and behavioral objectives for behavior change.
7. Counselor assists client in developing plan of action to resolve problem and reach objectives.
8. Counselor is aware of and communicates own expectations of the counseling process to the client.
9. Counselor is able to appropriately terminate an individual interview, including a summary of important information gathered and agreed upon action plan for client.
10. Counselor and client assess procedure and outcome(s) of counseling and decide to:
 - a. terminate
 - b. refine counseling process and redefine goalsc. make appropriate referrals and/or request in-interview assistance from colleague or supervisor.
11. Counselor develops a case conceptualization as a helpful tool in the counseling process. This will include a summary of the counselor's view of the problem, taking into consideration the common themes and what ties it all together. This is a synthesis of the above data that may illuminate the problem and guide the counseling plan.
12. Counselor develops a Counseling Plan in collaboration with the client. This will include a plan to be followed in the course of counseling to address the presenting problems. This plan is consistent with the conceptualization of the problem and the theoretical orientation of the counselor.

Understanding the Counseling Process

Counseling and psychotherapy is practiced in a variety of ways depending upon the setting, presenting issues of the client, theoretical orientation of the counselor and other factors. However, the following information is offered to give you a better idea of what to expect. If you have any questions concerning this information or anything else related to the counseling process, please do not hesitate to ask.

Counseling

- Counseling is a “conversation with a purpose”
- Counseling is not “advice giving” ... you are the expert on you, not the counselor
- The counselor strives to meet the client where he or she is ... to see the world through the eyes of the client
- Counseling is about helping you:
 - 1) to learn about yourself (insight, understanding),
 - 2) to become more self-aware (self-talk, environment)
 - 3) to use what you learn to make real and significant changes in yourself and your life

The Process of Change

- Change takes time and can be difficult ... you didn't become the person you are today overnight and you won't make significant changes overnight either
- Change comes slowly ... the focus of counseling is on making small changes
- Change is a process that involves stages: pre-contemplation, contemplation, planning, action, maintenance
- Setbacks are a part of the change process
- Change is often times about changing your perspective ... you cannot control events in your life but you can control how you react to them
- Real change is accomplished from the client's efforts and hard work ... it requires taking what you learned during the counseling session and applying it in your life

The Counseling Process

- Counseling is a process that involves the client's active participation and full commitment to the therapeutic process
- The focus of counseling is on:
 - a) how you see yourself
 - b) how you see your world
 - c) how you see yourself in your world
- The goal(s) of counseling is determined by the client and counselor together usually during the first therapy session
- Various therapeutic techniques are used to help you gain insight and achieve the established goal(s) of counseling

- “Homework” is assigned periodically to help you address a specific issue discussed and/or to keep you fully engaged in the counseling process between sessions

How will therapy make me feel?

Therapy is a very personal process. Sometimes it is necessary to talk about painful feelings or difficult decisions, so you may go through a period of feeling worse than when you started. However, therapy should enable you to feel better in the long-run.

If you do experience a period of feeling worse, talk to your therapist about it to ensure you get the best out of your therapy.

Will I feel better straight away?

Usually it will take a number of counselling sessions before therapy starts to make a difference. However on rare occasions, a single session may be enough.

Does it work for everybody?

Therapy doesn't work for everybody. It is not a universal cure-all. Because you may be talking about very personal and often painful things, it can sometimes be difficult to keep going. Despite this, it is often worth the effort as you can be helped to work through problems.

Will I be able to have therapy that understands my cultural background?

Therapists come from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. It should be possible to find an appropriate therapist for your needs. How and where you access therapy will affect how much choice you have when selecting your therapist.

Is all therapy the same?

No. There are different methods and approaches to therapy, and your chosen therapist will be able to talk to you about their particular method or approach.

Types of therapy

When deciding on an appropriate counsellor or psychotherapist, it can be useful to understand the different therapies they may use. Although all can be effective, you may find one approach more appealing than another, or find that some approaches are better for a certain area of counselling or psychotherapy than others.

Psychological therapies generally fall into four categories. These are behavioural therapies, which focus on cognitions and behaviours, psychoanalytical and psychodynamic therapies, which focus on the unconscious relationship patterns that evolved from childhood, humanistic therapies, which focus on self-development in the 'here and now' and arts therapies, which use creative arts within the therapeutic process.

This is a generalisation though and counselling or psychotherapy usually overlaps some of these techniques. Some counsellors or psychotherapists practice a form of '*integrative*' therapy, which means they draw on and blend specific types of techniques. Other practitioners work in an '*eclectic*' way, which means they take elements of several different models and combine them when working with clients. There are also a number of specific other therapies that can be used.

Below is a breakdown of some of the different psychological therapies available. To find out more about the therapy categories or the individual therapies themselves, take your time to explore the links.

Cognitive and behavioural therapies

Behavioural therapies are based on the way you think (cognitive) and/or the way you behave. These therapies recognise that it is possible to change, or recondition, our thoughts or behaviour to overcome specific problems.

- Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)
- Behavioural therapy
- Cognitive analytic therapy (CAT)

- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Cognitive therapy

Psychoanalytical and psychodynamic therapies

Psychoanalytical and psychodynamic therapies are based on an individual's unconscious thoughts and perceptions that have developed throughout their childhood, and how these affect their current behaviour and thoughts.

- Jungian therapy
- Psychoanalysis
- Psychoanalytic therapy
- Psychodynamic therapy

Humanistic therapies

Humanistic therapies focus on self-development, growth and responsibilities. They seek to help individuals recognise their strengths, creativity and choice in the 'here and now'.

- Existential therapy
- Gestalt therapy
- Human Givens psychotherapy
- Person-centred therapy (also known as "client-centred" counselling)
- Psychosynthesis
- Reality therapy
- Solution-focused brief therapy
- Transactional analysis
- Transpersonal psychology

Arts therapies

Arts therapies involve the use of creative arts such as music, art, drama and dance - in a therapeutic environment.

- Art therapy/Art psychotherapy
- Drama therapy
- Music therapy

Other therapies

Although psychological therapies generally fall into the categories above, there are also a number of other specific therapies too.

- Equine assisted therapy
- Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR)
- Family/Systemic therapy
- Group therapy
- Integrative
- Interpersonal therapy
- Mindfulness
- Play therapy
- Psychosexual therapy

Although there are four key categories into which psychological therapies generally fall, there are also a number of other specific therapies too.

› **Equine assisted therapy**

Equine assisted therapy is a form of animal assisted therapy that uses horses to help people build confidence and develop a greater understanding of their own behaviour. Challenges are set by a therapist and normally require the individual to work with the horse in a way that challenges their way of thinking.

› **Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR)**

EMDR is a form of psychotherapy that was developed in the 1980s by American clinical psychologist Dr Francine Shapiro. EMDR is used to treat psychological traumas, such as war experiences, natural disasters, road accidents, rape and assault.

› **Family/Systemic therapy**

Family Therapy, also known as Systemic Therapy, is an approach that works with families and those in close relationships, regardless of whether they are blood related or not, to foster change. Changes are viewed in terms of the systems of interaction between each person in the family.

› **Group therapy**

This type of therapy takes place with a group of people going through similar difficulties and is facilitated by one or more therapists. Group therapy can offer emotional support and help develop interpersonal skills.

› **Integrative**

Integrative counselling means drawing on and blending specific types of therapies. This approach is not linked to one particular type of therapy as those practising integrative counselling do not believe that only one approach works for each client in all situations.

› **Interpersonal therapy**

With a focus on interpersonal relationships, this therapy examines the way we relate and how this impacts our mental well-being. The core belief of interpersonal therapy is that psychological symptoms are often a response to the difficulties we have interacting with others - and when these interactions are improved, so are the psychological symptoms.

› **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is a technique that originated from Buddhist meditation that helps people focus on the present to gain greater awareness of their emotions and improve general well-being. Mindfulness meditation and mindfulness-based therapies are becoming popular tools to help those with depression and anxiety.

› **Play therapy**

While adults can express their troubling thoughts and feelings through talking therapies, children and young people may find it difficult to put their emotions into words. Play therapy is used to help children communicate their worries at their own level and their own pace, while a play therapist offers valuable support and guidance. The aim of play therapy is to increase self-esteem and confidence, and teach children new patterns of thinking and behaviour that makes them more resilient in everyday life.

› **Psychosexual therapy**

Psychosexual therapy, known as PST, is a treatment by a qualified practitioner which addresses a sexual dysfunction or emotional block within a relationship. PST is a behavioural programme which openly explores and discusses the sexual problem and looks at emotional blocks for the couple.

FAQS of counseling-

What should I expect from the first session?

- You can expect to do most of the talking.
- Your counsellor will probably ask brief, clarifying questions and make interpretive comments.
- They may also ask typical assessment questions about your symptoms, medications(s), past counselling, or drug and ALCOHOL USE.
- The counsellor will evaluate your situation, help you establish specific goals, and identify possible strategies for making change.

What will my counsellor expect from me?

- It is up to you to determine what you want out of the counselling experience.
- You need to be an active participant, honest about yourself and ready to fully participate in the sessions.
- It is expected that you will work collaboratively with your counsellor to establish goals and tasks for therapy, and that you be willing to work towards those goals by completing mutually agreed upon tasks.

- You cannot attend sessions while under the influence of drugs or ALCOHOL. If it becomes apparent that your judgment is impacted by drugs or alcohol, your counsellor may end the current session and ask you to come back.

Who will I see?

- All our counsellors are highly experienced and well-trained generalists who are committed to their own professional development. You may see a Psychologist, a Clinical Social Worker, or a Graduate Practicum Counsellor. We are a teaching facility, and our Graduate Practicum Counsellors are supervised by another counsellor on staff.

Am I required to go to counselling?

- No. Our approach to counselling is collaborative and unless there is an immediate safety concern, we do not see mandated clients.

What techniques will my counsellor use?

- Our counsellors use many different types of therapies. We have training in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Process-orientated therapy, Solution Focused therapy (SFT), Feminist Therapy, EMDR, Positive Psychology and Mindfulness based approaches.
- Your counsellor may suggest a variety of techniques, some of which may seem strange to you. If you have any questions or don't feel comfortable practicing certain EXERCISES such as certain relaxation techniques, it's important that you tell your counsellor. You have the right to stop any exercise at any time during any session.

How should I feel after a session?

- Although your counsellor will be supportive, they also should challenge you. As you begin to process new ways of thinking you may feel annoyed, tired or upset. Other times you may leave a session feeling much lighter. Change can be difficult in the short-term, but it's usually positive in the long-term. If you have any concerns please talk to your counsellor.

How long is a session?

- The length of individual sessions and the duration of counselling depend largely on your specific needs, but generally last for 45-50 minutes.

How long will I need to be in counselling?

- We provide counselling, averaging between 3-10 sessions. Your counsellor can help assess the amount of support you need.
- Individual sessions are usually scheduled once every week, or once every two weeks but you and your counsellor may decide to meet more or less frequently depending on your individual needs.