



CORK COUNSELLING CLINIC
PSYCHOTHERAPY · MEDIATION · COACHING



COUPLES COUNSELLING FIRST SESSION



Introduction to Couples Counselling

Approaching couples counselling for the first time can be an emotional journey filled with a mix of anxiety and anticipation. It's natural to feel a bit apprehensive about discussing intimate aspects of your relationship with a therapist. Yet, it's important to hold onto the hope that, when both partners are committed to the process, the success rate of couples therapy can be impressively high—research suggests as high as 84%. This brochure is to help ease your concerns, provide an overview of what to expect in your initial sessions, and reinforce the potential for positive outcomes through couples therapy.

The First Session Unfolded

Arrival: Upon arriving at the clinic, you can relax in the waiting room. We suggest you do this a few minutes before your couples session, so you can relax and as we say 'arrive' Here, you can take a moment to breathe and settle before meeting your therapist.

Meeting Your Counsellor

At the appointed time, your couples counsellor will greet you. This first face-to-face meeting is crucial in establishing a rapport and beginning the therapeutic relationship. The counsellor will guide you to a comfortable and private room where your session will take place, typically a room that is very welcoming and professionally arranged to foster a sense of security and confidentiality.

Discussion of Confidentiality and Boundaries

Early in the session, your counsellor will discuss the rules of confidentiality and the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship. This discussion is fundamental to ensuring that both partners understand and are comfortable with what can be expected in terms of privacy and professional ethics. The counsellor will explain how information is handled within the sessions and what can and cannot be shared outside of the therapy room. This conversation sets the stage for an open, honest exchange, reassuring you that your personal stories and vulnerabilities are protected.



Addressing Anxieties

The counsellor is trained to be sensitive to any anxieties or concerns that you may have about the therapy process. They will likely acknowledge these feelings early on and offer reassurance about the non-judgemental nature of the space you are entering. They may ask about your previous experiences with therapy (if any), your current emotional experience, and what you both hope to achieve through counselling. This initial dialogue is important for building trust and setting a collaborative tone for the sessions to come.

Initial Questions

You can expect the counsellor to ask a series of questions aimed at understanding the history and dynamics of your relationship. Common questions might include how you met, what you consider to be your strengths as a couple, and the challenges you are currently facing. This conversation is not just about gathering information but about starting to build trust and openness and understanding.

Unspoken until now!

In many cases, couples find it surprisingly easier to articulate their struggles in the presence of a counsellor than with each other. The therapeutic setting provides a safe space where honesty can be expressed without the usual fears of judgment or immediate reaction. For many couples, the first session can catalyse a level of frankness that has been avoided for a long time. Acknowledging these unspoken issues often brings a significant sense of relief and can be an important first step towards healing and understanding.

Understanding the Role of a Couples Counsellor

Couples counsellors are not only trained as general therapists but also have undergone specific, advanced training in relationship dynamics and couples therapy. This specialization equips them with the skills needed to address complex interpersonal issues, facilitating effective communication between partners and fostering a deeper understanding of relational patterns. Their training allows them to assist couples in navigating the often challenging waters of their relationships with expertise and empathy.



Common Concerns Addressed in Couples Counselling

Concern about neutrality: “Will the therapist take sides?”

It’s a common worry, but couples therapists are trained to maintain neutrality and balance, ensuring that both partners feel supported and understood without passing judgment.

Questioning the severity of issues: “Are our problems severe enough for therapy?”

Couples therapy is beneficial for a range of issues, from minor misunderstandings to serious conflicts. No concern is too small if it impacts your relationship.

Fear of uncomfortable discussions: “Will we be forced into difficult conversations?”

While therapy may lead you to explore painful topics, it is always within a controlled and supportive environment, paced according to each partner’s comfort level.

Worry about uncovering more issues: “What if therapy reveals more problems?”

Discovering deep-seated issues is a significant step toward healing and improvement. Your therapist will guide you through these discoveries toward constructive solutions.

Engagement levels: “What if my partner is less committed to the process?”

Therapists are adept at engaging reluctant partners by demonstrating the personal and relational benefits of active participation in therapy.

The Structure of Couples Counselling

First Session:

The initial session is designed to establish a safe and confidential setting where both partners can feel secure to open up. The therapist will introduce the concept of confidentiality and outline the structure of the sessions. It’s normal to feel a little awkward, but this space is dedicated to allowing both of you to voice your feelings and thoughts openly.

Second Session:

Unlike the first session, the second is held individually with each partner. This setup provides each person the space to express personal perspectives and emotions about the relationship without the other’s presence, offering the therapist valuable insights that might be very valuable in joint sessions.



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Subsequent Sessions:

After these individual sessions, couples come back together for joint sessions where they can work on their relationship with the guidance of their therapist. This blend of individual and joint sessions optimizes the therapy process, ensuring both personal and shared concerns are addressed.

Approaching with Hope

Provided both partners are committed to the therapy process, there is every reason to approach couples counselling with optimism. Studies indicate that the success rate of couples therapy can reach 84% under such circumstances. This statistic underscores the potential effectiveness of therapy in resolving conflicts and improving relationship satisfaction.

Each couple's therapy journey is distinct, and it's crucial to tailor the approach to meet the specific needs and dynamics of the relationship. Our psychotherapists are here to guide you and your partner through this process with professional expertise and genuine care. If you have any particular questions or need more information before your first appointment, please feel free to contact our clinic. Couples counselling offers a hopeful path to a stronger, more fulfilling partnership, and we are here to support you every step of the way.

**You can contact us by phone 089 600 9460 / 021 439 7552 or
through our website www.corkcounsellingclinic.ie**

We will be happy to take your call and look forward to working
with you in creating a harmonious and strong relationship.

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