

CLIENT GUIDE TO COUNSELING

(Please read and keep for your convenient reference)

You have made an important decision in seeking help. Our hope is that this will be a significant turning point in your life. I would like to share some important things that you can do to help yourself and your counselor.

First:

It is necessary for you to explain to the counselor the whole story to the best of your ability. This may consume much of the first interview; sometimes it can take much longer depending on your situation. The human personality, one's particular situation, life experiences, relational difficulties, marital problems, hurts and misunderstandings are usually complex. The client's perceptions of past and present events, core beliefs, thought processes and ways of handling problems are additional factors that influence current difficulties. Clarifications and evaluations about how the client sees things must be made from many angles. The client's cooperation with his/her counselor is necessary to gain understanding and to facilitate growth and change.

Second:

Since there is no such thing as an average human need or family problem, it is not possible to know exactly how long your therapy will take. Some problems can be handled in just a few sessions while others may require several months or more. I trust that your commitment will be to continue with the therapy process until your stated goals are realized. Certain tests can also be very helpful in the evaluation process. If applicable, I will explain the tests to you and seek your approval prior to administering them. The fee for the tests and their interpretation can vary from \$25 to \$100 depending on the test(s) given.

Third:

A vital part of your counseling process will, at times, involve homework assignments. It is important that you follow through with these exercises. For example, these assignments may include journaling, reading passages of scripture and certain books (this would mean purchasing or locating them in the library). I want to emphasize these activities since very often the effort you put into them will determine the degree of success you experience in counseling.

HOW YOU CAN HELP MOST:

1. *Be completely frank and honest:* I am not here to judge you or to criticize past mistakes. I am here to help no matter what the problem. We have all made mistakes. Bringing about change to prevent their reoccurrence is best served by your transparency and openness.
2. *Assume personal responsibility for your improvement:* Experience has shown that the client, who begins to strive to improve himself/herself, rather than waiting on the other person or situation to change, is more successful in realizing his/her goals. Often such efforts can spark a whole series of desired changes.
3. *Your individual role is very important:* Very often, a change of attitude by one person will have a favorable effect on the other. Many family and marital problems can be helped through seeing only one spouse, even though the other was uncooperative. This applies to other types of relational problems and situations as well. So do not be discouraged - you are a vital key!
4. *Apply what is prescribed in the office at home:* A doctor's prescription is useless unless it is filled and taken. The assignments given are designed to effect changes that will prove helpful to the healing of your problems. You may not see immediate results, but they will eventually prove very applicable if a proper foundation is laid.