

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COUNSELING



**WHY WOULD I CONSIDER COUNSELING?** Almost everyone has areas in their life that are challenging--even overwhelming. Frequently, it is difficult to face these challenges effectively, because we don't have the necessary skills or confidence. You may be ready to make changes in your life, but you may not know how to bring those changes about. With the help of a counselor, you can begin to see the hidden patterns that create blocks to fulfilling your happiness and potential. In counseling, you will receive ongoing support, encouragement, and tools to help you live a more fulfilling life.

**WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS IN THE FIRST SESSION?** In a confidential setting, the client discusses current challenges. The counselor listens, asks questions, and considers resources and helpful interventions. S/he may share observations and suggest possible solutions. When a different resource (such as a medical, or alternate therapeutic approach) will better assist the client, referrals are offered. If the client and the counselor agree on a course of action, they will continue to work together.

**HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?** Sometimes, a new perspective or piece of information is all that is needed. In that case, the work is brief. At other times, the client may want to change long-standing patterns or master challenging issues. A therapeutic relationship is an effective way of experiencing the safety and strength needed to change outmoded habits. With help, old patterns can be replaced with healthier choices. Since habits are created over a period of time, they can take some time to change. Most clients believe that the freedom and clarity gained through the process is well worth the time and effort.

**WHAT TOOLS DO COUNSELORS OFFER TO HELP CLIENTS CHANGE?** This depends on the client's needs, and a counselor's area of expertise. There is often more than one effective way to face life's challenges. Depending on the situation, a holistic counselor may use a variety of integrated approaches including: supportive talk, insight, body consciousness, gestalt, dream work, hypnosis, role play, journaling, art therapy, movement, music, belief removal, spiritual exploration, meditation, etc. When appropriate, the counselor may also suggest other services, such as medical or nutritional evaluation, support groups, and available community resources.

**HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE FOUND THE BEST COUNSELOR?** The most helpful counseling comes in the context of relationship. It is important to feel that you are working with a competent and trustworthy practitioner. This part of the decision is usually intuitive and highly personal. You may also inquire about the counselor's professional credentials and experience to get a more complete perspective .

**IS IT NECESSARY TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST?** Our present situations usually give us many clues about our past. Therefore, we begin with the here and now. Sometimes, all that is needed is a new perspective or unrecognized resource. Frequently, it is also helpful to examine how events in the past lead us to the creation of coping mechanisms that we still use. These strategies were intended to help us through challenging times. Although helpful in the beginning, they often impede us from being fully functional now. In the counseling process, unhealthy patterns and strategies can be observed and changed.

**WILL PAST FEELINGS COME UP?** Sometimes emotions arise in counseling, as they do in every arena of our life. These feelings can be useful in recognizing unresolved pain or trauma that has blocked the experience of our best self. The container that counseling provides, creates the safety to experience feelings and then move beyond them. Acknowledging and working with these emotions, can ultimately lead to a new perspective and awareness.

**HOW MUCH DOES COUNSELING COST?** This varies with individual counselors. I work on a sliding scale from \$70-\$90, and appreciate payment at the time of service.

**IS IT POSSIBLE TO MEET FOR A COMPLIMENTARY SESSION?**  
I am available to answer any questions you may have in an initial phone interview . I am also happy to meet with you for a 50 minute session in which you will have the opportunity to experience how we might work together.



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*Providing Safety and Support*

*To Master Life's Challenges*