

# Ghostwritten Blog Post: 5 Reasons We Avoid Counselling (And What To Do About It)

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The thought of making change – even though positive – can induce fear and stress in our minds. When that change requires counselling, or seeking mental health treatment, we may feel even greater intimidation.

It takes time and effort to decide to see a counsellor, and because of the myths and stigma around this kind of treatment, we may delay getting started – or give up altogether. Here are some of the common reasons that prevent or delay people from seeing a counsellor – and the solutions to overcome them.

## 1. “Seeing a counsellor means I’m weak or I’ve failed.”

Many of us are afraid to come into a counselling session as we are, or to simply admit we feel lost, helpless, or overwhelmed. And so we attempt the equivalent of cleaning the house before the cleaner comes. We do this because a part of us still wants to look at least somewhat capable. Perhaps we’re also uncomfortable with the vulnerability it takes to even admit we need help.

Sharing our desire for change might feel like holding up a big, flashing sign over our heads that says, I HAVE ISSUES. Fear of rejection comes in the form of nagging questions like:

“How will my friends/family/coworkers react to this step I’m taking?”

“Will they understand me? (Or will they think I’m weird and not want to talk to me?)”

“Will they even like the new me?”

Many people don’t realize the popularity of counselling and therapy services among healthy, successful, and relatively happy individuals and couples. Counselling is not a sign of failure – it’s a sign that we care enough about our health and well-being to invest in it.

## 2. “I don’t want/need a professional to try and ‘fix’ me.”

Some people are honestly surprised when they realize their counsellor isn’t out to “fix” them, doesn’t tell them their issue is unsolvable, or say, “Sorry, I’ve never dealt with a case like yours before. I can’t help you.” One of a counsellor’s highest priorities is to provide a safe, confidential, and nonjudgmental space for people to work through issues. We believe this is way more effective (and honouring) than treating people like problems to be solved.

Change is a personal process. It takes work, perseverance, and courage – principles far more effective than outsider expertise or knowledge. Progress happens, not when the

counsellor uses the right method, but when we are courageous enough to allow change to impact our lives – in our own time, for our own reasons.

Knowing this, good counsellors allow their clients to set the pace. There is no such thing as “taking too long,” because there are no deadlines to healing and development. The counsellor is there as a guide to walk with you, offering perspective, attentiveness, and encouragement along the way.

### **3. “Facing certain issues is just too stressful.”**

Positive change often involves added stress, and this can also worry us. To change, we must stare those unpleasant and difficult feelings in the face. Change means stepping out into the unknown and being vulnerable. We also must focus on an area of weakness. This can lead us to all sorts of worries, for instance:

“What will happen to my stress levels, my family’s perception of me, or even my perception of myself, if I seriously address this issue?”

“Is counselling even necessary?”

“Will the benefits be worth it in the end?”

Maybe part of the problem is that we often associate counselling with “gloom and doom.” But counselling is not just about facing challenges and unpleasant feelings. It’s also a place and space to celebrate and to be genuinely affirmed in who we are.

In fact, to acknowledge and celebrate small changes are vital ways that counsellors can help people realize larger goals. Counsellors genuinely want to affirm people, and occasionally celebrating the little things helps people recognize the progress they’ve made.

### **4. “What if I invest all that time and money and it doesn’t work?”**

For some of us, seeking positive change involves the risk of failure. We wonder if it’s worth the effort to risk only getting halfway or three quarters of the way and not fully attain the change we seek. Those of us with perfectionist tendencies will often avoid change for these reasons.

If counselling wasn’t actually effective, it would be a pretty depressing line of work.

Counsellors see people at their lowest, regularly. So why don’t more counsellors drop out and switch careers? The obvious answer is because counselling does support countless people to grow, heal, and find more fulfillment in their lives.

### **5. “What if my situation is hopeless?”**

The biggest barrier to change is a sense of shame. When we see a need for change, it’s normal to believe that no one else struggles like we do, wonder if our case is hopeless, or feel lonely and isolated.

For better or worse, every culture has things that are acceptable to talk about, things that are taboo and kept private. Sometimes these taboos are subconscious, meaning we aren't really aware of them yet they impact how we see our world and respond to what happens to us in it.

The internal barriers to change are real and, in many cases, stacked pretty high. The good news is that clinical counselling can help. Although counselling may not necessarily be for everyone, too many of us are held back because of myths and stigmas around counselling. More people than you realize are benefiting from counselling. Why not you?