

“It’s just a conversation...”

Connor knew something was wrong but didn’t really know what, so he went to see his GP, who prescribed anti-depressants. They helped, but Connor felt they were just a band-aid, so, on his doctor’s recommendation, he decided to give counselling a shot.

Connor, moved from Taranaki to Auckland in his early twenties to study IT, and took a job in the construction industry. His parents separated when he was in his childhood and while he has a close relationship with his mother, his father hasn’t been a strong presence in his life. During the extended lockdown in August last year, he realized things weren’t quite right.

He was able to continue to work during Covid-19 lockdowns, however, his friends and flatmates struggled with being socially isolated, which naturally impacted on him. The extra hours and being short staffed at work was also impacting his mental health - so Connor wasn’t really enjoying his work. He felt himself withdraw and noticed he’d lost interest in the things he enjoyed like hiking, photography, exercising and socializing with mates.

“Before counselling, all I could think about was getting through the day.”



A Google search revealed that Home and Family Counselling has a “home” just around the corner from where he lives on the North Shore and that he could request an appointment via the website.

It wasn’t a flying start as he didn’t gel with his first counsellor. However, Home & Family Counselling understood that finding the right counsellor is critical, so recommended Gemma. The ten counselling sessions that followed changed his outlook and trajectory.

“Gemma was not at all what I imagined a counsellor to be... She has a brilliant sense of humour.”

Connor had no idea how counselling would help: “I just knew I had to do something. I was lost. Talking to my GP was that first small step, and now, out the other side, I just want to encourage others like me to do the same. That first small step led to other small and sometimes scary steps, that have changed my life.”

“Home and Family feels so familiar; it feels like walking into your own home; everyone is so warm and friendly. Gemma was not at all what I imagined a counsellor to be; it felt more like a conversation with a wise older friend, and also she has a brilliant sense of humour; there was quite a lot of laughing during our sessions.”

Connor attributes his counselling sessions with helping him feel more confident in himself and giving him tools to navigate his emotions and the ups and downs of life.

“I am now so much more hopeful and positive about the future, back doing things I love...”

“Gemma was able to help me get perspective, understand that what I was experiencing was very common and normal, and learn things about myself that I hadn’t realized. For example, I now look back and can see that I’ve lived with anxiety and depression most of my adult life. I just didn’t realise that’s what it was or how to manage it in a healthy way.”

“Before counselling, all I could think about was getting through the day. I am now so much more hopeful and positive about the future, back doing things I love. “

“The staff feel like my extended family, who just live around the corner. Their voluntary contribution payment system is based on what you can afford, so that means somebody like me is not put off because it’s too expensive. And I know that, if I need a ‘tune up’, Home and Family Counselling’s door is always open, which is great ‘cos I now understand my mental health will likely need ongoing maintenance. “

