

Your First Counselling Session

Going to counselling for the first time can feel like a significant step, and it's entirely normal to experience a range of emotions – curiosity, relief, uncertainty, and even nerves. This guide will help you understand what to expect in your first session, so you can feel informed and supported when you arrive.

Arriving and Settling In

When you arrive, we'll take a few minutes to get settled in the space. You don't need to prepare anything or worry about what to say. This is your time, and we'll move at a pace that feels comfortable for you.

Beginning the Conversation

We'll begin with a simple check-in. I may ask you the following questions:

- What brings you to counselling at this time?
- What do you hope to achieve or need from therapy?
- How have you been feeling recently?

There are no right or wrong answers. You can share as much or as little as feels comfortable for you.

Understanding Your Story

The first session focuses on getting to know you – your experiences, strengths, and current feelings about life. We may explore the following topics:

- What challenges or burdens are you facing
- Any patterns you've observed in your thoughts, feelings, or relationships
- What support means to you
- Any relevant experiences from your past (only if you choose to share)

Remember, you are always in control of what you decide to share.

Safety, Boundaries, and Confidentiality

I'll explain:

- How confidentiality works
- The boundaries that keep therapy safe
- What you can expect from me as your counsellor
- How we'll work together moving forward

You're welcome to ask questions at any time.

How I Work

I'll briefly describe my **integrative approach** – how I draw on different therapeutic models to support you – and check what feels most helpful for you right now. You don't need to understand the models; I'll guide the process.

Checking In with Your Comfort

Throughout the session, I'll check in with you about:

- How you're feeling
- Whether the pace feels okay
- What feels supportive or not supportive

Your comfort and emotional safety are central to how we work.

Ending the Session

Toward the end, we'll gently bring the session to a close. We might:

- Reflect on what stood out for you
- Identify anything you'd like to focus on next time
- Discuss whether you'd like to book another session

There's no pressure to make decisions immediately.

After the Session

It's common to experience a variety of emotions afterwards, such as feeling lighter, tired, thoughtful, or simply relieved. Take your time to process these feelings. If anything arises between sessions, feel free to note it down to discuss in our next meeting.

My Commitment to You

In every session, you can expect:

- Warmth, respect, and genuine care
- A culturally sensitive, trauma-informed space
- Collaboration and transparency
- A pace that honours your boundaries and wellbeing

You don't have to do anything alone. We'll navigate this together.

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El Panim Counselling & Psychotherapy Services

hello@elpanimcounselling.com