

## **Counselling, mentoring and life coaching – what's the difference?**

The three share some similarities but some very important differences too, and so it's important to work out which is going to be better for you. BCT offers counselling directly or can signpost clients to the LOOK mentoring project. Coaching is another option that clients can explore independently of BCT.

### **Counselling**

A counsellor involves helping you with physical, emotional, and mental health issues to improve your sense of well-being, alleviate feelings of distress, and resolve crises.

### **Mentoring**

A mentor involves an experienced person giving you advice and direction from their personal experience, by passing on their life knowledge and specialist skills to you.

### **Life-Coaching**

A life coach focuses on your present and future. A coach can help you to set and achieve goals in your life.

This might involve developing new ways of thinking, setting goals and actions to reach goals, and identifying and overcoming obstacles to change. Coaches use a variety of tools to help you decide what direction you'd like to take, exploring your personal values and strengths, so that you can live with more purpose and fulfilment.

### **When to use counselling, mentoring and life-coaching**

Counselling, mentoring and coaching are each beneficial in their own way.

Here's some examples of when you might use each.

#### **Use a counsellor if:**

- You feel that events from your past are holding you back.
- You're experiencing symptoms of depression, anxiety, or another mental health challenge.
- You've experienced trauma or loss that you're unable to move past.
- You're experiencing ongoing emotional distress.

**Use a mentor if:**

- You want to learn from a more experienced professional in your field.
- You want advice and guidance on how to grow in your life or your career.
- You want to boost the network of people you can learn from.

**Use a coach if:**

- You want clarity about what you truly want in life and what's getting in the way.
- Your main goals are around building a certain kind of future rather than resolving and healing from what has happened in the past.
- You are looking for someone to keep you accountable to your goals.
- You feel that you are not living up to your personal or professional potential.
- You experience the desire for a more fulfilling, purpose-driven life.