



COUNSELING AND THERAPY

WHAT TO EXPECT



1-888-7CLINIC

www.meierclinics.org

How do I find a therapist?

Many professionals can help you find a therapist. You can ask your health care provider (doctor or nurse) or your insurance company for a referral; ask someone you trust, such as a religious leader, relative, or friend; or you may want to check out mental health agencies in your area via the web or phone directory.

What types of Therapists are there?

When you are referred for counseling, you may be referred to a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or some other type of mental health provider. All of these professionals are trained in understanding feelings and behaviors and know ways to help people through difficult times. They may also have additional training and/or experience in a specialty area, such as treatment of anxiety, depression, attention deficits, marital problems, etc.

A **Psychiatrist** is a medical doctor (M.D./D.O.) who has graduated from medical school, with extra training in psychiatry. A psychiatrist can provide counseling, but likely will focus on evaluation, diagnosis and management of psychiatric medications.

A **Psychologist** has a doctoral degree, (Ph.D./Psy.D./Ed.D) in psychology. A psychologist provides counseling and can also administer special testing to diagnose and treat various personality, emotional and learning disorders or issues such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

A **Social Worker (LSW or LCSW), Professional Counselor (LPC or**

LCPC), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) and Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC) are examples of therapists who have completed graduate work in a mental health field. They are able to counsel those with general mental health and relational concerns or those requiring more specialized care.

What will happen when I talk to a therapist?

When you talk with a therapist, you get a chance to talk about anything that is on your mind. A therapist will listen to you and not judge you. You may choose to talk about more serious things some of the time and you can talk about less serious things at other times, depending on your mood and level of comfort.

What kinds of questions will the therapist ask me?

The first visit generally includes orientation and assessment tasks. At this stage, the therapist will welcome you, explain the therapy process and expectations, review policies and answer any questions you might have to help you feel comfortable. The therapist will ask you questions about your current life and recent stressors and how you've been feeling during the past year. Your therapist may also ask you some questions about your health, your relationships with family and friends, your work and home environment and other such questions to get better acquainted. This will help build a solid foundation for effective treatment.

After this initial session, your therapist will begin to guide you through your

personal therapy treatment. It is usually started by formulating a treatment plan, which includes discussing with your therapist your goals, desires for the type of help you hope to receive, and a plan to achieve this. Your therapist may also discuss with you the projected timeline for your progress and some strategies that will be used in achieving your goals. It is important that you actively participate in the process of discussing your goals and preferences for treatment.

The ending phase of therapy is called termination. This is when your counseling goals are adequately met and includes an evaluation of your progress and discussing maintenance and prevention strategies. Or if you are not making satisfactory progress, your therapist will discuss other treatment options for you to consider.

Some people continue to see their therapist occasionally for booster sessions. This is when you choose to seek some additional support and guidance from your therapist in the process of your continuing personal growth.

What should I expect from counseling?

When you decide to start talking with a therapist, you should expect to meet with one person who will get to know you pretty well. You will build a relationship with your therapist during your counseling appointments.

Most therapists understand that it takes time to get used to someone before you feel comfortable talking about the more serious things on your

mind. Building a relationship and trust takes time. If you still don't feel comfortable talking with your therapist after a few visits, you may consider choosing a different therapist. You deserve to have a therapist with whom you feel safe and comfortable.

How long will counseling last?

The type of help you are offered by your therapist will depend on (1) the type of personal concerns you have (duration and severity), (2) what you tell your therapist (openness and cooperation), and (3) the kind of relationship you have with him/her (trust). Some people are helped after only a few sessions ("short-term therapy") that may last for only a few weeks, while others may need/prefer longer treatment ("long-term therapy") that may last from several months to years. When appropriate, family members may attend some of the counseling sessions to provide extra support and to help improve the family relationships.

Counseling lasts different periods of time for different people. Your therapist will work with you to decide how counseling sessions will best fit into your schedule, lifestyle and needs. When you start therapy, you generally can expect to meet with your therapist for a 50-55 minute session once a week. You may meet less or more often depending on your personal situation and what you and your therapist decide is best for you.

Why should I go to counseling?

If you are thinking about whether counseling could be helpful to you, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Do you ever feel really sad, frustrated or lonely?
- Do you feel especially angry, annoyed or out-of-control?
- Do you feel anxious, worried, or guilty?
- Have you experienced some major problems at home, work, school, or in your neighborhood?
- Is it hard for you to talk about your feelings with family or friends?
- Is your life being negatively affected by the way(s) you are feeling?
- Is your personal life, work and/or relationships with family and friends more difficult than you think it should be?

- Have you experienced a loss or trauma with which you are having trouble coping?
- Are you having thoughts of hopelessness, helplessness or just want to give up on life?
- Has a physician, family member, friend or other trusted individual suggested that you might benefit from counseling?
- Have you lost joy in life or are you having trouble with motivation at work, home or in other personal areas?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, then it may be a good idea for you to talk with a therapist. However, if you are having any thoughts of self-harm, don't wait! Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room

People go to counseling for many reasons. Counseling can help you better understand your feelings and problems, and help you learn how to more effectively manage them in your everyday life. Counseling takes place in a completely confidential setting. Confidential means that the therapist cannot tell anyone, not even your close family members, about what is discussed, except as allowed by state and/or federal law. These exceptions generally include if you are a danger to yourself or others, instances of abuse or neglect, or if a minor as defined by state law.

What else can I do?

In addition to receiving counseling, there are many activities you can do on your own to help work through difficult feelings and solve problems. You may want to join a support group where people with concerns that are similar to yours meet to discuss different topics, and to seek and give support and encouragement to one another. You might want to try talking with a family member, good friend, or a spiritual leader. You might try writing down your feelings in a journal or diary. Other things to try are relaxation exercises, listening to music, watching a good movie or exercising. Also, try getting involved in an activity you are good at such as a sport, drama, music, or hobbies. The combination of doing activities you enjoy and talking with a therapist will improve how you are feeling and make your everyday life easier in many ways.

What makes Meier Clinics stand out from other mental health providers?

Our staff and counselors share a Christian perspective on health care. We integrate biblically-based, Christian beliefs with sound psychological principles to treat the whole person – emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

What else should I know about Meier Clinics?

Meier Clinics was founded in 1976 with the goal of developing the best Christian counseling services available. All of our professional, highly-educated staff of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, family counselors, pastoral counselors, and other clinical staff are committed to providing each client with care tailored to meet her/his individual needs. All Meier Clinics locations offer Outpatient counseling and several have specialty programming such as Catalyst (a day program for adults), Pathway to Freedom (a program for those dealing with sexual addiction), and Breakaway (an after-school program for teens).

How can I contact Meier Clinics or get more information?

Call us toll free at 888-7CLINIC or visit us online at www.meierclinics.org.



DON'T GIVE UP! VICTORY OVER YOUR PROBLEMS AND A FRESH START IN LIFE IS POSSIBLE!

 **MEIER CLINICS**
One of the most trusted names in Christian Counseling
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