

Counselling & Psychotherapy: an Introduction

So what exactly is counselling / psychotherapy?

- Confidential, empathic, and non-judgemental support by trained, ethical, supervised professionals
- A space to explore things such as **emotional and psychological wellbeing, challenges, or impactful events**
- A wide variety of approaches: **person-centred, evidence-informed**, underpinned by a focus on individual experiences, resilience, and growth

Counselling & psychotherapy offers a **non-medicalised, diagnosis-free** way of effectively helping people to manage their challenges in life, such as **anxiety, stress, trauma, relationship difficulties, and major life transitions**.

It's the relationship between the therapist and the person attending therapy that acts as the crucible for change.

How does counselling / psychotherapy work to support wellbeing?

- Diagnosis is not required in order to benefit from counselling / psychotherapy
- The focus is on each person's unique experiences, challenges, and strengths
- The **support is relational, and relies on a foundation of safety and trust** being built between the therapist and their client
- The **consistent, boundaried relationship** can be reparative in itself, particularly for those who've experienced trauma or instability
- Ideal for **early intervention support**, it can help build resilience, provide a template for healthy relationship dynamics, and promote emotional regulation
- Helps people to **understand their emotions, develop coping strategies, and feel more connected** to themselves and others

How does the Accredited Registers Programme keep people safe?

- The Professional Standards Authority (PSA) Accredited Registers (AR) programme is one of **robust oversight** – the PSA also oversee Statutory Regulators
- It guides and monitors **high standards of professional practice and ethical conduct**
- It ensures public protection through **transparency and accountability** i.e. clarity in service delivery, a thorough understanding of risk, and robust, fair, complaints procedures
- It **prevents unsafe practice** through mechanisms that stop practitioners removed from one Register from simply joining another
- They promote **ongoing professional development, ethical awareness, and reflective practice**
- The AR programme supports **autonomy and diversity** within the profession, allowing practitioners to work in ways that are **responsive to different needs**

What can we do to keep people safe and improve their wellbeing?

- We recommend launching a **national public awareness campaign** on how to safely access counselling & psychotherapy. Make sure that people know about the Accredited Registers programme, and that they **must choose a practitioner that is Registered with one of those organisations**.
- We'd like to see more healthcare providers, including GPs, using **referrals directly to practitioners on Accredited Registers**.
- By referring directly to counsellors & psychotherapists on Accredited Registers, you **bypass lengthy waiting lists and access effective, preventative mental health support**
- Help us to promote the Accredited Registers programme as a **proportionate, robust, and reliable regulatory framework** for counsellors & psychotherapists within your constituency, and within Parliament



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Contact: Meg Moss
Head of Public Affairs & Advocacy
meg@ncps.com