

## What is Counselling?

There are times when we all need someone to talk to. Young people, like adults, can be adversely affected by difficult and stressful situations and may find it hard to cope. Counselling provides the opportunity to talk about things that are troubling them, in confidence, with a qualified counsellor. While the issues brought to counselling vary from person to person, some typical examples are:

- Low self-esteem or confidence
- Feeling anxious or depressed
- Bullying
- Relationship problems
- Family difficulties
- School or work related stress
- Self-harm
- Loss of someone close to them

Young people often talk to friends, family or teachers about their problems but sometimes it is helpful to speak to someone who is not involved in their everyday lives. Counsellors do not give advice but listen without judging and help the young person to sort out their thoughts and feelings and to explore

strategies to manage themselves and their relationships more effectively.

## The Service

Counselling is available to those aged 11-18 years, whether in school or not. Most sessions are delivered in a private room within the two local High Schools in Portree and Plockton but can also take place in a community setting. In school, the sessions last the duration of a school period and are rotated each week so that the same subject is not missed each time.

After a referral has been received, an introductory session is arranged to allow both the counsellor and young person to decide if counselling would be a helpful way forward. If so, an initial block of weekly sessions, usually 4 or 6, is agreed. There will be a review at the end of this initial block and, where appropriate, further sessions will be arranged.

At times, the counsellor may decide that an onward referral to another service is required and this will be discussed with the young person and parent, as appropriate.

As our Plockton High School counsellor is a fluent Gaelic speaker, sessions there are available in either Gaelic or English.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is central to the counselling process – it helps the young person to build trust and to feel free to discuss whatever is troubling them. However, the safety and welfare of the young people is paramount and this may take precedence over confidentiality if it becomes clear that they or someone else is at significant risk. Young people are made aware of this during the introductory session.

Young people may not always want their parents to know they are attending counselling. Under Scottish law, young people have the right to make that choice as long as they are assessed by the referrer and the counsellor to have the competency to make that decision with sufficient understanding. However, we do encourage openness with parents where that is appropriate and parents can be supportive by showing an acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful activity, while respecting the young person's right to keep the contents of sessions confidential.

## Standards

The service meets the guidelines laid down by the relevant Professional Counselling Bodies (COSCA and BACP) for the provision of counselling services for young people. The counsellors are professionally qualified and experienced and work within their professional codes of ethics and practice.

## Referrals

Referrals can be received from the young people themselves or from parents, schools, GP's and other agencies. However, it is essential that the young person is aware of the referral and wants to attend counselling.

## Costs

No charge is made for the counselling service. However, CounsellingCare: Skye and Lochalsh is a charity and donations can be made to the organisation at the address below.

## Contact Details

If you would like to discuss a referral for your young person, or if you would like more information about any aspect of this service, please contact:

Jean Gillies  
Lead Counsellor, Children and Young People  
c/o Lochalsh Health Centre  
Station Road  
Kyle of Lochalsh  
IV40 8AE

Tel: 01599 530930 (to leave a message)  
Mobile: 07881981519  
E-mail: jean.ncs@aol.co.uk

**OR** For pupils at Plockton High School:

Sheila Hamilton  
Counsellor, Children and Young People  
Mobile: 07585921686  
E-mail: sheila.ncs@aol.co.u



CounsellingCare:Skye & Lochalsh is a charity registered in Scotland No. SC033321

# Counselling Service for Young People

## Information for Parents and Carers

**CounsellingCare's Service for young people is  
supported by Highland Council and the RS  
MacDonald CharitableTrust**