



Alison Smith Counselling - Email: alisonsmithcounselling@gmail.com Tel: 07805 987472
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FAQs for Parents and Guardians and Referrers

These are the questions most frequently asked which I hope you will find helpful.

What is counselling? Counselling provides a safe, private space where children and young people are heard, seen, accepted and respected, and listened to without judgement, criticism, rescuing or imposing solutions. The purpose of counselling is to safely support and empower. Sessions with me typically take place weekly for 1 hour. For some clients, we find that a longer session works well and we might have a 2 hour session or more. This would be discussed with parents or referrers.

Why can't my child talk to me? What if he or she says private things about the family? Counselling is not about judging anyone. Having a safe space to talk to a trained and caring adult outside of the family can be easier because there is no need to protect anyone's feelings. Supporting your child to express him or herself honestly in sessions, whether about school, friends or family, will greatly enable him or her to get the most out of the counselling. My aim is to enable your child to feel happier, safer and more able to make the most of life, now and into the future.

Is it OK to ask my child about the sessions? Confidentiality is a cornerstone of the trust needed for counselling to be effective. People can be surprised to know that by the UN Convention Rights of the Child (1989), it is also your child's right. Some children choose to talk about the sessions at home, while others may not. It is best to take your lead from them. Your child may sometimes be more emotional when feelings have emerged, but this is generally a positive and necessary step towards change.

Can I be in touch about how the sessions are going if I am worried about my child? If you feel concerned about your child or have information of importance concerning his or her well-being or safety, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. If I ever have a safeguarding concern, while seeking to preserve trust and gain a child's consent before involving others, I will always do what I believe to be necessary in order to keep a child safe.



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How do you safeguard children and young people? Safeguarding is monitored responsibly and sensitively and is part of the transparent agreement about the boundaries of confidentiality made at the outset between counsellor and child. As detailed in the contract, and in accordance with GDPR, any personal data, whether electronic or hand-written, is stored securely and would only ever be shared with a 3rd party in the best interests of safeguarding your child. If you have any queries about this, please just ask. I also have a separate safeguarding policy which can be viewed on my web site [Policies \(alisonsmithcounselling.com\)](http://alisonsmithcounselling.com).

Does my child need to like the outdoors and animals to take part? I will always endeavour to find a way of working with a child that suits them and their preferences, and this may evolve over time as their confidence and comfort in the environment and our relationship develops. I can be very flexible in my approach and will meet the child or young person where they are at.

What should my child wear? It's sensible to be prepared for the option of heading outside: an extra layer and a waterproof, as well as good covering for those sunny days! Sensible footwear – be it boots, wellies or sturdy shoes - is essential to provide protection and to allow us to get the most of the environment if that's what we choose!

When do you work? Is it term time only or school holidays too?

Most of my work happens across school term times. However, there are a couple of weeks where I take holiday during term time (before Christmas and Easter). I also offer two weeks in the summer holidays (these are spaced at the start and towards the end of August) to keep up contact, consistency and work with the children and young people I work with. For some the summer holiday can be a very long time and having some contact with me over that period can be beneficial. This isn't the case for all people though. Not all referrers fund work outside of term time and this is something that can be looked into on a case by case basis. PLEASE SEE MY TERM DATES ON MY WEB SITE FOR EXACT DATES, under [referrals | Alison Smith Counselling](http://alisonsmithcounselling.com)