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Article for Bardonora newsletter.

What's so scary about relationship counselling?

Some of my clients have admitted that they were pretty fearful before making their first appointment, and even more hesitant on their way to our first meeting. My husband and I have needed counselling a few times. We were really fearful. How come? I think there are several reasons we are all a bit unnerved:

- Admitting we need to talk to someone to help sort things out can feel like we have failed. Really, we are just proving that we know how to use the resources of the community wisely.
- Sometimes we are afraid that the counsellor will tell us we've done everything wrong, or that one of us is more to blame than the other. My job as counsellor is to help YOU to HELP YOURSELVES. I will listen to both points of view, and try to understand where you're coming from.
- Some people are afraid that they will be given a list of new things to do, making the relationship even harder. I'm not there to tell you how to do things, but I will help you learn new skills and new ways of talking through issues. I will also help you both to get new ways of seeing the problems you are having so that you can make positive changes.
- Sometimes we are afraid something will be talked about that we have tried to avoid. Often in counselling, couples find, for the first time, that it is safe to deal with issues that felt too hard without a bit of help. But it is always your choice: it is OK to take time to face the harder issues.