

## NEED COUNSELING? NO NEED SHAME!

### WHY COUNSELING?

If a healthcare professional, friend or loved one suggested you see a counselor, how would you feel? Some folks react with shame or alarm, thinking, “Who me? I don’t need a therapist!”

Let me ask you a question...If you had pains in your chest or you broke your arm would you seek medical help? Of course you would!

**The same brain circuits handle *both* physical and mental pain.**

Sometimes pain from you mind will go away when you do something fun or talk with friends and loved ones. But sometimes it doesn’t go away and can even get worse. In this situation, be sure to tell your doctor who can refer you to a counselor and prescribe medication if needed.

### HOW DOES COUNSELING HELP?

Research shows that counseling relieves depression and anxiety more than medication by itself. Evidence also supports counseling for managing stress, pain and illness; resolving family or partner conflict; overcoming eating disorders and substance abuse; recovering from trauma and abuse, dealing with domestic violence; and more. Counseling works by providing support and teaching new skills.

Counseling can help you:

- Create a step-by-step plan for achieving your goals
- Develop motivation for change and learn to accept what cannot change
- Identify self-defeating thoughts and gain an objective perspective
- Face fear and anxiety that limits your success and happiness
- Practice healthy ways to calm down and cheer up
- Learn how to communicate better with partners, family, friends and coworkers
- Figure out realistic options in decision-making and practical solutions to problems
- Adjust to life transitions such as death of a loved one, illness, divorce, job loss and career change

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Certain kinds of therapy work best for certain problems. You should expect your counselor to explain how she or he can help you. Be sure to ask about a counselor’s training, approach and methods. You should also expect a counselor to respect your values, beliefs and preferences. She or he should invite you to discuss your therapy goals in your first session and ask about your progress each time you meet. A good counselor encourages feedback and is willing to make changes that increase your comfort and improve results. If you tried counseling and still feel bad, please don’t give up! It’s important to realize: **Not all counseling is the same.** For additional information, download, “Counseling Methods Overview,” from [www.wellmindcounseling.com](http://www.wellmindcounseling.com) and check out the blog [www.wellmindreview.com](http://www.wellmindreview.com).

### WHERE TO LOOK?

Ask your doctor, family and friends for recommendations. In addition to print directories or ads, Internet searches (e.g. Hilo, counselor, depression) can help find local therapists who treat your concern. Online directories, such as [therapists.psychologytoday.com](http://therapists.psychologytoday.com) or [GoodTherapy.org](http://GoodTherapy.org), offer details about a counselor’s approach, with links to websites, blogs and videos.

### HOW LONG SHOULD COUNSELING TAKE?

The timeframe for counseling depends on your condition, but it should not go on indefinitely without solid results. When you establish your goals in the beginning of the process, ask the counselor for a timeframe. If you feel the process is dragging on without much progress, speak up! Tell your counselor you want to try a different approach. If nothing changes, look for a counselor who meets your needs.