

How To Get The Most Out of YOUR THERAPY EXPERIENCE

Tell Your Counselor Your Expectations

If you attend counseling expecting to go back to your childhood to find the roots of the problem and your counselor focuses on the present, someone is bound to be frustrated if that expectation isn't brought up and discussed before you proceed. Similarly, you might tell your counselor approximately how long you had anticipated that you would attend counseling to make sure that you are both on the same track.

Tell Your Counselor What Works and What Has Worked for You

Each person is unique. You can help your counselor by teaching him/her the style and questions that work best for you as an individual. The counselor does have some expertise and good reasons for doing what s/he is doing, but a competent counselor also has some room for flexibility. If you have been in counseling before and found some aspect or method to be particularly helpful, let your counselor know!

Let Your Counselor Know When S/He Does Something Right

Counseling can be a difficult and challenging field of work; counselors often see people when they are at their most stressed and most impatient. Sometimes the counselor doesn't know whether s/he has been helpful, either because clients don't return or just because change takes some time. So, most counselors appreciate hearing that they have done something that worked for you or that was particularly beneficial. This can also make your counseling experience more productive, since your counselor will have your feedback to guide him/her in future attempts to help you.

Tell Your Counselor What Doesn't Work

Like telling your counselor your expectations and letting him/her know what has worked or is helping, it is just as important to let your counselor know when something *isn't* helping. This includes talking about what is happening during your counseling sessions as well as outside of counseling. Providing your counselor with this feedback gives you the opportunity to make adjustments in the treatment process.

Tell Your Counselor Your Objections

Some people think that they shouldn't speak up about their worries or objections to their counselor's suggestions, but a free and frank discussion about any misgivings helps your counselor deal with your concerns and make any adjustments; this in turn ensures a higher likelihood of treatment success.

Finally, Ask Questions!

Ask questions about the counseling process, any methods used by the counselor, the counselor's training and qualifications, etc. If it gets too personal or the counselor considers the questions to be inappropriate, s/he will explain this to you, but it still your right to ask any questions which you might have.

because it's your health.

