



Who is Towards Healing?

Towards Healing is the Counselling and Support service funded by the Catholic Church to support the needs of survivors of Religious, Institutional and Clerical Abuse and their families.

What services do Towards Healing offer?

Towards Healing offers a range of counselling and support services:

- Face-to-Face Counselling
- Psycho-Educational Group Work
- Practical Workshops
- Restorative Justice / Facilitated Listening Meetings
- Friendly Call
- Advocacy
- Structured Telephone Counselling
- Parent Coaching

What is Child Protection?

Child Protection is the steps taken to protect children from any harm. Towards Healing takes seriously their role in this process. Many of the people who use our service have been harmed as minors by an

adult. It is our belief that we need to share this information with the civil authorities so they can ensure children are currently safe from someone who has sexually harmed a child in the past. The Child Protection Administrator will work with both

therapists and clients to ensure we enact this role in the most sensitive way possible for all parties. If you have any questions about our Keeping Safe Policy please email: childprotection@towardshealing.ie

Who has access to my notes?

Towards Healing keeps limited information on a computer system to ensure that we are able to best service the clients who call us. Under the Data Protection Act 1988 & the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003), we are obliged to let clients know this and to share this information with the client if they request this.

How many sessions do I have?

Our service is primarily structured to support primary survivors of abuse by the Catholic Church. Primary survivors will be given up to an initial 80 sessions with reviews throughout this intervention to ensure the best possible outcome.

It is recognized by Towards Healing that families members of survivor's lives are also impacted by the trauma that was experienced. Family members (spouse, partner, parent, child or sibling) of survivors are offered up to 20 sessions of individual therapy.

Is the counsellor/therapist/psychologist qualified?

Yes, all the Towards Healing therapists are accredited, registered, licensed or chartered by a mental health professional organisation. This ensures that clients are referred to experienced professionals.

Who knows I'm using the service?

Towards Healing knows how important confidentiality is to the clients who use us. Towards Healing staff knows who is using the service; this includes the staff in the Towards Healing office and the therapist you are working with. Towards Healing does not share the identity of the service users with outside agencies (including the Catholic Church) without the written permission of the client.

Can I get more sessions?

If you are coming to the close of the number of sessions that have been allocated, you can discuss this with your therapist and they can make a professional recommendation to have your case reviewed for additional services.

What is Advocacy?

This service provides clients with practical support, advice and information on a wide range of services and on how best to access them. It assists clients to navigate their way through the administrative structures in both the statutory and voluntary sectors. It interfaces directly with these agencies and advocates on their behalf to ensure that their needs are addressed.

What is an Exchange of Information Form used for?

From time to time client ask us to talk with outside agencies on their behalf. If a client makes this request we ask that they sign an exchange of information form to give us consent. This ensures that there is clarity by all parties about who we should share information with and how much information should be share. This allows the client to stay in control of how information is shared about them.

What do I have to do to get counselling?

The first step is to call Towards Healing on our free phone and talk with one of our telephone counsellors. They will explain the process to you and explore the possibility of registering with us. If you decide to progress the counselling, you can register over the phone which will take about 20 minutes. This will involve asking you some questions to ensure you are eligible for our service and help us link you in with the best therapist to meet your needs. It is best are you in a private place as some of the questions are personal. Our telephone counsellors will do their best to support you through this process. We know the first step can often be the hardest.

Who works in Towards Healing?

Towards Healing is staffed by professional, lay people. The clinical team are all therapists with experience working with survivors. We also have an administrative back up team. None of our staff are priests, brothers, or sisters. We know how important it is for people to trust we are an independent agency.

Why do I need to answer so many questions to see a therapist?

We do not want to be invasive, but we do want to ensure that we get the right service for you. We ask questions to clarify what your hope and expectations are for support and to explore the best way to support you. We also need to ensure you are entitled to our service.

How will I know therapy is right for me?

Usually people call us because they want some aspect of their life to be better. Often they are struggling or overwhelmed by something. Therapy can help people to find a safe space with a trusted person to explore how to make their life better. The best way to find out if therapy is right for you is to try it. Towards Healing does not ask you to make a long term commitment. You can contact us to explore the option of entering therapy and see if it feels right for you.

Can I change therapist if I don't think the first one is not for me?

Yes, the relationship with your therapist has to feel right to you. Sometimes you will not feel like the therapist we send you to, is the right person for you. This does not mean therapy is not for you. It is important for you to feel like you are comfortable and have trust in your therapist. If you do not think we made a good match for you, call us and we will try to make a better match.

What are check ins?

We like to make sure that after referring you to your therapist that things are going well for you. You will be encouraged to keep in touch with us to let us know you are happy with the service. From time to time we will call you just to make sure things are going well.

How long are sessions?

Usually therapy sessions are between 50 minutes to an hour once a week. However, it is important for you and your therapist to agree to regular meetings times and frequency that is right and safe for you. For some it might be best to space out the therapy over time to allow clients more time in between session to practice some of the learning. The main thing to remember is that we are all individuals and might progress in different ways, so talk with your therapist to agree what works for you.

Can I call the line to chat if needed?

Yes, we are here to listen! The Helpline at Towards Healing is open Monday to Thursday from 11:00 am to 8 pm and Fridays 11:00 to 6 pm. The helpline is staffed by therapists who are there to support you.