

How do I know if I need counselling?

Perhaps you have been thinking about having counselling for a while. Some days you feel really low and feel like you need to speak to someone as soon as possible. Then the next day you feel OK and the thought of ringing a counsellor goes away. But the issues that made you feel low are still there and you inevitably feel worse again in a few days' time.

What stops you from biting the bullet and making an appointment? Feeling apprehensive about seeing a counsellor for the first time is common. It can be hard to accept you might need help. Asking for help can make the problem seem more real: you can't pretend it's all OK so easily.

If you've not had counselling before you may have questions about what it involves. You may feel uncertain about committing your time and money to see a counsellor when you don't know much about [counselling](#) and whether it will help. Hopefully, this article can begin to answer some of your questions.

Do I need counselling?

People often ask, 'do you think I need counselling?' It's difficult to answer this. If someone tells you 'you need counselling' it can make you feel that your problems must be really bad. The decision to see a private counsellor is always a matter of personal choice rather than something you 'must' do.

A better question is, 'might I benefit from trying counselling?' Many people, whatever their situation, have found counselling extremely helpful. It tends to be more useful, more effective and more successful if you have chosen to come because it feels like the right thing for you, rather than someone else telling you to go because you 'need' counselling.

Counselling might be beneficial for you if:

- Something has been troubling you over a period of time and you're having difficulty finding a solution on your own.
- Things are getting on top of you, and affecting your well-being, for example, causing [depression](#), [anxiety](#) or [stress](#).
- You find it hard to talk to friends or family because they are directly involved in the issues.
- Issues from the past are having an impact on your day to day life.
- Things that are troubling you are having a negative impact on your relationships or work.

What are the benefits of counselling?

Counselling can help you reflect and make sense of difficult life events and find a way to move forward. Some of the benefits can include:

- Talking to someone neutral, outside of your immediate situation, can show you a different perspective and help you find a way forward.
- Talking with a trained counsellor who is skilled at listening can help you to process difficult thoughts and feelings.
- Sharing your worries helps you feel less alone with the problem.
- You can gain a better understanding of yourself and a clearer sense of what you want and need.
- You can practice communicating more clearly and honestly in the safety of the counselling relationship.
- Counselling can help improve your relationships and your ability to communicate.

If you're still not sure, the best way for things to become clearer is to book an initial session with a counsellor. That way you can find out more about how counselling works and the counsellor can help you decide if it would be useful for your particular situation.