





## How can counselling help?

Many young people struggle with how they feel. They are maybe having problems with friendships, families or school., they could be anxious, angry, depressed or scared and need to talk to someone about it.

Sometimes family and friends are too close to the situation and the young person may feel that they need someone who is not a friend or a relative but a person who can support them through a difficult time.

Counselling can offer a safe space where the young person is free to express how they feel without fear of judgement or embarrassment and in confidence.

## Do parents/carers or other adults need to be informed?

If a young person has been assessed as \*Gillick competent they have the legal right not to tell parents, carers (or even other adults or young people) that they are accessing counselling, and this should be respected. Of course, young people themselves are free to tell whoever they wish that they are engaging in counselling, and often do. During the first session with a young person, the Counsellor will always explain the boundaries of confidentiality, check that they are fully understood and in what circumstances confidentiality would need to be broken (for safeguarding reasons). We would respectfully ask that parents/carers and other adults **do not contact the counsellor** to ask any questions or speak about the sessions and the young person.

## Why is it so important that counselling sessions are kept confidential?

In order for young people to feel completely safe and trust the counsellor to help them with their concerns, it is essential for confidentiality to be maintained. Confidentiality also supports young people when they want to change their behaviour or be completely honest about some of the more difficult feelings in life, such as sadness, anxiety, fear, shame or anger.

## Can I make an initial appointment on behalf of a young person?

Yes, however, only if the young person requests this or agrees for you to do this on their behalf. It is always a young person's choice about whether to come to counselling and they should not be 'sent' to counselling for help or persuaded one way or another, even if school staff, parents/carers or other adults think they could benefit from talking to a counsellor.

The appointments are arranged throughout the school day and we do offer after school sessions.

### *\*Gillick Competent*

*Children under the age of 16 can consent to their own treatment if they're believed to have enough intelligence, competence and understanding to fully appreciate what's involved in their treatment. This is known as being Gillick competent.*

