

## Key Differences Between Counselling and Parent Coaching

This document outlines the key differences between therapeutic counselling and parent coaching. Although both can feel supportive and involve emotional insight, their purposes, methods, and boundaries differ.

Category	Counselling	Parent Coaching
Focus	Exploring emotional wellbeing, trauma, past experiences, and inner world.	Improving parenting strategies, understanding child behaviour, and supporting family dynamics.
Approach	Non-directive, reflective, often trauma-informed and emotion-focused.	Directive, collaborative, strategy-based with reflective parenting elements.
Goal Setting	Client-led goals based on emotional needs and healing.	Collaborative goals based on family challenges and parenting priorities.
Client Role	Explore personal challenges and emotions at their own pace.	Actively reflect, learn, and apply strategies between sessions.
Practitioner Role	Provide a safe, non-judgmental space to explore thoughts, emotions, and past experiences.	Offer guidance, tools, and insight for specific parenting concerns.
Session Content	May involve therapeutic models such as CBT, person-centred therapy, or parts work.	Includes psychoeducation, parenting tools, behaviour strategies, and reflective exercises.
Boundaries	Strict confidentiality; no contact between sessions for emotional support.	Similar boundaries, but often more structured with between-session tasks.
Safeguarding	Mandatory reporting and safeguarding responsibilities apply.	Same safeguarding responsibilities, with emphasis on child/family welfare.
Outcome	Emotional insight, healing, improved mental health, and self-awareness.	Practical parenting tools, improved parent-child relationships, increased confidence.
When to Refer	If deep trauma, mental health needs, or complex emotional patterns emerge.	If parents are seeking strategies, support with behavioural concerns, or confidence-building.