

Relationship Counseling

Relationships are hard work. They need to be created, maintained, and sometimes, saved from sheer destruction. It's a lot for two people to manage, practically impossible for one. Sometimes, relationship counseling via a third party is necessary to expose the danger areas and promote healing.

If you're in a really good relationship, you've already built a solid foundation on which it can grow. Regardless of your personal age, or the span of your relationship, the thrills that you and your partner experience and the challenges you face will continue to help your partnership to flourish. You should view your relationship as a lifelong commitment, and be willing to develop the skills and understanding required to face and defeat the many challenges you'll encounter.

Personal relationships are the foundation of our society, with those between romantic couples being considered the most important. Regardless on the nature of your relationship, it must be based on effective communication and mutual respect in order to be strong and healthy.

It would be foolish and naïve for any of us to suggest that our relationships are problem-free. The question is not whether we have difficulties, but how we are prepared to face the challenges and solve the problems. These are the most difficult aspects to deal with, and it is when relationship counseling is often needed.

Relationship counseling should not be considered a 'last resort', or viewed as an option for 'losers in love'. Relationship counseling is an important tool that can help guide us in making the right decisions. A good counselor will not offer solutions, but will lead us in the decision-making process. In contrast, the role of an adviser is to provide definite decisions to individuals seeking help.

Anyone in an active partnership can gain new insight and helpful alternatives under the direction of relationship counseling. We will leave the counseling equipped with updated methods and a new perspective in order to face our challenges as a couple. During the counseling process, each partner will be given time to express their needs and fears, and will later discuss ill feeling and misunderstandings. Relationship counseling can help to remove the hindrances that can hold us back from having a truly intimate relationship. Conflicts can be resolved through the efforts of both parties. Communication skills are enhanced. For the most part, people are very effective in communicating thoughts and ideas, but lack the skills necessary to respond to negative situations without criticizing or complaining. Through counseling, couples learn to discuss their differences in beliefs and ideals, rather than saying hurtful things or destroying the reputation of the other person. Relationships, as a result, are very much improved.

As in any area of life, the first step to finding a solution is addressing the problem. For relationship counseling to be successful, both partners must be aware of their own behaviours, and understand how those actions affect the entire picture. It's important to remember that this is not personal counseling -- it's relationship counseling, and the focus must be on the relationship itself.

Our relationships are put to the test every day. Issues can range from the very minor (an empty toilet paper roll), to potentially devastating (an extra-marital affair). When relationships become wounded, they take time to heal. They need patience and care and kindness and forgiveness in order to continue growing. The success of relationship counseling depends on how each party views the damage, and whether both parties are willing to face the issues and help heal the relationship. Some people are active participants who work hard at making the relationship a success, while others seem to have little concern and don't respond at all.

If you and your partner are considering relationship counseling, you need to be prepared both individually, and as a couple:

Individuals:

- * I can work with my partner to discover (or rediscover) a healthy relationship.
- * What do I think is needed in our relationship?
- * I will know the obstacles that can keep me from being close and committed.
- * How much do I contribute to my relationship with my partner?
- * What areas do I feel need improvement?
- * I can help to make the relationship more healthy, lively and fun.

Couples:

- * Together, we'll build (or rebuild) a relationship filled with love and fulfillment.
- * We will openly discuss the reasons why we have developed relationship problems
- * We will be able to end conflicts in a healthy manner.
- * We will address and resolved issues surrounding commitment.
- * We will experience more intimacy and enjoyment in our relationship.

Even if you're not actively seeking counseling, considering these areas is a great exercise in addressing any issues, facing underlying problems, and helping your relationship continue to grow and flourish.