

Thrive

**UNDER
PRESSURE**
HOW DOES IT FEEL?

The LOWDOWN

OK so you're in care and sometimes it's tough but there are people that can help you. Do you know where to get that help?

**WARNING!
OMG!**

SCHOOL COUNSELLING
CAN BE SERIOUSLY
GOOD FOR YOU!

2010

SPECIAL EDITION
**SCHOOL
COUNSELLING**

**SCHOOL
COUNSELLING**
IS IT FOR ME?

SAY WHAT?

School Counselling
and being in care
- can it help?

MUST READ

Teens in Trouble
and nowhere
to turn



ALONE angry DEPRESSED

dizzy HELPLESS moody PANICKED

paranoid **HOW DOES STRESS
MAKE YOU FEEL?** quiet

SICK tearful TIRED UNABLE TO SLEEP

unloved WORTHLESS



10 REASONS WHY YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELLOR ROCKS

They...

1 ...won't
judge you.

3 ...are not part of
the school staff.

6 ...will see you
in schooltime.

2 ...have had
plenty of
training so
they can do
their job well.

4 ...are there for **YOU** -
whatever your problem.

5 ...are good at
listening carefully.

9 ...know
how your
school
works.

8 ...will
give you
the time
and space
you need.

GET IN TOUCH

Write to:

Thrive, The Fostering Network Wales,
1 Caspian Point, Pierhead Street, Cardiff Bay CF10 4DQ

✉ thrive@fostering.net ☎ 029 2044 0940

rhwydwaith maethu
llais gofâl maeth
the fostering network
the voice of foster care



10 ...can get you help and
information when you need it.

A BIG UP...

to Mathew - you know what you did.

School Counselling – is it for me?

Being a teenager is one of the most stressful times of your life. As well as the usual Boyf, Girlf worries and mate dilemmas, there's pressure to do well at school. It feels like aliens from a different planet would understand you better than your social worker or foster carer!

Sometimes it can be hard to cope with all of the changes that happen when you are fostered.

Do you feel especially angry, annoyed or out-of-control?

Do you often feel really sad, frustrated, or lonely?

Have you noticed some changes in the way you sleep, eat or think and feel about life?

Do you feel very anxious, worried, or guilty?

Are these feelings having a bad effect on your schoolwork, home life or friendships?

Have you experienced some major problems at your foster home, at school or where you live?

Is it hard for you to talk about these feelings with your family, foster carer or friends?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, then it may be a good idea for you to talk with a school counsellor.

Counselling is confidential, meaning that the counsellor will not tell anyone about what you talk about together.



A problem shared...

Got a problem that needs sorting, but not sure who to turn to? Help is here!

Our guest expert is school counsellor Nicki, she will help you solve that tricky situation and get you back on track.



I'm left out

Q. Me and my mates are close but since I have been fostered they sometimes leave me out. They also take my stuff, my dinner and call me names. It's upsetting me so much, but they're my friends and I don't want to lose them.

Amy, 15

A. NICKI SAYS: Does it really sound like these girls are being good friends? They are acting more like bullies. Remember coming into care has not changed you as a person, you are not the one with the problem they are.

Ask your foster carer to contact your school counsellor. They are trained to deal with these sorts of friendship problems and they won't think you are being silly.



NOBODY
deserves to
be bullied.

Tame my rage!

Q. So much has happened to me recently and I'm finding it so hard to cope with going into care and changing schools. I keep my emotions locked up so that eventually everything comes out in a boiling rage. My temper scares my little brother and upsets my foster carers. How can I start to open up?

Leon, 13

A. NICKI SAYS: Coming into care is a difficult thing to cope with, there's no right or wrong way of dealing with it. You've taken the first step by acknowledging your feelings. Talking to someone about these feelings may help. Maybe someone that you trust, that you would feel comfortable with. Keeping things bottled up is definitely not good for you, and it's obviously having an effect on you and others around you. Talking to a school counsellor may be a big help to you.



Bisexual blues

Q. I think I might be bisexual. I'm attracted to girls sometimes, but not since I discovered I like boys. Please don't tell me I'm going through a phase. I can't face telling people and it's really getting me down. I can't sleep at night, I'm desperate'.

Matt, 15

A. NICKI SAYS: Yes there's a possibility you may be bisexual, but the best thing you can do for now is chill with that. Fancying people and going out with them is a huge part of growing up, but it's still only one part of it. It's OK to wonder, it's OK to question, and the biggest surprise of all is that it is OK to be straight, bi-sexual or gay. It's only a small part of who you are.

It may be something you want to talk to your social worker or school counsellor about or it may not be, only you can make that choice. Relax and enjoy life. Remember, whatever happens, real friends will accept you for the person you are and not the person they think you should be.

I'm making myself sick

Q. My friend went to see a school counsellor and she said it was really good and I should talk to her about my eating – I'm making myself sick whenever I eat something and I'm taking laxatives and slimming pills. My mum is desperate to get me home so I know she won't sign the consent form in case it stirs up trouble. What shall I do?

Tracey, 15

A. NICKI SAYS: I understand your anxieties about how this may affect your return home. However that should not be the case. If you feel you would benefit from speaking to the school counsellor and you're not getting the consent form signed, don't panic. Chat to your social worker, foster carer or school counsellor – there is a way that you can access school counselling without parental consent as long as it can be seen that you are mature enough.

Discussion between you and the counsellor should be strictly confidential unless you or somebody else is at risk of harm. The counsellor may then need to talk to someone else to help keep you safe, but will always try to talk with you about this first.

An eating disorder often develops as a way of coping or trying to control parts of a person's life they are finding difficult. This could be exam stress or a family break up. Counselling is about helping you to work things out for yourself, making decisions and choices and helping you to look at things differently. It will help you feel better about yourself.



THE LOWDOWN

SCHOOL COUNSELLING UNCOVERED...

OK so you're fostered and sometimes it's tough, but there are people that can help you. But how do you know where you can get that help?



At times, everyone feels worried or has problems that may be hard to talk about with people close to you. You may worry whether they understand, whether you can trust them, whether they will blame you, or ignore your feelings. That is when you may think about talking to the school counsellor.

What's counselling about?

Counselling is about helping you to work things out for yourself, making decisions and choices and helping you to look at things differently. It can help you to feel better about yourself.



What kind of things do people talk about in counselling?

Whatever matters to you or is worrying you. It could be about lots of different things. Here are some examples of problems and feelings that you may have:

Being in foster care
Is it my fault?

Bullying

I don't want to come to school. Bullies bug me every day about being fostered and it's getting worse.

A tough time at school

The work is piling up. I'm getting more and more behind, changing schools hasn't helped. I can't seem to get on with it. The longer that this goes on the worse I feel.

Chaos at my foster home

I want to go out with my mates and make my own decisions. I'm arguing with my foster carers all the time. They never listen to me, why should I listen to them???

I'm feeling angry but I don't know why

I'm worried because I keep feeling that I want to lash out at people. I can't control myself. I'm always in trouble at home and at school because of it.

Feelings about myself

Sometimes I don't understand how I feel or why I feel like I do.

Death of someone special

I miss this person so much. I'll never get through this. It'll be like this forever. Nobody understands how bad I'm feeling.

Making friends/keeping friends

Everyone else seems to have loads of friends. I haven't. What's wrong with me?

How will I know if School Counselling is right for me?

You can meet the counsellor for one or more sessions to find out for yourself.

The counsellor will talk to you about where and when to come and how often you will meet.

Counselling is voluntary. You have the choice to come or not. Whatever you decide will be OK.



How do I get to see the school counsellor?

It's slightly different for each school but the principles are still the same. Someone may have suggested it to you, or you can begin by talking to a member of staff that you trust. This may be your form tutor or the pastoral head.



Will other people know what I have talked about?

No. What you talk about is confidential. That means it's between you and the counsellor. It's your time and your space to be with someone who is there for you and nobody else. Obviously if you want to talk to anyone else about what you have discussed in the counselling session, that's up to you. The counsellor will keep everything confidential unless you are at risk of harm. The counsellor may then need to talk to someone else to help keep you safe, but will always try to talk with you about this first.

Will anything be written about me?

Keeping information, about people, safe and confidential is very important to the counsellor. The counsellor will make some notes about what has been talked about in the session. These are kept safe in a locked filing cabinet. What you say in counselling is not repeated to others without your permission, unless there are very serious concerns about you or another person's safety.

A request for counselling form will be completed and given to your counsellor, who will see you when they have a space and discuss your wishes with you. Some schools may contact your foster carers for consent for you to attend counselling. They will always ask you for your opinion first. Your opinion is important.

For any problems related to fostering, you or your foster carer can call FOSTERLINE WALES free on 0800 316 7664.

SAY WHAT?!



Being in care - School counselling, can it help?



➤ **Toby, 14 says** 'Don't get me wrong, my teachers are great but they have to look after a whole class and there's not much time for me. It's great to have the time and space to talk to Jenny my counsellor'.



➤ **Chirag, 15 says** 'I don't feel ashamed to admit that I need help because now I know that I am not the only one that needs it. The school counsellor is not just for when you are in care'.



➤ **Jodie, 13 says** 'It helped me to understand my problems and to overcome them. The counselling has helped me to feel more confident about myself'.

➤ **Adam, 15 says** 'I like the person I am now more than the person I was when I first came to counselling'.



➤ **Holly, 15 says** 'Talking to a school counsellor helped me realise that some problems are not just because you are in care. It kinda made me feel more normal not having to run everything by my social worker. I had a feeling that I was in control and was not going to be judged'.

