

# Counselling for primary school children



## Information for staff



*Supporting young people and children  
for over 20 years*

## What is Counselling?

Counselling provides an opportunity for children to talk, in confidence, about things that are worrying them or affecting their day to day life. By supporting the emotional health of pupils, counselling helps to make it easier for children build healthy relationships and learn within the school environment.

For the one to one counselling to be effective YCT recognises that it is important to understand a child's life both inside and outside of school. The counsellor will therefore take time to familiarise themselves with the issues and strengths the child feels they have, the concerns of parents/carers, teachers and staff members along with the child's existing support structures.

At the heart of our service is the one-to-one therapeutic counselling that we provide to children **after** liaison and consultation with staff and parents/carers. Alongside our one-to-one counselling service YCT can also offer a range of group based services for children to suit the needs and priorities of your school – please contact us for more information.

## What does a Counsellor do?

Counsellors are trained to listen without judging and to help children sort out their thoughts and feelings.

Counsellors in primary schools often use a wide range of activities and utilise the natural role of play to enable

the child to express themselves in a safe and natural way. Counsellors may, for example, make use of sand trays, art, writing and board games to support this process.

The sessions are always non-directive and led by the child's needs

## Who would be providing the counselling and what qualifications do their counsellors have?

YCT is an accredited organisational member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy- this means that all our counsellors are:

- Qualified to a minimum of a Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling
- BACP accredited or working towards accreditation
- Experienced in working with children OR are in the process of gaining this experience through supervised practice
- CRB checked
- Insured
- In receipt of regular clinical and line management supervision
- In receipt of regular continuing professional training
- Familiar with and working within Essex Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures.

- Familiar with maintaining records within data protection guidelines

## When should I consider referring a child for counselling?

You might want to consider making a referral for counselling if a child is:

- Becoming very subdued or over excited; has marked mood swings, or is exhibiting behaviour that is 'out of character'
- Refusing to go school
- Found bullying other children
- Being bullied
- Having difficulties due to a family breakdown or parents separating
- Having peer group difficulties/relationships
- Finding it hard to cope following the death of a family member/close friend
- Self-harming e.g. cutting
- Experiencing low self esteem
- Finding it hard to concentrate in school and the standard of their work has dropped dramatically

## Some questions you should consider before making a referral:

- What has been tried already and what has been the response from the child?
- How extreme is the behaviour or attitude?
- How long or persistent is it?
- How sudden is the change?
- Have you discussed your concerns with parents/carers?
- Are your concerns shared by other members of staff and/or parents/carers?
- How is the behaviour affecting other members of the school community/family?

If these questions raise concerns then please contact YCT to discuss the most appropriate way forward.

## How do I refer a child for counselling?

1. Once you are clear that a referral is appropriate you need to talk with the child and their parents/carers about your concerns and your reasons for suggesting counselling. This can be done separately and/or together.
2. When talking to the child remember to convey that counselling is voluntary and confidential and it is a means of support not a disciplinary measure. It should also be made clear that it is an opportunity to talk about problems and worries with a view to

- resolving or managing them more easily. The first session is an opportunity for them to make a decision as to whether they want to continue with counselling or not -it is completely their choice.
3. When talking with parents/carers you may find it helpful to give them a copy of the 'Information Sheet for parents and carers'. This will help them to understand what is involved and helps to explain that counselling is a normal and ordinary approach to supporting children experiencing difficulties. The care and sensitivity that is taken during this discussion can make a big difference to a child's engagement with counselling and the support they will receive from parents/carers whilst attending.
  4. When all the above have been done, you can make a referral to YCT by contacting us on the telephone number or through the email address on the back of this leaflet.

## Is it confidential?

A key feature of any quality assured counselling provision is that it is confidential. Counselling gives a child or young person a safe space to share their fears, worries or concerns and it is vital that they are able to develop a trusting relationship with the therapist if the work is to be successful.

When a child sees a counsellor or therapist for the first time they enter into a contract that makes clear that the only time confidentiality would be broken and a

discussion shared is if the child or young person is deemed to be at risk of significant harm from her/himself or others. If this were to be necessary the therapist would look to obtain a child or young person's approval where possible.

Schools and parents can be frustrated by the boundaries of confidentiality as issues may be discussed between the child and the therapist that they are unaware of. Some people can feel that knowing what is discussed may help them better understand how the child or young person is feeling and therefore how they can support them. To encourage a child to feel more in control of their situation a therapist will work to empower them to feel able to share issues that they are experiencing with the school or their families. They may also explore what they want the counsellor or therapist to share on their behalf.



*If after reading this information, you have any more questions please speak to one of our counsellors or contact YCT:*

YCT House Maddox Road Harlow CM20 3GA

01279 414090

Email: [youngconcern@btconnect.com](mailto:youngconcern@btconnect.com)

Website: [www.youngconcern.com](http://www.youngconcern.com)



*And don't forget...*

YCT can help your school by:

Providing group work with pupils and consultancy on issues of concern

Providing counselling support to parents

Staff training



*would like to thank Abigail, Jaime, Jeff, Sandor and the children of Milwards School in Harlow for their lovely pictures*