

How much does counselling cost?

The cost of counselling differs amongst various organisations. With your medical card, you can access HSE's free counselling services. Many organisations offer free services or reduced fee based on your financial situation.

What are the waiting times?

The waiting times for your service can vary based on the availability of the service. Also, if your GP determines that your needs are more urgent, your waiting time can be shorter. If you find that your waiting time is too long, you can ask your GP for local support groups that may be useful while you wait for counselling. Alternatively, you can further discuss the urgency of your situation with your GP.

Is it confidential?

All services are confidential; your counsellor cannot tell anyone about what you talk about in your sessions.

However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if something you say leads the counsellor to believe:

- someone is in danger
- you are a danger to yourself/others
- any criminal activity has happened

What if I cannot speak English well?

If you cannot speak English well, there are private organizations that have counsellors who speak many languages or have trained interpreters, such as for example MyMind counselling service.

What services are there for children under 18?

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is an HSE organization for children under the age of 18 and their families. Your GP or a senior social worker or a senior psychologist must refer your child for this service. You can also contact TUSLA child and family agencies, community psychology services, and/or your local family resource centres. There are some charity organisations that provide free counselling services for children, such as for example Jigsaw.

Emergency Situations

If you are having thoughts of suicide or need immediate attention, you can access the necessary services at your local mental health unit or hospital. You can call the Emergency Service at 999 anytime on any day or:

FREE HELPLINES 24 HOURS 7 DAYS A WEEK:

Samaritans 116 123

Console 1800 247 247 (suicide)

Childline 1800 66 6666 (for children)

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What is Counselling?



A safe place to be heard

Cairde

Health Information and Advocacy Center

19 Belvedere Place

Dublin 1, Ireland

Phone: 01 855 2111

www.cairde.ie

What is counselling?

In counselling, a professional counsellor provides a safe, confidential space for you to discuss problems you want to understand better. You and your counsellor work together to explore how you can manage your lifestyle better and deal with those issues. Your counsellor is a support through this entire process. There are many different types of counselling: one-to-one counselling, family counselling, group counselling, couples counselling, psychotherapy and more. Talk to your family doctor (GP) about which type is best for you.

What is psychotherapy? How is it different from counselling?

Psychotherapy and Counselling follow the same process of talking with a counsellor to understand problems; however psychotherapy is meant for problems that have gotten worse over many years. Psychotherapy is a longer process and is meant to understand events or difficulties from the past that cause you to feel the way you do. A psychotherapist wants to understand a pattern to your behavior and emotions. Counselling is meant to address individual, less complex problems and ways you can change your life to potentially eliminate those problems.

How can counselling be helpful?

The counsellor offers a different view point on your problems, making them clearer and easier to understand. Your counsellor can teach you ways to deal with your problems better. Counselling can also introduce positive changes you can make to your lifestyle. Also, you may better understand and resolve past events and conflicts that were still bothering you. Counselling allows you to talk about your problems in a safe, private setting without judgment.

When is counselling necessary?

If you need to deal with:

- depression
- anxiety
- bereavement (death of a loved one)
- serious relationship difficulties
- sexual issues (discrimination based on sexuality)
- racial issues (discrimination based on race)
- abuse
- serious illness, disability
- and more

Specific problems like addiction and eating disorders may require a specialist (addiction counsellor, counsellor for people with eating disorders). Some problems such as bipolar/personality disorders and schizophrenia are more severe and may be more suitable for a psychiatrist. Your GP will refer you to the necessary service.

How do I get counselling?

Make an appointment with your GP to discuss your needs. Your GP may give medication or refer you to private/public services or specialists. You can also get counselling through self-referral by contacting individual organizations and making appointments directly. Some organizations will have self-referral forms on their websites. Make sure that any counsellor you choose is accredited. An untrained counsellor can harm you rather than help you. You can find a list of accredited counsellors at www.irish-counselling.ie

How do I get counselling if I have a medical card?

The HSE, Health Service Executive, offer Counselling in Primary Care and National Counselling Service free of charge for people with a medical card. Both of these services are offered in all regions of Ireland.

HSE Counselling in Primary Care

HSE'S primary care counselling is short-term, only 8 sessions long, for people 18 years of age or older with mild to moderate difficulties. Talk to your GP about referring you to this service. You can also self-refer yourself for this service by calling Counselling in Primary Care. Contact information can be found on the HSE website.

National Counselling Service

This counselling service is available for adults (over 18 years of age) who experienced trauma, neglect and/or abuse in childhood. More information can be found on the HSE website.

What if my GP only prescribes medication?

When you first go to your GP, he/she may prescribe you medication rather than refer you to a counselling service. If you feel you may benefit from counselling, discuss it with your GP.

What happens at the first visit?

The first visit is an opportunity for your counsellor to understand your needs. It is also an opportunity for you to figure out whether the service is right for you and whether the counsellor is right for you. If you feel that the counsellor is not right for you, notify your GP, and he/she will refer you to someone else. The counsellor may ask you questions or ask you to fill out a questionnaire. Before your first meeting, think about what problems you wish to discuss and what you hope to get out of counselling.

How long will I be in counselling?

The number of times you may need to meet with your counsellor differs from person to person. Your GP/counsellor will recommend a certain number of sessions. As the sessions go on, your counsellor may feel that you need more sessions. You can talk to your GP or counsellor if you feel you would benefit from more sessions. Counselling is most effective when you attend every session recommended. It is not advisable to skip sessions.