

Youth
Talk



Youth Talk 14 – 25 is based at:

28 Spencer Street

St. Albans

Herts

AL3 5EG

T: 01727 868684

E: info@youthtalk.org.uk

www: www.youthtalk.org.uk

Youth Talk 14 - 25 is a registered charity and offers free counselling and related services to young people aged 14 to 25 years (ending on their 25th birthday)

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What is it like to have counselling or psychotherapy?

Some people find it helpful to know a bit about the way in which counselling sessions work. This leaflet sets out to give you some idea about what to expect. It is important to remember that everyone's reasons for coming to counselling are unique and their counselling experiences will be unique too. If you are curious or anxious about coming the following information may be useful.

What happens in the first session?

The first session is the beginning of an important relationship with your counsellor; some people find it a relief to talk and things just tumble out; others may find it very hard to talk at first about what has brought them to counselling. It is the counsellor's task to help you do this and to explore things in the present and the past that may be connected to what makes you feel unwell, unhappy, confused, different, angry, tired (or many other things) at the moment.

What kind of counselling or psychotherapy will you have?

Youth Talk offers a psychodynamic counselling and psychotherapy service. This means that the way that you and the counsellor work together will be an important aspect of the time that you spend together. *(This is sometimes referred to as the 'therapeutic alliance').*

An important relationship

Feelings that you have towards him or her can be important indicators of how your relationships work in the outside world. Noticing and talking about these feelings in a curious, non-judgmental way will help to give them meaning. (*This is called working in the transference*).

Reflecting

Thinking together and putting into words thoughts, memories, events and feelings can bring about a new sense of how things are in your life and who you are in the midst of it all (*affecting your self-esteem*). Often these moments can bring relief, a new understanding and a growth in self-confidence. Sometimes you may experience intensely sad moments that have gone unexpressed – perhaps for years. They may have got in the way of living life to the full. You may now be able to feel that difficult bits of your internal world can be spoken of (*made conscious*) in the presence of a trusted 'other' (your counsellor).

Listening

She or he will listen to you very attentively; s/he will not talk about his/her own experiences but will concentrate on you, looking for links that will begin to make sense of your experiences in a new way. For example it may become apparent that the way you responded to an early life experience (*your emotional defence*) is now no longer keeping you feeling safe and well.

Feelings

You may feel 'down' (depressed, angry, bereaved, guilty etc) as you confront the buried, painful bits. You and your counsellor will monitor these times and assess that you have the resilience to deal with them. This involves effort and energy from both you and your counsellor and it is why having counselling is often called personal 'work'.

Changing – getting stronger

Because successful therapy involves being able to get at feelings of all kinds the counselling process can involve feeling worse before you feel better – but this does not mean that you are not getting stronger! Do not give up coming if you feel 'worse' – talk to your counsellor first. Equally you may feel immediately better after your first session and feel you do not need to come again. Check this with your counsellor before ending.

How much personal work will you need to do?

Some people choose to do a little work and then wait until they can organise their life to support further work. For example you may have come to counselling to deal with feelings of anxiety before important exams. Together with your counsellor you may have discovered that there are lots of reasons underlying this anxiety and that most of these can wait until the exams are successfully over before you explore them. Sometimes 'you' rather than the exams must come first.

You may like to visit the Youth Talk website for further information including a true/false quiz about counselling and related web sites.

Our contact details are overleaf