

The information contained in these handouts is provided to increase awareness of how hypnosis may help and does not constitute medical expert opinion, diagnosis, or treatment. It is not intended to replace medical care or professional advice from a qualified healthcare provider. If you have any concerns for yourself or loved ones consult with medical and or health providers.

Educational Handout: Individual Counselling

Definition: What is counselling?

Individual counselling is a confidential, structured process where a person works one-on-one with a trained counsellor or therapist to understand what's affecting their wellbeing and to develop practical strategies for change.

Counselling may focus on thoughts, emotions, behaviours, relationships, coping skills, and life circumstances. Sessions are guided by your goals—what you want to improve, understand, or manage.

Why people seek individual counselling

People often seek counselling for many reasons, including:

- Stress, anxiety, or overwhelm (feeling “on edge” or unable to switch off)
- Low mood or depression
- Relationship or family strain (patterns, boundaries, conflict, grief)
- Trauma or difficult life events
- Life transitions (moving, job change, breakup, parenting changes)
- Burnout and mental fatigue
- Self-esteem and confidence concerns
- Coping with change, uncertainty, or loss (including grief)
- Habit challenges (e.g., emotional eating, procrastination, compulsive patterns)
- Work or performance pressures
- Developing healthier routines and emotional regulation skills

Counselling is also common for people who are functioning “on the outside” but feel stuck internally and want support to feel better from the inside.

How individual counselling helps

Counselling can help in several ways:

1) Understanding patterns

You learn how your thoughts, emotions, and behaviours connect—often identifying repeating cycles (e.g., stress → worry → avoidance → more stress).

2) Emotional support and regulation

3) Practical coping strategies

You gain tools to manage strong emotions and recover faster after difficult moments. You develop skills for real-life challenges, such as problem-solving, communication, grounding techniques, or behaviour change strategies.

4) Changing unhelpful thinking

You learn how to regulate your emotions and respond more effectively. When appropriate, you work on perspective shifts—reducing catastrophizing, self-criticism, and “all-or-nothing” thinking.

5) Building insight and self-compassion

You clarify what you need, what triggers you, and how to respond more kindly and effectively.

6) Strengthening boundaries and decision-making

You learn to set limits, make values-based choices, and reduce people-pleasing or avoidant patterns.

What to expect in sessions (common structure)

While approaches vary by counsellor, sessions often include:

- discussing what’s been happening since the last session (or since starting)
- identifying goals and priorities
- exploring thoughts, feelings, and behaviours linked to your concerns
- practicing or planning coping skills
- agreeing on small steps to try between sessions

Myths about counselling (and the reality)

Myth 1: “Counselling is only for severe problems.”

Reality: People seek counselling for everything from everyday stress to major mental health challenges.

Myth 2: "A counsellor will tell me what to do."

Reality: Counselling focuses on helping you understand and choose for yourself. A good counsellor guides, supports, and helps you build your own solutions.

Myth 3: "If I start counselling, I'm admitting I can't cope."

Reality: Seeking help is a proactive step. It's about building skills, not proving failure.

Myth 4: "It will fix everything instantly."

Reality: Real change usually takes time, practice, and consistent effort.

Myth 5: "Counselling means reliving everything."

Reality: You control how much you share. Many approaches focus on coping, skill-building, and problem-solving rather than only "recounting the past."

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Is counselling confidential?

In most cases, counselling is confidential. There are usually specific exceptions (for example, risk of harm to yourself or others). Your counsellor will explain confidentiality clearly.

Q: How many sessions will I need?

It depends on your goals and needs. Some people benefit from a short course; others work longer-term.

Q: What if I don't know exactly what I want to work on?

That's common. Counsellors can help you clarify goals by exploring what feels hardest, what isn't working, and what you want to feel instead.

Q: Will I be judged?

No. Counselling is designed to be a non-judgmental space where you can be honest and work at your own pace.

Q: What if I don't like talking?

Talking is only one part. You may work through worksheets, exercises, goal-setting, grounding strategies, or other structured activities depending on the approach.

Q: How do I know if counselling is working?

Signs include feeling more understood, fewer recurring crises, better coping skills, improved communication, more consistent routines, and a growing sense of control.

Q: Can counselling help with everyday stress, not just mental illness?

Yes. Many clients attend counselling specifically to manage stress, anxiety, boundaries, and life pressures.

Quick self-check (to help you get started)

- What's been hardest lately? _____

- How is it affecting my life?

_____ • What would I like to feel or be able to do instead?

- What patterns do I notice repeating? _____

If you are interested in personal or individual counselling contact Brendan Online Hypnotherapy

Important for you to consider:

Mandatory Reporting & Duty of Care (Important Information)

What is duty of care?

Duty of care means that your counsellor has a professional responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect your wellbeing and safety, and to act responsibly when risk is identified. This includes creating a safe space for sessions and responding appropriately if serious concerns come up.

What is mandatory reporting?

Mandatory reporting refers to situations where a counsellor is legally required to report certain information to the appropriate authorities or organizations. This is not the same as "breaking confidentiality for any reason"—it is limited to specific legal criteria.

When can counselling confidentiality be limited?

Confidentiality may be limited when there is a serious concern such as:

- Risk of harm to yourself (e.g., imminent self-harm or suicide risk)
- Risk of harm to others (e.g., credible threats or imminent danger)
- Child or vulnerable adult protection issues (where required by law)
- Some legal processes (e.g., court orders, subpoenas, or specific legal requests)

What does this mean for you?

- Your counsellor will normally explain confidentiality and its limits at the start of therapy.
- If a reporting obligation applies, the counsellor will generally take steps to support you and, where possible, discuss the situation with you before reporting (though immediate action may be required in emergency/crisis situations).