

COUNSELLING FOR CHILDREN



Information for Parents and Caregivers



About us

Centrecare is a not for profit organisation that delivers quality professional counseling, support, mediation and training services throughout Western Australia.

Centrecare seeks to provide excellent, respectful and caring services, which facilitate healing and encourage all people to develop to their fullest potential.

Centrecare, in providing services, always seeks to demonstrate its belief in the intrinsic worth of people by respecting differences, cherishing individuality and nourishing dignity.

Centrecare offers counselling to children from the age of four. The environment for children's counselling is an important factor and Centrecare has specialised facilities essential to providing counselling for children; including a child therapy room and art, craft and play resources. All children's counsellors at Centrecare are qualified counselors and experienced in the unique ways of working with children.

The purpose of child counselling is to engage children and involve them wherever possible in the issues that concern them, taking into account their age and maturity, to listen to what they have to say, to see the world from a child's perspective, seeing the child as an individual.



When Child Counselling Can Be Helpful...

- * Family changes such as separation and divorce;
- * Experience traumatic event/s;
- * Loss and grief;
- * Excessive anger, worry, sadness, fear;
- * Low self esteem;
- * Developing friendships;
- * Challenging behaviours;
- * School difficulties;
- * Abuse and neglect;
- * Depression;
- * Bonding and attachment issues;
- * Foster and adoption issues;
- * Illness and hospitalisation.



Centrecare's Thoughts on Counselling for Children

- * Children often don't say in words what they feel or how experiences have affected them. Child counselling at Centrecare offers a variety of means of expression. This may include play, art, clay, role play and invites children to show their inner feelings through what they choose and how they play.
- * Counselling can be a comfortable way for children to make sense of their world. It also facilitates expression of thoughts and feelings, exploration of relationships, as well as the opportunity to enhance social skills and learn self awareness.
- * Child Counselling is designed to help children grow up to be as happy and well adjusted as possible by supporting the child's unique growth and development. Counsellors seek to explore what underlies children's behaviours rather than diagnosing or labelling behaviours.
- * Children can benefit from counselling, just as adults can. Counselling for children is based on the similar principals but has been adapted to levels that children are able to

Centrecare's Thoughts
on Counselling for
Children (continued)

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- * The child's caregiver plays an important role in the child's life and development; as such the caregiver will be invited to support the child during the times they are engaged with counselling. This will be directed by the children's counsellor, on a case by case basis determined by each child's individual needs.
- * Children's counselling sessions are confidential. Limits to confidentiality exist if the child or others are at risk. If the counsellor assesses that there is a risk, their duty of care will be to involve the caregiver and Centrecare Management immediately.
- * Interaction with other professionals can be negotiated as necessary in the best interests of your child/children. The counsellor will need to get your written permission to speak with the teacher and/or any other professionals involved with your child/ren and family.



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Frequently Asked Questions...

What should I tell my child about why they are coming for counselling?

If your child/ren asks why they are going to counselling, you could say something like:

"When things are hard at school, home, with friends, with things changing at home, it can help to have a special place just for you with someone who is there to listen".

You can adapt this to your child/children's situation and circumstances.

How long and how frequent are the child counselling sessions?

Child sessions are generally weekly and where possible are scheduled at a regular time for your child/ren. This will become your child/ren's special time as predictability and consistency are important and helpful for children. Sessions last for 45 minutes. The sessions may be shorter, such as 30 minutes, with very young children or if the child has particular special needs.

Do I need to wait when my child is in the child counselling session?

Yes, this is important so that your child/ren knows that you are in the waiting room. It may also be necessary for the counsellor to come and see you during the session.



What should I say to my child when they finish the child counselling session?

It is ok to ask your child how their session was. It is important to listen and be positive and encouraging. Sometimes children after a child counselling session do not want to talk about what has happened - it is best if you can follow their lead with this.

What sort of contact will my children's Centrecare counsellor have with me about the counselling sessions?

Your children's counsellor will speak to you and your child/ren about what contact they will have with you while they are coming to counselling.

If something arises in a child counselling session that your counsellor feels is important to discuss with you, a phone call will be made at the counsellor's earliest convenience. Between sessions, if anything happens which is worrying or potentially disruptive for your child/ren, Centrecare would appreciate you letting your child/ren's counsellor know about this by phoning the counsellor.

When your child/ren come to their session, this is their special time. It is important to remember that this time is focused on the child and you are requested not raise any issues with the counsellor while the child is present.

Can I get information about my child's session or progress?

Legally, both parents have the same rights to information about their child unless a special court order is in place. Information from child sessions may be conveyed to the parents with the child's consent or if it is in the counsellor's opinion the child is at risk.

Seven Things to Remember When Your Child is Attending Counselling ...

1. Every child is different and will express themselves in the best way that suits them.
2. Counselling sessions are the child's special time and it is important to allow them to have privacy about what they choose to share about their sessions.
3. Keep your children's counsellor informed of any significant events that may occur between sessions.
4. If you are not going to be able to bring a child to their session, let the child and the counsellor know as soon as you can.
5. Generally, children are asked not to bring toys from home into the playroom, they may however like to show their counsellor something in the waiting room.
6. There are no hard and fast rules about counselling for children, so be sure to talk to the child's counsellor if you have any questions.
7. Counselling for children is a great place for children to come and share how they are thinking and feeling.

About Centrecare

Centrecare is a not-for-profit organisation delivering quality professional counselling, support, mediation and training services.

Centrecare office locations:

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