Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Clearing up the misconceptions: the myths and facts about counselling

Life is full of challenges. From work pressure, to family tension, to financial concerns–all of us contend with our own daily battles. Despite strong support from friends and family, sometimes you just need someone else to talk to. Although it's no longer a taboo topic, there are still many mistaken ideas about what counselling is and who it's for. The facts below will help debunk some of the counselling myths that may be holding you back from reaching out.



Myth: Counselling is only for people with serious mental health issues.

Fact: Problems that start out as everyday concerns can build up and, if not dealt with, spiral out of control. Many people make the mistake of waiting until a small roadblock becomes a major issue before seeking help. Counselling offers you the chance to deal with day-to-day concerns—whether stress, anxiety, work-life balance or another issue—and discover tangible and effective solutions that work for you.

Myth: Only weak people who can't cope with issues on their own should seek counselling.

Fact: There is nothing weak about seeing a counsellor. In fact, it takes inner strength to acknowledge a problem. It also requires great insight to proactively and responsibly deal with the matter before it negatively impacts your physical and emotional well-being and relationships.

Myth: A stranger can't possibly help me—they don't even know me.

Fact: This is actually why counselling is so effective. Friends and family are our greatest support systems but these relationships are two-way streets that involve give and take. Time with a counsellor is all about ***you*****.** A professional can offer you impartial, unbiased insights and support that will help you speak more openly about your situation and remove any fears or anxiety about being judged.

Myth: I've tried counselling before and it doesn't work.

Fact: Although counselling may not have "worked" for you before, that doesn't mean it won't a second or even third time with a different professional. Counsellors use varying approaches and styles to help determine the right approach for your specific situation. Also, the success or failure of a counselling relationship will depend on your openness to the process.

Myth: Counsellors never say anything they just listen and take notes.

Fact: Many people expect a counselling session to involve a couch, disapproving eyes and lots of silent analysis. Counselling is actually a very interactive process that creates a two-way discussion between you and your counsellor. It will help you explore your choices and set goals, while providing you with some original ideas and new perspectives. As cliché as it sounds, it can be a real breath of fresh air

Myth: Everyone will know that I'm going to see a counsellor, which will only make everything worse.

Fact: The only person who will know you are visiting a counsellor is **you.** Counsellors are bound by very strict codes of ethics and confidentiality and every good professional should go over this during your first appointment.

Regular ups and downs are an expected part of life. But sometimes life can throw you a curveball that can be difficult to gauge and handle on your own. You wouldn't think twice about going to the doctor to treat a bad cough, so why not take the same approach with your emotional health? Be proactive, put yourself first and get the support you need before your situation worsens.

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