



Service Information Leaflet

Young People's Counselling Service

Phone: 01352 704150

Text: 80800 start your message YPCS - Texts are free

email: ypcs@flintshire.gov.uk

web: www.flintshire.gov.uk/help4yp



This Service Information Leaflet provides a series of questions and answers about counselling and the Young People's Counselling Service, Flintshire. If you require any further information, feel free to contact the counselling team directly.

About Counselling

What is counselling?

Counselling gives young people a regular and confidential space to talk about worries or problems they are experiencing. Talking things through in a confidential setting, with regular appointments over a period of time can often help young people gain new and different perspectives. This can lead to changes in how they feel about themselves, their relationships with others, their thinking and their behaviour - both in and out of school.

How does counselling work?

Having thoughts, feelings and worries listened to, clarified or understood by someone who is not directly involved in problems or concerns can be hugely beneficial. Often, young people find that having a confidential setting and regular time to talk enables them to build a trusting relationship with which to understand themselves better or get further help in other places if they need it. Counselling can also enable young people to see alternative choices for moving forwards. Sometimes just 'talking things through' can help young people to feel clearer or more confident about something they had in mind already.

What does a counsellor do?

YPCS Counsellors are trained to listen and understand young people; to see things from their perspective. As well as listening, counsellors also help young people to clarify their problems or difficulties, see patterns in their relating, thinking and/or behaviour and support them in making positive changes if they wish. Counsellors do not give advice or tell young people what to do - instead they help young people to make their own choices to facilitate personal growth and self-awareness.

Who can come to counselling?

The Young People's Counselling Service is open to all young people in Flintshire, Years 6-13, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), not in education, employment or training (NEETs), Specialist School, Travellers and educated other than at school (EOTAS).

What kind of things might a young person talk to a counsellor about?

The issues are wide and varied. Some of these include:

- ▶ anxiety
- ▶ bullying
- ▶ behaviour
- ▶ bereavement
- ▶ depression
- ▶ divorce & separation
- ▶ exam stress
- ▶ family
- ▶ relationships
- ▶ self harm
- ▶ sexuality
- ▶ substance misuse

Confidentiality

Is counselling confidential?

Yes, however there are exceptional circumstances when confidentiality needs to be broken. This is clearly explained to the young person at the start of any counselling relationship.

Why is it so important that counselling sessions are kept confidential?

In order for young people to feel completely safe and trust the counsellor to help them with their concerns, it is essential for confidentiality to be maintained. Confidentiality also supports young people when they want to change their behaviour or be completely honest about some of the more difficult feelings in life, such as sadness, anxiety, fear, shame or anger.

When would confidentiality be broken?

Confidentiality will be broken if the counsellor deems a young person at significant risk of harm to either themselves or others during the course of counselling. In these cases, the Counsellor will speak to the designated Link Teacher in school and/or Child Protection Officer and agree the next steps, together with the young person (wherever possible).

This could mean a referral onto other external services such as Child and Adolescent Team (CAT), informing parents/carers or other actions to ensure the care and safety of the young person.

Counsellors, along with other professionals continue to balance young people's rights with the duty of child protection and to act in the best interests of the young person.

Do parents/carers or other adults need to be informed?

If a young person has been assessed as *Gillick competent they have the legal right not to tell parents, carers (or even other adults or young people) that they are accessing counselling, and this should be respected. Of course, young people themselves are free to tell whoever they wish that they are engaging in counselling, and often do.

During the first session with a young person, the Counsellor will always explain the boundaries of confidentiality, check that they are fully understood and in what circumstances confidentiality would need to be broken.

Do Counsellors work with other services?

Counsellors work closely with CAT and other Children's Services - making referrals in conjunction with school staff where necessary - to ensure the safety of all young people who engage with the service.

**Gillick competence is a term originating in England and is used in medical law to decide whether a child (16 years or younger) is able to consent to his or her own medical treatment, without the need for parental permission or knowledge*

Appointments

What should I do if I think a young person could benefit from counselling?

If you believe a young person might benefit from talking to the school counsellor, you can:

- ▶ find out who the counsellor is & when he/she is available in school and let the young person know
- ▶ give the young person a YPCS FAQs leaflet, contact card or flyer
- ▶ inform them how to make an initial appointment
- ▶ help the young person to make an appointment
- ▶ talk to the YPCS or the Link Teacher in school

Can I make an initial appointment on behalf of a young person?

Yes, however, only if the young person requests this or agrees for you to do this on their behalf. It is always a young person's choice about whether to come to counselling and they should not be 'sent' to counselling for help or persuaded one way or another, even if school staff, parents/carers or other adults think they could benefit from talking to a counsellor.

How can young people access the service?

There are a number of ways young people may access the service:

Tel: 01352 704150
Text: 80800 (start message with YPCS) - Texts are FREE
Website: www.flintshire.gov.uk/help4yp
Email: ypcs@flintshire.gov.uk
Drop-in: drop-in to see the counsellor on the day(s) they are in school

When and where do appointments take place?

Appointments take place weekly, in or out of school in a private, designated room. It is helpful for sessions to take place in the same room each week to promote feelings of trust, safety and confidentiality.

Can appointments be made outside of school hours and holidays?

Yes. Appointments can be made during school holidays at venues in and around Flintshire.

What if a young person misses an appointment or is not in school?

If a young person misses an appointment, they will be offered another appointment. If two consecutive appointments are missed and the counsellor does not hear from the young person (or the Link Teacher on their behalf) he/she will assume that the young person no longer wishes to come to counselling. The young person is free to return at any time in the future and this is clearly explained during the first session.

What if a young person wants to stop coming to counselling?

Young people are free to end counselling at any time. During the first session they are advised of this and are asked to let the counsellor, counselling service or Link Teacher know if this is the case.

Who is the 'Link Teacher' in school?

The Link Teacher is a designated member of school staff who has agreed to take responsibility for and be the point of contact for school-based counselling. The Counsellor and the Link Teacher also work together to ensure smooth running of the appointments system, review and evaluation of the service and ongoing improvements where necessary.

The Link Teacher also works with the Counsellor to raise awareness of the counselling service with young people, staff, parents and governors and also informs the Counsellor of any significant events that may impact on young people's emotional wellbeing. For example, bereavements or critical incidents, which can occur in the community or school.

About the counsellor

What qualifications, experience and supervision does the counsellor have?

All Counsellors hold a recognised, formal qualification in Counselling, such as a Diploma or a Degree, plus a range of appropriate experience and training to work with young people. YPCS counsellors are also members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), engage in regular training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and work with BACP's Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling & Psychotherapy.

In addition, Counsellors receive regular, ongoing Clinical Supervision. This is where the counsellor meets with another counsellor, who is their Supervisor. Counsellors discuss their caseload during Supervision and receive support and guidance for their work with young people.

And finally, what if. . .?

What if I think a young person is only coming to counselling to get out of going to a lesson?

YPCS Counsellors always vary appointment times each week to ensure that young people do not miss the same lessons. Where appropriate, they can also explore with the young person their concerns about going to the lesson, as sometimes underlying fears or issues may be at the root.

The counselling relationship is a professional one and YPCS Counsellors continue to review whether counselling is effective or the best form of help.

What if a young person is unhappy with the counselling they are receiving?

Young people are advised of the complaints procedure during their first session and can talk to the Counsellor directly about how they feel or, they may prefer to contact the Counsellor's Manager using the contact details outlined in this leaflet. All young people are advised of this during the first session with the Counsellor.

Further information

For further information about counselling and to view a copy of the Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling & Psychotherapy, go to www.bacp.co.uk or contact the Young People's Counselling Service directly.

Feedback from young people

"It helped me a lot in big situations"

"It improves my behaviour and my confidence around people, where ever I go"

"Really helped me to organise my thoughts and understand my feelings more"

"I have found counselling helpful and it has been useful to let things out in the open, instead of keeping them inside"

"It helped me get a bit more confidence and believe in myself a bit more"

"Counselling helped me a lot by helping me to stop stressing so much and how to handle stress"

"It was helpful to go to someone and tell someone everything that was happening knowing that no one else would know"

"I got lots of confidence, got safety idea"

"More able to explore and understand feelings which has helped to control my temper"

"Counselling helped me loads"

"It helped me to deal with my worries and overcome them"

This booklet is available in Welsh on request