

Helen Palmer BSc Hons MBACP

Offering Counselling/Psychotherapy

I have been counselling since 1995 and in private practice since 2001. I am committed to an ongoing programme of continuous professional development and my work is regularly supervised. I am a fully accredited member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and abide by their Code of Ethics and requirements for annual reaccreditation. I have an honours degree in psychology and a diploma in psychodynamic counselling. I offer a completely confidential service. If you would like to know more about the service I offer or have any questions about the information below please phone 07773248744 or email helenpalmer1261@gmail.com

Who is Counselling/psychotherapy for?

I see people, individuals and couples, with a wide variety of problems with varying degrees of severity. I believe counselling/psychotherapy can help most people with aspects of their lives that they believe are problematic. I have seen people with **stress/anxiety, depression, obsessive, compulsive** behaviours, **addictive** behaviour and all types of **relationship** and **personal** problems sometimes of a **sexual** nature. I also see people who lack **motivation** or **direction**, or a sense of **purpose** in their lives. I have counselled people who have been **bereaved** both recently and sometimes many years ago.

What type of counselling/psychotherapy?

I am psychodynamically trained and tend to work within this perspective. However I do use cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) methods and others where appropriate. A psychodynamic perspective assumes that we are the way we are, to a large extent, because of past experiences and our reaction to them, not all of which are within our immediate consciousness. It assumes behaviour and emotional state are often directed or at least influenced by our unconscious and our present experiences are constantly reinforcing and in conflict with our unconscious world. In this way we, our "psyche" (the Greek for self) is truly dynamic, how we felt about things and our "self" in the past, affect how we feel about them now.

The cognitive behavioural perspective assumes we all have stories and pictures about our world, called "schemas". These are based on experience and are mainly conscious but we are not always aware of them.

How does therapy work?

We all experience feeling different from day to day and often it is difficult to know why some days little things can be more annoying or upsetting than other days. Most people come into counselling or psychotherapy because they are looking to **feel** better or different with fewer ups and downs. It is not always the apparently obvious reason that is the cause of why we feel the way we do.

Counselling/psychotherapy offers time and space with an impartial, non judgemental trained person to ask questions about assumptions we make about ourselves, others and our world and the way we feel as a result. It is this exploration, sometimes challenging, that develops awareness and insight that eventually can lead to change in the way we feel about our life situation. Sometimes this prompts physical life changes too.

How long does therapy take?

Counselling/psychotherapy is a process which once embarked upon continues throughout life. (Obviously, eventually without the therapist!) For some people that journey in the company of the therapist is short for others it is much longer. It depends on the individual on when they feel they can “go it alone”. This depends not only on how difficult things were for them when they started therapy but also on what they might want to do in life. This may change as they go through therapy. Often people remain in therapy even though their original reason for coming has long since subsided. They find it a source of enlightenment about themselves which is strengthening and confidence building.

Life Coaching/Counselling/Psychotherapy. What's the difference ?

All three use counselling skills to varying degrees. A Life Coach would draw on his/her knowledge of life and people in light of what they know about their client and would use that to help coach a client into living a more satisfactory way of life. Always being led by the client the coach would not hesitate to advise and suggest ways to improve a life situation.

Counsellors/ psychotherapists rarely advise. They would expect clients to come up with their own solutions for making life “better”. They may introduce ideas for ways to do that but would rarely suggest they **should** do it. Counsellors help clients effect change by helping clients to “see” things differently.

Psychotherapy and counselling are very similar and are usually carried out in the same way. That is meeting at the same time each week for 50 minutes, no social contact between sessions. There is no social interaction between client and therapist, the relationship is strictly professional. The main difference between counselling and psychotherapy is probably at the level where client and therapist are working.

It is important to feel reasonably comfortable with your therapist. Research shows that the relationship between client and therapist rather than the type of therapy seems to be more indicative of a successful outcome. However, that does not mean that you will always agree, in fact some of the best work takes place when the client can talk to the therapist about things that are an issue between them.

Therapy can be a life changing experience. Most people enter in times of extreme discomfort but if they see therapy through, usually discover a sense of empowerment and a belief in themselves that they previously did not possess.