

SCHOOL COUNSELLING

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Introduction

All parents have the responsibility of helping their children to grow and develop. Children may need help with their problems and worries. Sometimes, no matter how well they get on with their parents, they may find it hard to talk to them. Children often get help and support by talking to someone they trust. Maybe a friend, a teacher, a relative or neighbour can help. Often having a problem or concern can affect a child's behaviour and school-work, and the **school counsellor** may be able to help.

In this leaflet, 'child' means any child or young person of school age.

How can school counsellors help?

School counsellors are carefully selected for their experience and counselling qualifications. School Counsellors are good at relating to school students and are trained to listen without judging. They can help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about what is worrying them.

School Counsellors usually provide short-term counselling, up to six or eight sessions, on school premises, and usually during school time. The length of the sessions varies; typically it lasts about 40-60 minutes. Most of the time counselling would be in one-to-one session. Occasionally, the counselling might be conducted in a small group with the consent of the students or under the students' request due to common themes of the problems and worries.

What is discussed during the sessions is **confidential**, but the students are told that the school counsellor may discuss their problems with other people and agencies and get help from them if he or she thinks the student is at risk or in danger.

The school counsellor is someone who understands the school and works with teachers and other staff to help your child, while at the same time keeping confidentiality. Sometimes the school counsellor, with the parents' consent and the student's knowledge and agreement, may refer the student to other agencies who can give more help.

How does my son or daughter get to see the school counsellor?

Your child may ask to see the school counsellor directly or you or a teacher may recommend it.

Effective counselling needs to be a voluntary process. It is thus important for you or the teacher to get your child's consent for counselling and explain to him/her the nature and consequences of counselling.

What issues can school counsellors help with?

There can be lots of pressures on young people growing up, for example friendships, teasing and bullying; exams, school work, education and career development; family relationships, separations and changes; as well as illness, loss or death of someone close. Young people also have to cope with adolescence and the strong feelings and physical changes that go with it. And other personal and social concerns such as making good choices and emotion management.

How can a parent or carer support the counselling?

It will help your child if you accept counselling as a normal and useful activity, and show an interest if they want to talk to you about it, without pushing it if they prefer not to discuss it.

Counselling is not a magic solution, and sometimes it takes a while to feel the benefit.

Who are the School Counsellors?

School counsellors are trained for this special type of work and are professionally managed and supervised. They work closely with school staff and other agencies. All school counsellors work within a recognised code of ethics and practice.

Our school counsellor has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia and a Bachelor of Art degree from the National University of Singapore. She also has a Diploma in School Counselling from the National Institute of Education, Singapore. She is also trained to teach the .b Mindfulness Curriculum.

How can parents and carers find out more?

Your child's teacher can give you more information.

For more details, you can contact the school counsellor Ms. Lynne Lee at the school's phone number @ 6288 9382.