



2285 Benden Drive
Wooster, Ohio 44691
(330) 264-9029

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY WHAT CAN IT ACCOMPLISH?

As persons, we all need to learn and grow throughout our lives. If we don't, we become unhappy, stressed, lonely, unproductive, unfulfilled and generally "stuck." Mental health therapy (also referred to as "therapy", "psychotherapy" or "counseling") is a way to overcome the barriers that keep us from learning and growing. Therapy is a process by which you and, in some cases, other important people in your life can discover solutions to the problems you face. By talking about your problems with a trained therapist, you can discover new ways to understand your difficulties, develop new skills to help you cope with life's demands, improve your relationships with the people around you and learn to feel and function better. More importantly, you can learn a lot about yourself as a person, find ways to better meet your own emotional needs, set and achieve personal goals and live a more satisfying life.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY THERAPIST?

- First, therapists cannot magically remove the problems from your life, make you forget painful experiences or make you immune to the stresses of life -- nor can they make important life decisions for you. Your therapist will listen carefully to understand your situation and needs and will provide caring support and direction to help you discover the solutions that will work best for you.
- Your therapist can serve as an objective "sounding board" for you and, no matter what you say or do, is not likely to criticize you as a person. However, he/she may suggest different ways of behaving or looking at problems. He/she may also teach you new ways of coping with stress or communicating with others. At times, it might feel like your therapist is pushing or challenging you, but this is normal and is often a sign of future progress.
- At the start of therapy, your therapist will help you set goals for your treatment. With clear treatment goals, therapy can be much more successful. Occasionally during therapy, your therapist will ask you to assess your progress toward your goals and may ask you fill out a questionnaire to see how well therapy is working for you.
- Your therapist may also sometimes make "homework assignments" for you do between sessions to help you practice new skills.
- During therapy, your therapist might suggest other kinds of additional treatment services that might be helpful. Additional services may include (a) crisis intervention services to help you deal with unexpected situations that might arise between therapy sessions, (b) group therapy to provide you with additional helpful information and support, (c) case management services to help coordinate all mental health, medical and other agency services that affect you, (d) psychosocial services to provide daily supportive activities or (e) vocational services to help you get or keep a job. If you agree to participate in those

services, your therapist will help set them up for you and will work closely with other service providers to make sure they are helpful.

- In some cases, your therapist might suggest that you see a psychiatrist to prescribe medication to help you feel or function better. However, if you agree to take medication, realize that medications are only for symptom relief. By themselves, they do not solve the underlying problems that often cause the symptoms. If you use medication, it is very important to continue with your regular therapy.
- Your therapist and all other professionals from The Counseling Center keep all information about you, even the fact that you're in therapy, in strict confidence. They will not share any information about you with anyone outside of The Counseling Center, including your family, without your written permission. The only exceptions would be (a) if you are under 18 years old or a dependent adult (in which case your parents or other legal guardians have the right to know about your therapy), (b) if you share information that raises concern about your or someone else's safety or (c) if professionals from The Counseling Center are ordered by a court of law to provide information about you.
- While your therapist can be a valuable resource for a period of time, he/she will primarily work toward helping you function better on your own.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES THERAPY TAKE?

Therapy sessions last about one hour and are usually occur every 1 to 3 weeks. Therapy is time-limited and most people meet their treatment goals in 12 or fewer sessions. But if you need more time than that, your therapist may provide more sessions.

HOW CAN I MAKE THERAPY SUCCESSFUL FOR ME?

- Therapy cannot guarantee results. You will get as much out of it as you put into it.
- Be completely honest and open with your therapist about your experiences, thoughts and feelings and be open to new ways of looking at your problems and new ways of thinking and behaving.
- Be on time for all scheduled appointments. Your therapist may look at late arrivals, early departures, missed appointments or cancellation with less than 24-hour advance notice as signals that you are not currently ready for change. If that is true, your therapist may suggest ending therapy for the time being so he/she can be available to other persons who need his/her services.
- While you're in therapy, don't abuse alcohol or drugs and be sure to take any medications only as prescribed. Abuse of legal, illegal or prescription chemical substances is one of the most common reasons why therapy is unsuccessful.
- Don't drop out too early. It's OK to have uncomfortable thoughts or feelings and to be tempted to quit, especially in the early stages of therapy. But experience shows that, if you can push beyond those thoughts and feelings, you can make significant gains.

- Don't hang on too long. Too much therapy can be as harmful as too little therapy, especially if it starts to make you feel like you can't function on your own or if it becomes a substitute for having other important social relationships in your life.
- Above all, remember that the only person who can make changes happen for you is you. Your therapist can be a valuable assistant as you attempt to make positive changes in your life. But, in the end, you are responsible for making your own important life decisions.