

COUNSELING OR PSYCHOTHERAPY?



Let's distinguish between *psychotherapy and counseling*, as we understand them. In counseling, you and your counselor talk about your problems and learn to cope with them - kind of an "outside-in" approach. Good counselors provide support, guidance, information, and advice to help you change your behavior and challenge unhelpful beliefs that may get in your way. Psychotherapy is a deeper engagement that works from the "inside out". Good psychotherapists help you accomplish permanent, structural, psychic "rewiring" that helps you get "unstuck" from unhelpful neurological patterns formed as a result of old traumas and unmet developmental needs. Once "unstuck", you will be free to behave as you choose, to bring into your experience what you want and deserve. "Inside out" and "outside in" work are not incompatible, and often work best in tandem. You and your therapist will collaboratively decide what is the best fit for you.

Counseling approaches are most appropriate for "problems in living" experienced by the "worried well." We will be looking for openings for behavior change, within limits chosen by you. Initially, we will be looking to provide immediate symptom relief. At the same time, we will be developing a detailed, behavioral treatment plan that identifies specific targets for change, and lays out a step-by-step process to make that happen.

For those suffering the aftereffects of trauma, including relational trauma, counseling is rarely sufficient, and can be harmful if the client blames herself for the slow pace of change. Deep wounds need deep healing, in our opinion. For that, psychotherapy is the way to go. Chances are that your plan will include what we call "inner work." This approach is based on the conviction that *you are designed by the Universe to be healthy*. All the resources you need to re-align your life along the lines that you prefer are present within you, but injury has made them currently inaccessible. Since your injury, obstacles (in the form of unhelpful conclusions you mistakenly drew about yourself/others/life, ugly memories, conditioned response patterns, etc.) now get in the way of the free flow of information within your mind/body/spirit system. As the unhealthy patterns "take over the controls" of your inner world, the healthy information you need to solve the problem gets walled off and inaccessible - it can't rise to a level of consciousness where it can be put to use. (This is why counseling alone is insufficient!) But, *the healthy information is in there*. Our work together will remove the obstacles, re-connect you to the healthy parts of you, and restore your brain/body's *natural* ability to integrate, adapt, and heal. Real-world behavior change will follow spontaneously.