

What is counselling?

Counselling is a chance to talk confidentially about whatever is on your mind and getting you down. For example, it might be your relationship with your family or a friend, or it may be confusing feelings that do not make sense – like feeling particularly angry, sad, or anxious. Sometimes a memory may keep coming to mind and upsetting or troubling you.

You may feel alone with your troubled feelings of stress and worry. Talking can help alleviate this feeling as you begin the process of addressing the issues on your mind. Counselling can help identify your feelings, so that you are better able to understand and manage them and develop appropriate coping strategies.

Whatever it is you are struggling with, counselling gives you the opportunity to explore the issues in a quiet and safe place.

Typically, counselling is about empowering you to be in a better position to be able to solve your own problems and get on with your life.

What sort of things are talked about?

Relationships with family and friends, anxiety and depression (can occur together), inability to control emotions (for example angry outbursts), bereavement, bullying, self-worth, abuse, self-confidence, eating disorders, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, body dysmorphia, self-acceptance, perfectionism, family breakdown, traumatic experiences, and issues around identity.

When will the counselling take place?

The counselling takes place during the school day and is arranged around the pupils' timetable; usually taking place on the same day and at the same time each week.

How long are the sessions?

Each counselling session is 45 minutes.

Is the counselling confidential?

Counselling sessions are confidential, unless there are concerns about the pupil being able to keep themselves safe. In these circumstances, it might be appropriate to inform a parent, the Deputy Head (Safeguarding) or the GP.

Who is our School Counsellor and where can I find her?

The School Counsellor is Mrs Carolyn Varney, and her office can be found on the same floor as the Library (almost opposite Mr Leigh's office). Her school hours are Monday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm, Tuesday 8.30 am – 4.30 pm and Thursdays 8.30 am to 4.30 pm. Counselling can be requested by either the pupil themselves, a member of staff, or a parent. Appointments can be made by either dropping by Mrs Varney's office or by emailing her (c.varney@ewllcastle.co.uk) or phoning directly on 0208 394 3567 (ext. 265).

There is a counselling 'drop in' service every Monday during morning break (10.50 am – 11.10 am) when all pupils can visit Mrs Varney office and organise a counselling meeting.