

The role of counselling in Schools

The independence of the ICSS service increases the possibility that young people will feel safe to discuss the issues that bother them, including issues relating to family, school and peer relationships. Provided by the Department of Education, it is also an integral part of the pastoral support system of the school, and functions within this framework.

The service supports the emotional health and well being of pupils which underpins academic achievement and facilitates the maintenance of positive relationships throughout the school. Extensive experience of working in the school environment enables counsellors to understand the dynamics within the school, the issues young people have, the dilemmas faced by busy staff and the concerns of parents and carers.

The nature of the service

The core one-to-one therapeutic counselling which lies at the heart of the service depends on liaison and consultation with staff, and regular awareness raising activities such as talks and small group work activities with pupils. Familiarity with the counsellor and with the service is key to encouraging young people to present for counselling.

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Please Note

The advice given in this leaflet is intended to be helpful to most people. It does not replace the direct advice of a healthcare professional or counsellor. It is only a general guide and cannot deal with all possible situations nor can it be specific to any one individual. If you or someone you know needs help please contact your GP as soon as possible to obtain further help.

“we’re listening”

Contact Details

For further information or to make a referral, please contact:

25 Ardoyne Road Belfast BT14 7HX
Tel: 028 9039 1630

Unit 20 North City Business Centre
2 Duncairn Gardens Belfast BT15 2GG
Tel: 028 9074 6184

www.newlifecounselling.net

Hello.

We're New Life Counselling,
we're here to help you.

**Independent Counselling
Service for Schools**
Information for teachers

New Life Counselling was established in November 1993 in response to the social needs and problems of North Belfast. We are committed to supporting people to achieve their personal potential through the support offered by professional counselling and therapeutic services.

Our vision of the future is one where society actively promotes positive emotional health and wellbeing, gives everyone the freedom to grow and provides access to excellent counselling and therapeutic support services when they are needed.

The values we uphold are respect for, and responsiveness to the rights, needs and aspirations of individuals and communities, and the provision of an excellent, appropriate, quality service, delivered with integrity to the highest of professional standards.

New life Counselling has been providing counselling support in schools in Northern Ireland for over 15 years, and in July 2009 was awarded the Department of Education tender for the delivery of the Independent Counselling Service for Schools in over 180 post primary schools.

we're listening

Reasons for referral

Young people will self-refer for a number of reasons. Staff may refer them for the same or similar reasons as well as for a range of other reasons. Common reasons for referral are:

- Dramatic drop in standard of work
- Behaviour that is 'out of character'
- Marked mood swings
- Involvement in bullying, either as a victim or perpetrator
- Peer group difficulties/relationships.
- Have been bereaved or suffered loss or separation
- Low self-esteem
- Have difficulties due to family breakdown or conflict
- Self-harming behaviours
- Misuse of alcohol and drugs
- Are known or who are suspected of having suffered abuse
- Anxiety and stress
- Low mood
- Anger issues
- Withdrawn behaviour

Although many young people with difficulties resulting in school refusal have found counselling extremely beneficial, successful management of this requires a high level of co-operation to ensure that the young person is able to access the service. Similarly while counselling is an appropriate forum to explore and manage risk issues, working with issues of risk necessitates co-operation and collaboration between the young person, the school, parents or carers and the counselling service.

Making the referral

If you are unsure whether to refer for counselling it may be helpful to discuss concerns with the counsellor in order to clarify the most appropriate way forward. Once you are clear that a referral is appropriate you need to speak with the Key Contact. The idea of counselling needs to be talked about sensitively with the pupil. This can be done either by the Key Contact, or by someone else who the pupil knows and trusts. It may be necessary to explain the counselling process to the young person to help them understand what is involved, to normalise the process and to allay any fears they may have. The care that is taken with this can make a big difference to whether or not the pupil attends the first appointment, or how they approach it.

It is essential for everyone involved to understand and appreciate that participation in counselling is completely voluntary for the young person and not a disciplinary measure. It should be made clear that it is an opportunity to talk about problems and worries with a view to resolving or managing them more easily. In order to inform their parents the 'Information for Parents and Carers about Counselling in Schools' leaflet can be accessed on the New Life Counselling website, or printed off and sent home.

If you have any queries or concerns, please discuss them with the counsellor or the Regional Team Leader.