



## What is Psychotherapy or Counselling?

*"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them" - Albert Einstein*

Individuals, couples, or families participate in psychotherapy and counselling individually or in groups for many different reasons. It seems the most common reasons people reach out for this assistance is when they are emotionally troubled around relationships or with developmental life changes. Many people experience emotional crisis when they have troubles in either, or perhaps a relationship has become troubled or now lost, or they are stuck negotiating a developmental life change, such as ageing, transitions in career, or parenting.

Being able to share what is challenging or causing difficulties in a safe and non judgemental environment, and to gain new perspectives about how you can be supported or approach issues or problems differently can be life changing in itself. This can greatly enhance your awareness and your own ability to achieve solutions or outcomes that you desire. Greater self-awareness, internal healing and learning and developing more meaningful ways of being in the world facilitates increased intimacy with self and enables us to achieve that then with others.

The words Psychotherapy and Counselling are often used interchangeably in sessions with client(s); however following gives a brief overview of the differences of each.

Psychotherapy involves a therapist and client(s) in individuals or groups. In family therapy it may include several family members or in group therapy even other members within a social or job network. Client(s) discuss their issues in an effort to discover the underlying problems and to find constructive solutions. Because sensitive topics are often discussed during psychotherapy, therapists are expected, and usually legally bound, to respect client confidentiality. The process can be most beneficial where there is a feeling of safety with the therapist in the environment where the session is taking place, and a foundational therapeutic relationship is built from the therapist's ability to listen and discuss client(s) issues whilst displaying positive regard and non judgment. Psychotherapy is intended to improve mental health, and emotional or behavioral issues of individuals, group, or family relationship climates. Mental health problems can include psychological, social and somatic dimensions, which often make it hard for people to manage their lives and achieve their goals. Psychotherapy is aimed at these problems, and attempts to help people to solve them via a number of different approaches and techniques which may include accessing the conscious or unconscious mind with a view to becoming more aware of the script that we use to run our lives.

Many people mistakenly believe that Psychotherapy is all about digging up the past. How you have learnt to be, what you have learnt to do, the 'rules' – spoken or unspoken – that you believe you have to live your life by may be a contributing factor in a current issue or it may be blocking or stopping you achieving the future you desire. Our present behaviours, beliefs and actions have usually come about as a result of our life experiences to date. These

can continue to impact our present and create our future, and at some stage may become unuseful for us.

If this is the case, then it can become very useful through psychotherapeutic methods to explore parts of our past, gain greater awareness of how our unconscious mind may be influencing us, to uncover how we got to become who we are. Through this we can learn to change what is no longer useful for us.

Awareness of what it is that we do unconsciously or consciously, that no longer serves us well or is now unuseful to us as an adult, brings us choices, personal freedom and an increased self esteem.

Counselling is often used interchangeably with psychotherapy. It was originally adopted by the person centred therapist Carl Rogers to distinguish his work from the more medically oriented psychotherapy but the difference has become blurred among lay people. A general perspective is that counselling deals with ordinary every day problems and issues, while psychotherapy can deal with deeper mental and emotional problems. Psychotherapy requires more intense training than counselling, and often tends to involve a longer time of participation by the client, although there are some models of Psychotherapy that have a short term treatment approach such as Cognitive, Brief or Strategic therapy.

Counselling is the process of being able to share what is emotionally painful or troubling for you in confidence with another. A counsellor can offer you invaluable support in a safe, trusting, non judgemental space, where you can be fully listened to, learning to share your thoughts and feelings with another in ways that you may never have had the opportunity to do. From this you can become aware of different perspectives, or of ways of relating that you have learnt through life which may or may not be useful for you now. I enc

ourage you to contact me if any of the above has meaning for you, or you are wondering just how you may be able to help yourself in either of the above processes. I will be happy to share with you how the process of therapy may work for you.