



Counselling Service - Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to talk about what happened to me?

No — not unless you want to. You are always in control of what you share and when. Some people find it helpful to talk about their experiences, while others prefer to focus on how they're feeling now or work on coping strategies. We will support you either way.

Is counselling confidential?

Yes. Everything you share in sessions is kept private and confidential, with a few legal exceptions — for example, if there is a serious risk of harm to yourself or others. We will always be transparent with you about these limits and will agree them in a contract before you begin counselling. For pre-trial counselling, it is possible that your counselling notes may be requested for use as evidence in court. Notes are brief, factual and co-constructed with you and your counsellor. You will always be asked to provide consent for us to share your notes with other professionals such as police, CPS or solicitors. You can say no and we will protect your right to do so. Only a judge or coroner can order us to share your notes — which you will be able to see at any time.

How do I know which type of counselling is right for me?

You don't have to figure it out alone. In your initial consultation, we'll talk about what's brought you here, what you're hoping for, and how you'd like to be supported. Together, we can decide on a counselling approach that feels right for you. If you require pre-trial counselling, you can still choose which type of counselling is right for you.

What if I had an experience a long time ago — can I still have support?

Yes. There's no time limit on healing. Whether your experience happened recently or years ago, your story matters, and your healing is valid. You are welcome here.

Do you work with people of all genders and identities?

Absolutely. Our practice is inclusive of all genders, sexualities, cultural backgrounds, and experiences. We are committed to anti-oppressive and trauma-informed care. We can provide a counsellor from the LGBTQIA+ community upon request for adult clients.

You can choose if you prefer to see a male or female counsellor.

Do you provide women only spaces?

Yes, we provide dedicated women only spaces at our Women's Centre in Stafford and Forward House Refuge.

You will always be given a choice to see a female counsellor.

Do you offer interpretation services?

We work closely with local and national translation services and use their services whenever required. You will be asked if you have any additional requirements when we triage your referral and ensure we have the right team to work with you.

What happens in the first session?

The first session is mostly about getting to know each other. We'll talk about what brings you in, your hopes for counselling, and answer any questions you have. There's no pressure to dive into anything heavy — we'll go at your pace.

What will I get out of counselling?

You get out of counselling, what you put in! All our counselling is non-directive so you will decide what we discuss, you won't be questioned, or lead and we won't give advice or tell you what to do. Counselling can help with a huge variety of issues but we find that the following themes are regularly worked on together with your counsellor:

- Help to unpack and understand your feelings.
- Learning to cope with strong or upsetting emotions.
- Managing flashbacks, nightmares or intrusive thoughts.
- Reducing feelings of shame and self-blame.
- Improving your self-esteem.

Do you offer virtual sessions?

Yes. We offer secure online sessions as well as in-person sessions, so you can access support in the way that feels safest and most convenient for you.

What if I'm not ready yet?

That's completely okay. Just exploring this page is a brave first step. When you feel ready, we'll be here — no pressure, no timeline, just support.

Is there a criteria for counselling?

We ask that you have had no recent counselling elsewhere or with us, are able to attend and commit to weekly counselling sessions either face to face or remotely. We ask that you are motivated to engage and participate in counselling.