

What Is Counselling?

Sometimes the best and clearest explanations are the ones we give children. Kids prefer short and simple. Get to the point, in plain language, or kids are likely to lose interest or tell you that you talk a lot.

So here's what I tell kids:

Counselling is about helping.

But there are lots of different kinds of helpers. You probably know some. Your doctor helps when you have a very sore throat. I don't know much about sore throats. A mechanic helps, if your family's car stops working well. Nobody wants me working on their car.

Counselling usually helps with three things: thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. What do you think? Do you have any thoughts, feelings or behaviour which are giving you some trouble, and you might want some help with?

It is actually quite rare when a child does not immediately nod, and pick one or more of these options. They might tell me something like this:

"I feel sad."

"I get in trouble at school a lot."

"I think nobody likes me."

Kids think intuitively and answer quickly. Adults often like to complicate things, and put more thought into it. So for you adults out there, I'll add **functioning** and **suffering** as additional considerations to chew on.

People typically do not come to counselling for help with thoughts, feelings and/or behaviour, unless one or more interfere with their day. Unless functioning -- at work, home or play -- gets messed-with. Counselling is intended to help improve functioning, so that you can get on with your day.

Suffering is often hand-in-hand with functioning; but some people manage to function quite well in life, yet suffer greatly. Counselling is also intended, therefore, to help reduce suffering; suffering, of course, which is connected to thoughts, feelings and/or behaviour. (As opposed to suffering from a sore throat or car troubles.)