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Relationship Counselling - FAQ

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What to expect for your first couples counselling session?

During the initial session, I will ask you a few questions for the purpose of assessing your current situation and establishing the goal for counselling. These questions may include:

Why you sought counselling. The issue(s) that have led you to see me. I will ask each of you to describe the problems from your perspective. This is done because couples often see issues differently. I will also ask what solutions has been sought in the past and what has worked, not worked based on those experiences.

Your current life situation. Sometimes, outside factors such as having a newborn, moving to a different part of the country or one partner suffering from a chronic medical condition can add stress to the relationship. It is important for me to have a bigger picture of your life in order to help you.

Your goals and expectations. I will ask you both to share with me what you are hoping to get from the process of counselling. This is the beginning of defining your goals and objectives of being in couples therapy.

In addition to the above, I will share with you how we will work together going forward. I will also answer any questions you may have about counselling or about the issues presented.

Because I believe that it is important to have a good fit between the counsellor and the client, at the end of the session, we will check in to see whether the counselling process is to be continued.

Who do you work with?

I work with couples who experience a variety of challenges. I also work with couples who have good relationships and are looking to further their connections and growths together.

What makes you different from other counsellors / therapists?

Practical Experience - I specialize in marriage and relationship counselling and over 60% of my workload is couples therapy. Take comfort in knowing that you will be working with a specialist in the field rather than a generalist when you choose to work with me.

Specialized Training - I am a Certified Imago Relationship Therapist and have gone through hundreds of hours of training specifically targeted towards relationship therapy.

Clear Goals - In my work with couples, I am active in structuring the sessions to help couples learn new ways of communicating with each other and approaching difficult issues.

In-depth Approach - Rather than merely being a referee to your arguments which does not produce long-lasting changes in relationship patterns, I will work with you to address the root cause of your challenges.

What if my partner isn't willing to participate?

This issue is very common. Sometimes people are simply worn out and they feel hopeless about their relationship and don't see how it can get better. Other times, people have misconceptions about what marriage counselling entails, the very idea of going to therapy brings about anxiety.

If this is the situation you are facing, it is important that you receive individual therapy to relieve and ease your pain and distress. The focus of our work will center around your relationship and what you can do to improve it. There are skills you will learn that can be immediately applied to better your relationship. Often times, reluctant partners decide to participate in therapy once they have seen the positive changes created by the spouse who receives individual relationship counselling.

Whose side are you on?

I am on the side of your relationship. My job is not to determine who is right, who is wrong, who is good, who is bad. My focus is to help the two of you to dissolve your differences in a mature and respectful way and re-create the connection you long for.

Is counselling confidential?

Confidentiality is an extremely important aspect to counselling. With a few exceptions to your legal rights to have confidentiality and privacy, which I will go over with you at our first session, your sharing is completely confidential.

How many sessions are required ?

This is not an easy question to answer. Couples come in with a variety of issues and the severity of the issues are also different. Depending on the types of issues we are looking at and how long you've had these issues, the number of sessions vary. Some people begin to notice positive changes after 2 to 3 sessions. Generally speaking, sustainable progresses are achieved after 8 to 12 sessions.

The progress of the therapy also depends on how much work you put in. The counselling process doesn't work like the medical model where you tell your doctor about your symptoms and he/she diagnoses and prescribes you a medication to cure your illness. Counselling is a team effort. The more you participate, the more benefit you will receive. Active participation means that you can directly influence the length of the therapy. I will share with you at our first session what active participation looks like.

You can start and stop counselling at any time you wish, you can work as fast or as slow as you would like to. Since most relationship issues cannot be resolved within 1 to 2 sessions, having enough sessions will give you a sense of clarity of the issues at hand and the progress you are able to make in that time span. Ultimately, it is your decision.

If you are asking this question because of financial concern and you are making progress and are satisfied with the work, it is a good idea to talk to me about your financial situation as we may be able to come up with an alternate arrangement so that you can continue with counselling.

How long are the sessions and how often do we see you?

Generally speaking, the sessions are 90 minutes in length and you can see me either weekly, or bi-weekly.

Most of the time, couples see me bi-weekly for 90 minutes which is more affordable financially than the conventional one hour weekly session arrangement. The advantage of this arrangement is that it also allows us to do more in-depth work with 90 minute sessions.

In addition, I am also open to discuss alternative arrangements with different session lengths and frequency to suit your needs.

How much does it cost? Is it covered by insurance?

Counselling services provided by Registered Counsellors may or may not be covered by your insurance plan. Please check with your insurance provider for more details.

The cost of marriage counselling is a worthwhile investment compared to many of the other alternatives. For example, it is much more expensive to hire a mediator or a divorce lawyer, not to mention the cost of your mental and emotional suffering caused by the stress of your relationship.

What happens if I need to cancel or re-schedule a session?

I request a 48-hour (2 business days) notice should you need to cancel or re-schedule a session. Otherwise, the full session fee will apply. I will go through my policy in detail at our first session.

What happens if I run into you in public places?

It might be awkward to run into me in public places because what has been shared during sessions can be extremely personal and private, in any case, I will respect your privacy. I will wait for you to acknowledge me and will not greet you unless you do so. If you choose not to acknowledge or greet me, I completely understand.

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Providing individual & couples counselling services to the communities of White Rock,
Surrey, Delta & Langley, BC

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