

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q:** What is counselling or talk therapy?

**A:** Talk therapy is a process where a trained counsellor or therapist helps you to address your problems by assisting you in clarifying your issues, exploring options, developing strategies, expressing your emotions, and increasing self-awareness. In counselling, we believe that you are the expert of your own life and the counsellor is expert in the process of change. It is a partnership. The counsellor doesn't tell you what is right or wrong and doesn't advise you. A counsellor helps you find your own unique path.

**Q:** How is it different from talking to a friend or family member?

**A:** The counselling relationship is different from talking to other people in these ways:

1. Everything you talk to the counsellor is kept secret unless there is a situation where there is a threat to your safety or someone else's safety.
2. The counsellor is trained to create a safe space where you can freely explore and express your thoughts and emotions. Often, friends or family members are not able to understand you or don't know how to react and what to say.
3. The counsellor is also trained in psychological techniques that help in mental healing.
4. Counselling is a professional service provided to you. Your needs and health are the main focus of counselling and not the counsellor's.



**Q:** What is the difference between a counsellor and a psychiatrist?

**A:**

- **Psychiatrist:** Is a doctor who specializes in psychological issues. To become a psychiatrist you need a medical degree like MBBS. They can give you medicines and perform other medical procedures.
- **Counsellor:** Is a person who has trained in counselling. They usually have a postgraduate degree in Psychology. They usually use talk therapy techniques.
- **Clinical Psychologist:** Is a person who has trained to deal with mental disorders. They also use talk therapy techniques but they are tailored to work with specific disorders. They also do psychological assessments. In India, clinical psychologists often have an M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology.
- **Developmental Psychologists:** Usually work with children and adolescents. They deal with issues like learning delays, Autism, Downs Syndrome and other neurodevelopmental conditions. They use techniques like play therapy, behavioural therapies etc.

