

# Opening the Door to **Counselling in Scotland**



This leaflet from COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) provides you with important information on:

- counselling and who can benefit from it
- how to access counselling services in Scotland
- the role of COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) as Scotland's professional body for counselling and psychotherapy.



**COSCA**

Counselling & Psychotherapy  
in Scotland

## What is Counselling?

- Counselling provides the chance to explore issues and difficulties in a safe and confidential environment. Counsellors assist people to live in more satisfying and resourceful ways.
- In counselling, the relationship between the counsellor and the client is an essential part of the process. As trust is built up, the counsellor works with the client to enable them to make their own choices, and to put them into action.
- Counselling sessions are generally about one hour in length and can involve a short or long-term commitment. The sessions can be for individuals but also for more than one person, including families.
- For more information on counselling, please see COSCA's film, Person to Person: COSCA's Guide to Counselling. [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)

## Who Benefits from Counselling?

- People with issues related to relationships, bereavement, alcohol, low mood, and many other social and emotional problems can benefit from counselling.

## Is Counselling for Everyone?

- Yes, counselling can be used to great effect by people from across society, including people with the lived experience of mental health problems.
- Counselling can be suitable for children and adults, for people who have hearing and visual impairments, for people from black and minority ethnic communities, people who are homeless, and for people from all walks of life.

## How to be Assured that a Counselling Service is Safe?

- Checking that the counsellor or counselling service is a member of COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) or another similar professional body is a very useful way of gaining assurance about the safety of the service.
- COSCA recommends that those seeking counselling use COSCA's information leaflet: Making Safer Choices: Selecting a Counsellor. This provides information and a checklist on how to make informed choices about counselling.

## Where are Counselling Services in Scotland?

- Counselling services can be found across the voluntary, private, and statutory sectors such as in schools and via GP surgeries.
- Counsellors may work on a voluntary or paid basis, independently or within an agency. They may charge or not charge for the sessions, or ask for a donation towards covering costs.
- COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) holds up-to-date lists of counsellors and counselling services in Scotland [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) – Counsellors.

## What does COSCA expect of Counsellors?

Counsellors and counselling services that are members of COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy) and other similar professional bodies are expected to:

- have high standards of competence that require them to meet specific criteria related to training, practice and supervision
- adhere to COSCA's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice or ethical frameworks of other similar professional bodies.

## What are People's Experiences of Counselling?

- Most people have very positive experiences of counselling. If people are motivated to have counselling and have a specific issue to talk about, then counselling can be enormously helpful.
- Positive experiences most often happen when there is a good match between the counsellor and the client. It is worth remembering, however, that people in counselling can often feel worse before they feel better, particularly if they are dealing with a difficult issue.
- To improve the experience of clients, many counsellors use regular feedback from clients to alert them to any problems regarding the counselling sessions.
- Despite all the above measures, COSCA acknowledges that some people have negative experiences of counselling.
- If you feel that there is cause for complaint you can make a complaint against members of COSCA (please see the COSCA Complaints Procedure [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)) and members of other professional bodies.

## What does COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) do?

- As Scotland's professional body for counselling and psychotherapy COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) seeks to:
  - ensure that counsellors are properly trained to deliver counselling services
  - advance and support all forms of high quality counselling

promote counselling supervision and continuing professional development for counsellors, and monitor their competence

provide information to the public on finding a counsellor and making safer choices when selecting a counsellor.

Please see COSCA's website for more information on COSCA's work. [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)



For further enquiries please contact:  
COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)  
16 Melville Terrace, Stirling FK8 2NE  
Telephone 01786 475 140 Fax: 01786 446 207  
Email: [info@cosca.org.uk](mailto:info@cosca.org.uk) [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)