

HOW TO PREPARE FOR COUNSELING (Particularly for First-Timers)

Making a decision to seek counseling is not easy. Knowing how to make the most out of your decision is a critical component to assure that your foray into counseling will be a positive experience. The following are pointers to keep in mind prior to your first appointment.

1. There needs to be a good enough fit between you and your counselor. You will be disclosing sensitive information to someone you've just met. Take time to get to know your counselor ... how she/he communicates, responds to your concern(s), manner in which she/he shows interest. If the counselor doesn't quite measure up to your "Good Enough" expectations, let the counselor know your reservations. This is important! Your decision to come for counseling wasn't a mistake, so don't just quit. Rather, ask to be referred to another counselor.
2. Progress in counseling is dependent upon being as open and honest about yourself and your concerns as possible. Without adequate information, the counselor will be of little help.
3. If your counselor says something you don't understand or disagree with, let she/he know. How much you get from counseling is based upon developing a therapeutic alliance with your counselor. This takes talking, possibly confronting, questioning and sharing. This alliance also takes time to develop.
4. Any recommendation(s) your counselor may offer is "Not A Have To", but rather a choice you make.

We are very committed to make your counseling experience as positive and rewarding as possible. It is our hope that these pointers will reduce some anxiety you may have about taking this important step in your life.

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