



Counselling Children Factsheet

This factsheet is aimed to provide information about counselling children. Counselling children is fundamentally different to counselling adults, as such, the emotional expression and processing with children is through play. This being a child's most natural form of communication. Below, provides some information to assist in understanding the process and nuance of counselling children, in comparison to the expectations and outcomes of counselling adults.

'Play therapy is the dynamic process between child and play therapist in which the child explores at his or her own pace and with his or her own agenda those issues, past and current, conscious and unconscious, that are affecting the child's life in the present. The child's inner resources are enabled by the therapeutic alliance to bring about growth and change. Play Therapy is child-centred, in which play is the primary medium and speech is the secondary medium. Play Therapy encompasses many approaches, but the foundation of all approaches is child-centred'. (British Association of Play Therapy)

Counselling children is based on the premise that play is spontaneous and initiated by the child to enable them to learn to cope with emotional conflict, with the belief that children symbolise their inner world best through creative mediums. As such, counselling offers empathic reflection on the child's symbolism rather than interpretation of said symbolism.

One of the most important tasks of counselling is developing a trusting relationship between therapist and client by providing a safe confidential space to process/express anything that may be troubling them. It is of vital importance that this stage is not rushed, any disruption to the safety or confidentiality of sessions could seriously rupture the therapeutic relationship. Detailed information about the content of sessions will not be shared with parents/carers, however regular reviews will take place which the counsellor may invite you to. This will be with a view to gaining your perspective of any development/change outside of the counselling room and in the child's natural environment. Parents/carers often ask if they can be present in their child's sessions. At Walk Tall we afford children the same right to confidentiality as adults, therefore if parents/carers wish to play an active part in the therapy process then it's advised that family therapy is accessed. Children need to feel free to express their feelings and often with parents/carers present, children can be inhibited in this process for many reasons, such as trying to protect the parent/carer.