

How Counselling Helped Me

An ex addicts personal experience of therapy.

My experience has been that until I reached out and sought help that my life would stay stuck. I believe that anyone seeking to change their patterns of behaviour and improve the quality of their life can achieve this with the support of therapy.

I grew up in the 'inner city' the youngest of 5 children. My neighbourhood consisted of many ethnic backgrounds and I quickly learned from an early age how to defend myself because being different i.e. whether your skin colour, sexual orientation or ethnic background meant you were not acceptable.

Homosexuality was not talked about other than as filthy, sinful predators who were not normal; I was told to stay away from them.

For generations the men in my family were heavy drinkers and womanizers. It was accepted that every man had a 'mistress' on the side.

From an early age I recognised that I 'liked' other boys more than I should. When I 'experimented' with my friends I felt so guilty and knew that I would go to hell. I was very confused about my feelings.

As I approached puberty my feelings became more intense and the hatred I had towards myself that I was not normal started to increase.

It was then around the age of 13 that I had my first alcoholic drink and smoked marijuana. Suddenly I felt 'brave'.

My alcohol and drug use quickly accelerated. I used stronger drugs and daily! I would constantly get 'high' so I didn't have to deal with what I was told was abnormal. I didn't realise at the time that it was actually making my mental state worse. I was falling deeper and deeper into depression and despair. I believed my 'self medicating' was the only option to get through my days.

I started to live a double life. Pretending to have girlfriends but sneaking off to be with men. My despair increased and though I overdosed many times I never actually had the courage to kill myself. By the time I was 29 years old I had been in numerous hospitals and detox centres.

It was then that I decided to turn my life around by seeking help. I started seeing a therapist and going to AA. (Alcoholics Anonymous)

It was a struggle and I often found myself arguing with my therapist because all the beliefs that had been instilled in me were so difficult to let go of. It took some time for me to accept the help that was being offered to me.

Slowly my life started changing.

I am now 'out' and in a long-term relationship and have been clean and sober for a long time. My final message would be that 'you don't have to do this alone' and help is out there if you want it.