

Tip sheet

Common counselling myths – debunked

Some people may be wary of accessing counselling due to common misconceptions. That's why it's important to examine and debunk whatever myths that may be preventing someone from reaching out when they need it the most.



Let's bust some common myths

1. It's only for serious mental health issues

Counselling can benefit anyone facing stress, emotional difficulties or life challenges.

2. Counsellors will 'fix' all your problems

Counselling is not about quick fixes; it's a process of self-discovery and developing strategies to cope with problems, not someone solving them for you.

3. You have to be in crisis to go to counselling

People often think they need to wait until they are in crisis to seek help, but counselling is also useful for personal growth, managing daily stress or preventing problems.

4. Counselling is a sign of weakness

Seeking help is often viewed as admitting defeat, but it takes strength and courage to work through emotional or psychological issues.

5. It's too expensive and unaffordable

Vitae's workplace wellbeing services are paid for by your employer and free to you for a set number of sessions.

6. Counselling is just talking about your past

While understanding the past can be important, counselling often focuses on the present and how to improve the future.

7. Counsellors will judge you

Counsellors are trained professionals who provide a nonjudgmental, safe space where you can express yourself freely.

8. Counsellors just sit and listen to you talk

Though listening is a big part of the process, counselling is also interactive. Counsellors provide feedback, ask questions and help clients develop strategies to address their concerns. You can guide what you need from your sessions.

9. Counselling is only about mental health

Counselling can cover a broad range of topics like career issues, relationship challenges and stress management, not just mental health.

10. It takes years to see results

Some people find relief or develop strategies in just a few sessions, depending on their goals. Short-term counselling is often effective.

11. If counselling didn't work for someone else, it won't work for me

Counselling is highly individual. What works or doesn't work for one person may not apply to another. Success depends on the counsellor-client relationship – tell them what you need.

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12. It's the same as venting to a friend

Unlike casual conversations, Counselling involves a structured, therapeutic process led by a trained professional who can guide you toward insights and solutions.

13. All counsellors are the same

There are different types of counsellors and therapy approaches. What works well for one person may not work for another, so it can take time to find the right match.

14. Just figure things out on your own

While self-reflection is important, having a trained professional guide you through complex feelings or situations can offer a perspective and tools that are hard to develop alone.

15. Counsellors will tell you what to do

Counsellors don't give direct advice or make decisions for you. Instead, they empower you to make informed choices and come to your own conclusions.

16. You will feel better after one session

While some people might feel relief after a single session, meaningful change often requires time and consistent effort in therapy.

17. You need to have all your problems figured out before going to counselling

Counselling can be for those who may feel confused or uncertain. You don't need to have a clear idea of what's wrong to seek help.

18. Couples counselling is a sign that the relationship is doomed

Many couples seek counselling to strengthen their relationships, prevent problems or improve communication, not because the relationship is failing.

19. People will think less of me

Unfortunately, societal stigma may fuel this myth, but more people are recognising the value of mental health support as a positive, proactive step.

20. Sessions are uncomfortable and awkward

While initial sessions may feel unfamiliar, most people quickly become comfortable as they build rapport with their counsellor.

21. Counsellors just prescribe medication

Counsellors do not prescribe medication; that is the role of a psychiatrist or a medical doctor. Counsellors focus on talk therapy and behavioural techniques.

22. You have to share everything in counselling

You only share what you feel comfortable sharing. You are in control of the process, and you can open up at your own pace.

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