



A Guide to Supporting Children Accessing Counselling



How do I explain 'counselling' to my child?

It is important that children have a clear understand of what counselling is prior to them attending their first session. Providing a clear and age-appropriate explanation of counselling can ensure that your child understands the role of the counsellor and why they are attending.

Some things to avoid when explaining counselling to children include telling them that they are meeting a "new friend" or that they are going somewhere "just to play" as this can create confusion. You can explain to your child that counselling is a safe place for them to express their feelings, work on ways to feel differently, and to talk about any worries that they may have. It is important that children know that they won't be forced to talk about or do anything that they don't want to and that counselling can also include making art and playing.

It can also be helpful to answer any questions your child may have about counselling so that they can feel prepared before they go somewhere and meet someone new for the first time. If your child has questions that you don't know the answer to, you are welcome to call your counsellor before your child's appointment or write these questions down with your child so that you can ask them at the first appointment.

What do I do with artwork that my child brings home?

Creating artwork can be an important component of counselling, with children often given the choice as to whether they would like to take their artwork home at the end of a session. It is important that any artwork that is taken home is treated as special and kept in a safe space where it won't be damaged by pets or siblings. Some parents will keep their child's artwork in a folder or box to make sure it is kept safe.

Can I ask my child questions about counselling?

It is natural to be curious about how your child's counselling session went and want to ask questions. As we want to ensure that children feel a sense of safety and privacy in counselling, we recommend avoiding specific questions and instead asking general questions such as "how was it?"

What is my child's behaviour becomes worse during counselling?

Counselling is a space for your child to work through any big feelings that they may have which can sometimes bring up difficult emotions or memories. Therefore, it is common for parents to notice a change in their child's behaviour as they begin to work through big feelings. When children are feeling angry, sad, scared, or confused they may behave differently at home and/or school. It is important remember that this will pass. Your child's counsellor can also help you develop strategies to support your child during this time.

Talking to your child's counsellor -

If you have any questions about your child's counselling or would like to discuss any concerns or incidents with your child's counsellor, we recommend that you call your counsellor prior to the next appointment or book in a time for your own counselling appointment. This will allow you to talk about your child without them being present and ensure that your child does not miss out on any of their session time.

We encourage consistency with sessions -

Being consistent with your child's counselling sessions means that they will get the most out of counselling as they will be able to establish a relationship with their counsellor and become familiar with the counselling space.

If you decide to finish your child's counselling, we highly recommend that your child has the opportunity to have a goodbye session with their counsellor so that they can reflect on what the counselling experience has been like for them, celebrate any achievements they have made, and say goodbye to their counsellor.

Having a positive goodbye session can also help children feel more comfortable engaging in counselling in the future

If you have any other questions, please contact your counsellor on 07 3816 3000.



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