



COUNSELLING & COACHING

KIRSTY MCGOVERN

*Your
Essential
Guide To
Changing
Anything In
Counselling*

**YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO BE CRAZY...**

CHAPTER 14 HOW TO BE WITH YOUR EMOTIONS



COUNSELLING & COACHING

'YOUR TURN' WORKSHEET: CHAPTER 14

From "You Don't Have To Be Crazy..." by Kirsty McGovern

How To Be With Your Emotions

This is a process you'll probably find yourself doing naturally when working with your counsellor. I've written it out here to help you get clear on the different parts of it so you can practice it when you need to between sessions. It's best to start with milder emotions and 'build up' to facing more intense one if you can.

NB - If there are emotions that are frightening or overwhelming to you, don't try this process alone, see your counsellor as soon as you can.

1) Ground Yourself In The Present.

Example – feel your feet on the floor, your back against the chair you're sitting in, looking around the room at what you can see, noticing certain smells, whichever senses help you 'anchor' to your surroundings.



COUNSELLING & COACHING

2) When you're ready, take your focus inside your body. Locate where you feel the emotion and the sensations that come with it.

It might help to think of the following questions - Where are you feeling that sadness, anger, fear etc? In your back, your chest, your stomach, your legs or somewhere else?

What does it feel like - is it sharp, a dull ache, or a tension?

Does it remind you of anything?

Don't get lost in the analysis, just get a sense of it.

3) Breathe through the sensations and any emotions as they come up.

Note - This isn't about focusing on your breath (as you might do in meditation) as that can take you away from the emotion. If it helps, try 'breathing into' the parts of your body that are holding the emotion. This can help you stay connected to it without being overwhelmed by it.

4) Gradually tune into the 'message' - What are you're feeling and why might you be feeling that?

Note - If answers to these questions come, great. If they don't, don't worry, with deeper feelings and in certain situations it can take us time to understand why we might be feeling something. If you're not sure, check it out with your counsellor.



COUNSELLING & COACHING

5) Is there something that part of you needs to hear right now? If so, can you give yourself that reassurance?

Example – Maybe you need to hear that it’s okay to feel angry or that the sadness won’t last forever. Putting it into your own words will make it more effective. Hold those words and repeat them over to yourself whenever you need them.

Note – yes I am encouraging you to talk yourself! If it seems strange this is how self-soothing / emotional regulation works!

6) Before you finish, check out what, if anything, you might be needing. Can you give that to yourself?

Example - Maybe you need to share your feelings with your counsellor or a trusted friend. It could be you need to wrap yourself up in a blanket and breathe through it until it’s passed. Or you may need to take action of some kind (but make sure you don’t skip out of the feeling part before you’re ready!)

Give yourself time if you can’t think of anything immediately. Tuning into our deeper needs in a skill that we can all get better at - if we practice.

It’s important to know the feeling (or feelings) may not shift straight away (although sometimes they can). Even if there isn’t an immediate shift you’ll probably find the feeling less consuming and you won’t have to spend energy trying to avoid it. This can give you the space to focus on other things while the emotion moves through you in its own time.