



A Safety Net for Mental Health

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MBK Wellness CO., Ltd.

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※We will respond within two business days of
receiving your message.

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"Mirror, Mirror on the Wall..." — What Can AI Truly Reflect?

Over the past year, the usage rate of generative AI in Japan (including conversational/advisory, search/text generation, and video/image/music generation tools) has more than doubled, surpassing 50% of the population (Source: NTT Docomo Mobile Society Research Institute, "2025-2026 Generative AI Usage Awareness and Behavior Survey"). Furthermore, usage among younger demographics aged 15-24 has reached the mid-80% range, with surveys revealing that AI is being used daily not only for academic research but also for "personal relationship consultations" (Source: LINE Research, fiscal year ending March 2026).

Indeed, more and more people who reach out to our counseling service tell me that they have already turned to AI before coming to see me. So why do so many people feel drawn to seeking advice from AI? Numerous surveys have explored this very question. Common reasons include AI's around the clock availability, its ability to provide immediate access to information and specialized knowledge, and the opportunity to seek advice privately without fear of being judged.

Reading these findings, I am reminded of the classic Brothers Grimm fairy tale, Snow White. The beautiful yet arrogant queen in the story asks her magic mirror each day: "Mirror, mirror on the wall — who is the fairest of them all?" The mirror always answered, "You are, Your Majesty," until one day it replied, "Snow White, Your Majesty." Upon hearing this, the queen was deeply shaken, driven by rage and hatred to attempt to take Snow White's life.

Doesn't this magic mirror, depicted in a fairy tale written over 200 years ago, bear a striking resemblance to modern AI? AI that is always available, faithfully returns an answer to any question, and allows you to inquire without anyone else knowing — it could be said to represent the evolution of technology in fulfilling human desires.

Interestingly, counseling is sometimes compared to a "mirror" as well. Just as we cannot see our own appearance directly but can do so through a mirror's reflection, it is equally difficult to clearly observe the true state of our own troubled minds. A counselor strives to become a mirror as free from distortion and cloudiness as possible, reflecting back the client's inner emotions, values, and desires through dialogue, and working together to bring clarity and understanding.

So, how does consulting AI differ fundamentally from counseling? Looking back at the magic mirror example offers one important insight. The mirror answered the queen's question faithfully and accurately. Yet one cannot help but wonder whether it ever truly tried to understand why she felt compelled to ask the same question over and over again. Behind that relentless need to ask that question lay profound anxiety, fear, loneliness, and suffering. These feelings would likely have been revealed not only through her words, but also through her facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures. Counseling is not simply about answering the question a person brings. It is about exploring the concerns that lie beneath the question — sometimes even the person has not yet become aware of themselves — and searching for answers together with sincerity, patience, and compassion.

Counselor's Oasis

When I become aware of fatigue or stress, I first make sure to get proper rest — and then one of my favorite ways to refresh is simply to pause and take in the view. Sometimes I visit a hilltop observation deck, stroll along a riverside path, or spend time by a lake or the sea, quietly taking in the scenery. Or I visit an interesting art exhibition and immerse myself in the world of the works on display. In daily life, I tend to become caught up in what is right in front of me, narrowing my perspective. Stepping back — both literally and mentally — helps me regain perspective, restore my sense of balance, and return to everyday life feeling refreshed in both body and mind.