

School Counselling Information for Secondary Students

This Service Information Leaflet provides a series of questions and answers about counselling and how talking to one of the counsellors at school may help you with any issues you are having. Please pop in and see us in Room 338 if you would like to find out more about the counselling service at BIS Abu Dhabi.

Counselling Room 338

Emails:

Ms. Aine Aine.Knapton@bisad.ae

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What is counselling?

Counselling is when you talk to a trained person about something that is on your mind or is a problem to you. While it can be good to talk to friends, parents or teachers it can sometimes feel easier to talk to an independent person. This is when you may want to think about talking to the school counsellor. A counsellor will listen to you very carefully and will not judge you or tell you what to do.

How can it help me?

You might feel better just talking about something that has been bothering you, knowing that you have been listened to and understood. You might want to change something, sort out a problem or make a decision. Counselling is about helping you to work things out for yourself, to help you make decisions and choices and help you look at things differently. It can make you feel better about yourself.

What do students talk about?

Students can talk about whatever is worrying them, it could be about lots of different things. You might have problems at home or with friends, you might be feeling quite down and not understand why, you may be worried about something at school, maybe there is something about your behaviour in your life that you want to change. If this is important to you and is making you unhappy then counselling may be a helpful option for you.

What will it feel like?

You might feel nervous about going to your first appointment. You might find it hard to talk about

how you are feeling or it may be the first time you have talked about your problems with another person. The counsellor will understand this and will try and make you comfortable about talking. You can meet the counsellor for one or more sessions to find out if counselling is right for you. The counsellor will talk to you about where and when to meet and how often you will meet. Counselling is voluntary. You have a choice to come or not. Whatever you decide is OK.

How long does counselling last?

Sessions last about 50 minutes. The counsellor and you will talk about how many sessions you will attend, Students can come for a few sessions or for a couple of months, each case is different so please do not worry about the number of sessions. If the counsellor thinks you need longer ongoing support they will suggest an outside agency to continue working with you.

How does counselling work?

Seeing the counsellor might be your idea or your parents or teachers might suggest it for you. If you think you might like to see the counsellor, you can

go and see them directly in Room 338. If you are unsure and feel anxious or nervous talk to a staff member you trust and ask them to speak to the counsellor on your behalf. You will have an initial session with the counsellor where together you will decide if counselling would be beneficial for you. You can use this session to ask questions and find out more about counselling. Counselling is voluntary, you have the choice to decide if you would like to attend. On occasion the school may suggest a student considers counselling, at this time the school will require the student to meet with the counsellor for an initial session, following this session the student can then decide if they would like to continue seeing the counsellor.

Will anyone know what I have talked to the counsellor about?

Counsellors are not allowed to talk about what people tell them in counselling. It is private and confidential which means it is between you and the counsellor. Obviously if you want to talk to anyone else about what you have discussed in the counselling session, this is up to you. The only time this will change is when you give your permission for someone else to be told or **very importantly if the counsellor thinks that you or someone else may be at risk or in danger.** They may need to get help from others to keep you safe. The counsellor will talk to you about this and together with you, will try and find the best way forward. Teachers might know you are coming to see the counsellor but they will not know what you have been talking about. Parents and carers are also aware of the counselling service.

Will anything be written about me?

Keeping information about people safe and confidential is very important to the counsellor. The counsellor will make some notes about what has been spoken about in the session. These will be stored securely where no one is able to access them. All information written or discussed is private and confidential unless there is an agreed or overriding reason to share this information in your best interest.

How can students access to the service?

There are a number of ways students may access the service:

- Email one of the counsellors.
- Speak to a teacher you trust and they will arrange for you an initial appointment with the school counsellor.
- Leave a note in the box which is located outside the counselling office
- Drop by the counsellor office during lunch, break, or form times.

What if I miss an appointment?

If a student misses an appointment, they will be offered another appointment. If two consecutive appointments are missed and the counsellor does not hear from the student he/she will assume that the young person no longer wishes to come to

counselling. The student is free to return at any time in the future and this is clearly explained during the first session.