



OUR PLACE

**FREE
FACE
2
FACE**

Face-to-face counselling is available from Monday to Wednesday, 9am until 5pm.

Get in touch on **8202 5190** or counselling@unitingcommunities.org to book an appointment.

You will be asked to provide the name, date of birth and contact phone number of all who are attending – feel free to let us know the correct pronouns too.

Free counselling for LGBTIQA+ youth and their loved ones

If you need a safe space to talk, Our Place is your place.

How we work

We provide respectful, non-judgemental and inclusive narrative counselling. We recognise that not all therapeutic spaces are supportive of queer and gender diverse people, and that there can be skepticism within the community sometimes. It's okay to come and check us out first.

We ask a lot of questions, but you can ask questions too!

More to your life than problems

We know that counselling conversations are only one part of all the things you're doing to respond to challenges in your life, and we recognise the existing skills and knowledge that you've been using to respond to the problems you face. There's no requirement for your challenges to be overwhelming to access Our Place, and if you'd like to talk about other parts of your life, we would be interested in hearing about them.

Your safety

Your safety is at the centre of everything we do. We understand that LGBTIQA+ people are at a higher risk of experiencing abuse and violence, and approach all conversations with care, and in ways that do not invite shame or blame.

We do not believe that sharing detailed accounts of trauma is necessary. However, in some cases, it can be important to speak about, and we take great care to ensure those conversations do not cause further harm.



**UNITING
COMMUNITIES**
Our Place

Options for who attends

You can choose to attend counselling by yourself or bring friends, family members or other support people. Families and support people of LGBTIQ+ young people are also welcome to come along separately.

Accessibility

Options are available if you would like an Auslan, or other language interpreter, or would prefer telephone counselling. Our building is wheelchair accessible and has gender neutral bathrooms.

Frequency and duration of conversations

Counselling conversations run for up to one hour at a time. Some people may choose to attend once, others come every few weeks for either a short or extended period of time. Different options work for different people and there is no limit to the number of conversations you can have.

Topics of conversation

People choose to attend counselling for many different reasons. You might want to speak about things related to sexuality, gender or intersex status, or you might want to talk about relationships, hopes for the future, current struggles or past experiences.

Families and support people may want to discuss feelings like loss, loneliness, confusion, anger or sadness in relation to a young person coming out, or explore how to better support them.

Conversations can move in many different directions. Whatever you want to talk about, we hope to provide a safe space where you feel comfortable and accepted.

Giving us feedback

We are always learning how to better support LGBTIQ+ young people and their loved ones, and from time-to-time we will get things wrong. Our Place is a new service, and we want to co-create it with the community. This means that we are not only open to your insight, but hoping for it!

It's okay to say 'no' to counselling

If you find that counselling is not the best fit for you - that's ok! If you can't, or choose not to, come along to a booked counselling session, that is totally fine. Please try to give us at least 24 hours' notice so that someone else on the waiting list can use that appointment time.

If we make a mistake

Here are some of the ways you can let us know if you think we need to do some more learning or if you've had any experience with us that doesn't feel good:

- Let your counsellor know - you can do this at any time and it is never too late.
- Let another member of staff know, including the reception team or management, especially if you'd prefer not to speak with your counsellor.
- Give feedback online [here](#) or you can ask reception staff for a Compliments and Suggestions Form to fill out and place in the feedback box in the waiting room.

We know it may feel uncomfortable to let your counsellor know that you'd like something to be different and we will do everything possible to make that process easier for you.



**UNITING
COMMUNITIES**
Our Place

Information and privacy

Any information you share with your counsellor, including any notes they take, will remain confidential (not shared with anyone else without your consent), except in a few important circumstances. This means, for example, if one member of the family says something to the counsellor, this will not be shared with other members of the family unless the person wants it to be. Your counsellor will be happy to discuss this with you and answer any questions.

EXCEPTIONS

If your counsellor has concerns about your safety or the safety of someone else that come up in the conversation, they will have to share that with a third party, especially if it relates to someone under the age of 18. All of our counsellors are mandated notifiers - you can read more about that [here](#). Where possible, the counsellor will speak to you about any concerns they have.

In order to make sure we are doing the best possible work, we often share details about counselling conversations with our supervisor and our team. The team are held to the same confidentiality requirements as your counsellor.

Sharing information with your consent

There are lots of reasons why you and your counsellor might want to share things that come up in your conversation with others, including:

- You might find it useful for your counsellor to speak to or write to a teacher, doctor, psychiatrist, parent or someone else to ensure you're better supported.
- You might be interested in your counsellor sharing some of your ideas and insights with other professionals to enable them to better support LGBTIQ+ young people and their families.
- Often people we meet with have incredible knowledge and skills to get through all sorts of tricky times. You might be interested in sharing these learnings with others who are going through similar hard times.
- Sometimes, during counselling conversations, people agree to invite in others to observe the steps they are taking, or to hear them tell their story in ways that make them stronger.

Importantly, what is shared - how, where, with whom and in what circumstances - will be completely up to you!

Sharing learning

In speaking to many LGBTIQ+ people and their loved ones, we are told how valuable it would be if all counsellors and support workers were more educated and skilled at supporting them. In this service, we are hoping to increase the skill of as many counsellors as possible.

When you come to see us, we might ask if it's ok for another counsellor from the team to join the conversation. Their focus will be to learn from the primary counsellor, but they might also offer some useful ideas. Importantly, they will commit to learning from the conversation. Sometimes, we also ask if it's possible to video or audio record the conversation so we can learn from our work and improve. We will always ask for your consent, and it is always ok to say no.

We hope that this information has given you some idea of what to expect. If there is more you would be interested in knowing before accessing this service, we would love to hear from you. Please send any enquiries to counselling@unitingcommunities.org or give us a call on 8202 5190.



**UNITING
COMMUNITIES**
Our Place