



For the purposes of this booklet, there is no difference and both terms refer to talking therapy, most usually in a one-to-one relationship with a qualified, professional practitioner.

Sometimes it's hard to talk to family and friends and you just need that one person who takes the time to listen.

Talking therapies and counselling sessions involve talking to a trained professional about your thoughts, feelings and behaviour. There are many different types of talking therapy, but they all aim to:

- Give you a safe time and place to talk to someone who won't judge you
- Help you make sense of things and understand yourself better
- Help you resolve complicated feelings, or find ways to live with them
- Help you recognise unhelpful patterns in the way you think or act, and find ways to change them (if you want to)

The relationship you have with your therapist is the most important aspect of how successful you find any talking therapy or counselling. It is the trust that is established between you that will enable you to open up to them and have a positive therapeutic experience.

It's important to remember that you don't have to talk about anything you're not ready to talk about or anything you're not ready to do. In the first session (or assessment), you might just speak about how you're feeling or why you've felt the need for therapy and your therapist may ask you questions about:

- Your current and past relationships
- Your childhood and past experiences
- Situations or events you find difficult
- Your feelings
- What you think about things
- Your goals/what you hope to resolve in therapy

For the most part, yes. Confidentiality is an important part of building trust with your therapist. However, there are some exceptions. Supervision – therapists always discuss clients regularly with a supervisor (another experienced therapist) who also has to maintain confidentiality. It is seen as unethical for a therapist to work without supervision because:

- It helps your therapist look after their own mental health, so they're better able to support you
- It means someone else is aware of how your therapist is conducting their sessions, to ensure their practice is ethical, safe and appropriate.

**Safety** – if your therapist is concerned that you're at serious risk of harming yourself or someone else, if they feel that you are at risk of harm from someone else, they may need to inform your GP, a healthcare professional or, in exceptional circumstances, the police. They should always tell you first if they're going to do this.

QAHE's Counselling Service offers short-term counselling. The number of sessions will be agreed between you and your counsellor. It may be possible to extend the number of sessions after careful consideration and discussion with your counsellor.

### What to expect:

During your first appointment, the counsellor will answer any questions you may have about confidentiality, our record keeping, and other aspects of how the service works. The counsellor will also complete an assessment to enable you to explore what has brought you to counselling. Sometimes the counsellor may direct you to other university support or external services instead of, or in addition to, counselling. A session lasts 50 minutes. If you arrive late, it is unlikely your session will be extended due to other appointments and room availability. We would appreciate it if you would switch off your mobile phone when you are attending counselling.

## **Missed or Cancelled Appointments**

This information is contained in a separate leaflet, which you will receive when you start your sessions. However, if you find you have no alternative but to cancel an appointment, we require as much notice as possible.

If you feel you would like to talk to our counsellor,

