

Philosophical Counselling

What is Philosophical Counselling?

Philosophical Counselling is a counselling approach that sees most problems brought to counselling as 'problems of life' rather than as mental illness. Philosophical Counsellors are qualified philosophers who may or may not have also undergone mental health counselling training. A philosophical counsellor who is also trained and qualified according to ACA (Australian Counselling Association) guidelines will also be able to work with you therapeutically.

A philosophical counsellor has particular expertise in the role played by ideas and beliefs to how we see the world, live our life, and deal with our problems. They probe the role of assumptions, fallacies, evidence, and other mental processes that contribute to how we see and deal with life and people.

A mental health counsellor who has trained in psychotherapy will be able to offer various therapeutic approaches to dealing with problems (such as person-centred therapy, solution focused therapy, behavioural therapy and more).

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is used widely by mental health counsellors and is derived directly from the methods of philosophy. This is the main point of similarity between the two approaches. So while there are differences between the philosophical approach and the mental health approach, there are some common areas.

What issues can Philosophical Counselling deal with?

Issues that lend themselves to philosophical counselling are what are broadly termed 'issues of life,' such as relationship problems or moral dilemmas. Sometimes the line between 'mental illness' and 'life problems' is very blurred. Philosophical counselling is sometimes called 'therapy for the sane.'

Other issues brought to philosophical counselling include decision making, especially difficult or controversial decisions, alienation, dissatisfaction with life, exploring the 'meaning of life,' existential issues, such as 'why are we here?' questions of belief, religion, spirituality, and finding direction.

Problems such as anxiety, depression or addiction may also be brought to philosophical counselling. Often, beneath and causing these problems are mistaken beliefs, impractical expectations and unrealistic world-views. When these fallacies are exposed, the way forward to healing is opened.

How did Philosophical Counselling start?

Philosophical counselling began in ancient Greece with Socrates. Socrates saw himself as the 'midwife to the soul.' He would go about the market place, engaging people in discussion about life, ethics, existence, friendship, love, values and meaning. Socrates believed that the 'examined life' was better than one that wandered aimlessly. The Stoics too, developed a philosophy that aimed to keep one's emotional and mental life healthy.

While philosophy has never stopped addressing the important matters of life, it became re-identified with counselling during the latter half of the 20th century. Philosophical Counselling is now widely offered by philosophically qualified professionals. As my training and qualifications encompass both the philosophical and traditional therapeutic methods, I am able to blend and draw on both, providing a wholistic approach to counselling. If you think I can help you, get in touch, details below.

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