

Connect Ed

Mental Health Services for Schools

Counselling, Play Therapy & Creative Arts Therapies



A guide for school staff

What does counselling /therapy involve?

Our service seeks to provide accessible, flexible and confidential therapeutic support for vulnerable pupils who are experiencing a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Counselling and therapy give children and young people a regular and private space to talk about worries or problems they are experiencing.

What is different about Play Therapy / Creative Arts Therapies?

Creative art therapies aim to produce the same outcomes as traditional counselling. However, they are particularly beneficial for young children who may struggle to articulate and express painful emotions through words.

During a therapy session the child will engage with a wide range of games, toys and play activities to help them express their worries and feelings at their own pace. Our therapists may also use other creative mediums such as music, art and drama.

Through interacting with and observing a child, our therapist can gain a good understanding of the issues which are affecting their wellbeing. In the process our therapist will help the child to unburden themselves of their anxieties and fears and understand their feelings better.

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 is the counselling / therapy delivered?

We provide weekly one-to-one therapy sessions for pupils with complex needs.

We can also offer therapeutic groups helping pupils with specific issues such as bereavement, transitions or social skills.

How are pupils referred and selected?

Our therapist will work closely with a designated member of school staff (the school 'link person') to manage referrals and select which pupils are suitable for therapy. This is not simply about choosing the most challenging or disruptive pupils. It is about identifying those pupils who are emotionally vulnerable and would benefit from therapeutic support. Issues experienced by the pupil may include domestic violence, neglect, family breakdown, depression, anxiety etc.

In primary schools our therapist may conduct a classroom or playground observation of the pupil as part of the assessment process. At some secondary schools pupils can self-refer to this service, depending on the school policy.



Working with school staff

Although we will have a designated 'link person' at your school we encourage all staff to speak with the therapist about any pupils you are concerned about. Our therapist will be happy to provide advice and support, discuss whether therapy is suitable and suggest what other support may be available locally.

For those pupils who are attending therapy sessions our therapist will always seek to liaise regularly with appropriate school staff (class teacher, learning mentor, head of year etc.). Whilst full details about the therapy sessions cannot be shared due to client confidentiality, these meetings are an opportunity to help staff understand what progress is being made, gain insights into the pupil's situation and develop suitable support strategies.

What outcomes can be expected from counselling / therapy?

Our therapists are all qualified and experienced mental health professionals and can work with some of the most complex cases.

Often by helping vulnerable pupils come to terms with the sources of their distress they are able to develop greater emotional resilience, more positive self-esteem and increased confidence. This in turn can enhance their social skills and their relationships with peers, school staff and family members. It also helps ensure they are in a far stronger position to concentrate in class, engage with learning and achieve their full potential.

More information

For more information about the service we are providing in your school please speak with your counsellor/therapist.

Your counsellor/therapist's name is:

S/he works at your school on:

The best time and place to meet with him/her is:

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Delivered by The Catholic Children's Society
(Registered Charity No. 210920)