

# Counselling

## ***What is counselling?***

This is a deceptively simple question; What is counselling? The simple answer is: 'It depends'. Certainly, counselling at Saints aims to improve the mental health and emotional growth of College members.

## ***How does one access counselling?***

There are three main ways in which a College member accesses counselling. Sometimes a boy's behaviour suggests to staff that counselling might help a boy improve his coping mechanisms in school. Staff might then refer a boy to the Counsellor, who will contact the boy and arrange an initial interview. Parents ring or email the Counsellor to express concerns and through that conversation request counselling support for their sons, which is followed up and the boy is contacted. Additionally, some boys introduce themselves to the Counsellor and ask for a time to chat about an issue that concerns them.

## ***What happens in counselling?***

The first thing that happens when meeting the Counsellor is that the confidentiality of the counselling process is explained to each student. Confidentiality means that what is discussed within the counselling session remains between the participants unless the student chooses to discuss its content with another, and he is fully free to do so. The Counsellor maintains confidentiality unless there are concerns of harm to the student or to others, or in response to a legal subpoena.

It might take more than a single session to explore relevant aspects of the student's experience. Within that process, the Counsellor uses professional skills to determine appropriate means or actions. These actions could include further sessions to talk over issues, enacting specific mental health interventions or referral to outside agencies. In this case the Counsellor's role is to help decide which specialty is most appropriate and to which agency may the student be referred. Cairns is really fortunate in having a large number of specialist agencies, many of whom focus on the concerns of adolescents and young people.

## ***Aim of counselling***

The whole focus of this process is the health and wellbeing of the student. It is a priority that the boys be an ongoing part of decision-making, and parents are kept well informed, recognising the concerns of confidentiality. Ultimately, the answer to the question, 'what is counselling?' could be answered as 'fitting the best responses we can to the needs and concerns of the young person who asks for this help'. While a simple answer, lots of effort goes into making that answer work, because the needs and concerns are frequently individual and personal to each young person.

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