

Understanding the Counseling Process

Counseling and psychotherapy is practiced in a variety of ways depending upon the setting, presenting issues of the client, theoretical orientation of the counselor and other factors. However, the following information is offered to give you a better idea of what to expect. If you have any questions concerning this information or anything else related to the counseling process, please do not hesitate to ask.

Counseling

- Counseling is a “conversation with a purpose”
- Counseling is not “advice giving” ... you are the expert on you, not the counselor
- The counselor strives to meet the client where he or she is ... to see the world through the eyes of the client
- Counseling is about helping you:
 - 1) to learn about yourself (insight, understanding),
 - 2) to become more self-aware (self-talk, environment)
 - 3) to use what you learn to make real and significant changes in yourself and your life

The Process of Change

- Change takes time and can be difficult ... you didn’t become the person you are today overnight and you won’t make significant changes overnight either
- Change comes slowly ... the focus of counseling is on making small changes
- Change is a process that involves stages: pre-contemplation, contemplation, planning, action, maintenance
- Setbacks are a part of the change process
- Change is often times about changing your perspective ... you cannot control events in your life but you can control how you react to them
- Real change is accomplished from the client’s efforts and hard work ... it requires taking what you learned during the counseling session and applying it in your life

The Counseling Process

- Counseling is a process that involves the client’s active participation and full commitment to the therapeutic process
- The focus of counseling is on:
 - a) how you see yourself
 - b) how you see your world
 - c) how you see yourself in your world
- The goal(s) of counseling is determined by the client and counselor together usually during the first therapy session
- Various therapeutic techniques are used to help you gain insight and achieve the established goal(s) of counseling
- “Homework” is assigned periodically to help you address a specific issue discussed and/or to keep you fully engaged in the counseling process between sessions