Mental Health Support – Choosing the right fit for my child?

Part 1 – What Is the Difference in the Professions?

I am very privileged to do the work I do and I come into contact with such courageous and inspiring individuals and their families within the child mental health support sector. One of the key questions that arises during initial parent consultations is ‘how do I know what is the right type of support for my child? I do not know who does what and how this will affect my child.’ So I thought that today I would provide an overview of the support currently available and in part two which will follow later this week, I will discuss how to choose the right support for your child.

Many of us do not even think about mental health unless it directly impacts our lives in some way and when we have a child that is struggling knowing where to look for support can be daunting and clear guidelines are often hard to find.

There are a range of different types of professionals that can support your child depending on their age and the concerns they have. Each profession have specialists in different areas, providing a simple overview sometimes is a great place to start so below are my umbrella definitions and how I explain the different professions to my potential clients:

- **a therapist** explores your past experiences and how this affects your thoughts, emotions and reactions today
- **a counsellor** listens to your anxieties about your experiences
- **a mentor** shares their own experiences hoping you will
take something from this

- A coach asks you open questions to let you discover how to manage your experiences by yourself.

It is important to add that when we are talking about the mental health of our young people finding registered professionals is a high priority and each profession has a regularity body and code of conduct which I have linked to next, which helps maintain an understanding and collaboration to ensure the health and safeguarding of our young.

Links to the most renowned associations:

- [British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy](#)
- [UK Council for Psychotherapy](#)
- [National Counselling Society](#)
- [Mentoring and Befriending Foundation](#)
- [Association for Coaching](#)
- [BACP for Coaching](#)
- [Association for Child Psychotherapists](#)
The challenge parents currently have is that within the therapeutic world there are a range disciplines from talking therapies to internal work therapies, creative therapies, analytical therapies amongst others. I will discuss in Part 2 the fundamentals of the different approaches.

What is being found through research and development within the industry is that all of the above professions play key roles in supporting individuals and families and it is becoming more commonplace to have one individual who can support in a multi-discipline way so that a family unit can have a more secure support structure. Because of this some professionals choose not to affiliate with an association, this does not necessarily mean they are not professional or not able to support your family unit in a professional way.

This is where I recommend looking deeper into an individuals’ experience, testimonials, credentials and affiliations with like-minded professionals, I know this sounds like a lot of work, however, it pays off to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child. Call them and they will be happy to provide you with any background information you require and many will provide a free telephone consultation and a face to face guardian consultation before meeting a child if you wish.

In Part 2 I will advise on the process of getting support and how to choose the right approach for your child.