

Counselling and Therapy in a Psychoanalytic Way: In Brief

How counselling and therapy differ from each other is a subject much discussed. To be brief, I do not distinguish the two in this paper.

Example

There are a lot of scenarios. These can be about one person, a couple, or a group seeking or needing something from counselling and therapy. I will focus here on individuals. Yet the approach works more widely.

In one such scenario, somebody may have worried about what others thought or might think; and may have felt downcast a lot of the time. It may be that family and friends thought the last thing on earth for this person to do was to go and talk to a therapist each week. It could be family and friends thought that the individual was “self-centred enough already”. However, after sessions, many tend to agree something large has happened. Someone formerly known to have been most unhappy now gets on in a more real way with other people; feels both more present in relationships and more at ease in moments of solitude. That person can enter into life more and also without, as before, feeling hopeless or wretched.

Introduction

Counselling and therapy in a psychoanalytic way aim to open up a sense of your wholeness, your ability to lead your life effectively, and your engagement with your emotional, bodily and relational health. It is a process helping you explore and stay with your problems by increasing awareness of the way in which your inner world comes into, and is part of, your day-to-day behaviour. It differs from many other therapies and forms of counselling. This is because it can take longer. It can do so as its purpose is a deeper and more lasting change, a change in your being and capacity to grow.

Reasons For Seeking Help

Sometimes people seek help for particular issues such as

- eating disorders
- psychosomatic illnesses
- obsessional and other troubling or harmful behaviours and
- phobic anxieties.

At other times they seek help because of more widespread and ingrained feelings, for example

- depression
- anxiety
- difficulties concentrating
- dissatisfaction at work and
- inability to form and sustain satisfying relationships.

The Background

The psychoanalytic way of working comes out of the insight that we sometimes try to deal with problems by trying to keep them out of our minds. This has seemed to provide a way of getting rid of them. Yet there is no getting rid of or diminishing them this way. These problems continue to have an important effect on our feelings and behaviour.

Early experiences are important in shaping how our minds work. A large part of our minds operates outside of consciousness. From an early age, we find ways of managing our experiences; and this influences how we cope in later life. With the help of a counsellor or therapist working in a psychoanalytic way, you can gradually come to understand these experiences and make sense of how you have dealt and are currently dealing with them. This leads to a process of change, which takes place through and between sessions.

The relationship with the therapist is an important part of the therapy. I offer a confidential, safe and private place where the unconscious patterns of your inner world can come to light.

The quiet setting of counselling and therapy sessions means emotional conflicts can be re-lived and new responses to old problems can be found. This process helps you identify those patterns of behaviour you keep repeating. As you become aware of these patterns, the work enables a loosening of their hold; and movement can occur.

The Therapist

As a counsellor and therapist in a psychoanalytic mode, I will reveal little about myself. I will, in principle, keep contact between us to the time and place sessions occur. These sessions form the slot you will have booked with me. Moreover, I will work within a strict rule of neutrality toward what you bring. Such features may mean I appear to you to be unconcerned.

Nevertheless, this quiet, non-intrusive method adds to a setting intended for your safety and use, one helping you express unconscious wishes and disagreements. The difficulties you may have in your life, especially past discord, are reflected in the relationship between you and me. Though this experience may be uncomfortable at times, it is the basis for providing experiences of holding and understanding that help you stay in touch with states of distress, rather than seek means of short-term escape. This is although some of those around you, in your past and your present relations, may have approved of short-term escape.

Time In Therapy

It is difficult to say how long therapy will take. It can vary from months to years. So it involves some financial undertaking. That is why, as you can see at the *Confidentiality & Fees* page at my website, I offer a sliding scale. Each session lasts fifty minutes, somewhat longer in the case of couples; and takes place, generally, between one and three times a week. I will discuss this with you at the initial assessment.

The Cost

As mentioned, fees vary. We will discuss these before therapy begins; and they can undergo review, in the light of developments.