

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Psychologists:

Psychologists are experts in human behaviour, having studied the brain, memory, learning, human development and the processes determining how people think, feel, behave and react. Psychologists apply their expertise using reliable and scientifically supported methods. Psychological therapies are widely used to treat individuals and families and can also be applied to groups and organisations. (The Australian Psychological Society.) Doctors refer patients to a psychologist after a definitive diagnosis.

Counsellors and Psychotherapists:

Counselling and psychotherapy practitioners work cooperatively with clients to develop responses to difficult life circumstances. Issues may include depression, self-esteem, anxiety, grief and loss, communication and relationships, work and career, stress, life transitions, parenting, spirituality, and difficulties caused by addictions, trauma and abuse.

Counselling usually addresses particular issues or concerns for an individual, couple or family. The counsellor will focus with the client on dealing with the feelings and reactions experienced, and will assist the client in developing his or her own resources to find a way of moving forward.

Psychotherapy is generally a long term process that focuses on the self - both conscious and unconscious. Issues of personal meaning, relationship to self, and the impact of past events and trauma are dealt with.

While counselling and psychotherapy may be viewed as being on a continuum, there can also be considerable overlap between these two approaches.

Through the processes of counselling or psychotherapy clients are assisted to gain insight, to become aware of choices they did not initially recognise, to find more effective ways of relating, and to develop personal resources and resilience. Counselling and psychotherapy practitioners encourage their clients to be active partners in the therapy process. (Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia.) You do not need a doctor's referral to see a Counsellor or Psychotherapist.