

PSYCHOTHERAPY versus COUNSELLING

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When comes the time to take care of your mental health, choosing the right service can be a struggle. In the spectrum of psychology, psychotherapy and counselling are two different specialties, but similar. Although counselling allows you to share with your counsellor issues that cause you mild impairment, psychotherapy tends to treat symptoms that are more severe using a specific modality and techniques.

Psychotherapy process can be longer with indeterminate number of sessions whereas counseling offers you to overcome your problem in few sessions. Both services take place over a succession of sessions where the client and the professional interact with one another. The professional (counsellor or psychotherapist) may be using different modalities depending on the presenting problem of the client. Psychotherapy and counseling guide and assist clients gaining insight, awareness regarding their issues. But psychotherapy treats the underlying issues which fuel the current complaints.

Development of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Counselling is associated with Carl Rogers, an American psychologist who has developed this specialty after World War II. Carl Rogers was known to be the founder of the humanistic approach, also called the client-centered approach. The key components of counselling in Carl Rogers' theory are for the counsellor to be empathetic, non-judgmental, providing warmth, authentic.

Psychotherapy is associated with Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist, who was known to be the founder of the psychoanalysis, also called the cure. Sigmund Freud has discovered the value of talking while one of his patients asked him to literally "remain quiet". Listening and providing interpretations are the techniques that help clients understand their symptoms and decrease them.

Variety of approaches & Profession

Psychotherapy, as a specialty in Psychology, holds different approaches depending on what angles the professional has chosen to see the clients. Whether it's cognitive perspective, behavioral, psychodynamic, biological, cultural or humanistic, the professional who adheres to one or more of these approaches is guided by a set of beliefs to understand the human behavior.

When engaging in counselling, clients have decided to meet with a mental health counsellor or a psychotherapist. One or the other profession can be represented by the same person or two different professionals. A mental health counsellor holds in minimum a bachelor's degree in a relevant field of practice. For instance, a mental health counsellor can be trained and certified in marriage counselling, addiction, child and youth and is educated in counselling techniques.

Choosing to engage in counselling, clients may want to know if this professional would be able to guide them through their process. Because a mental health counsellor as well as a psychotherapist, both interact with clients, clients may want to know if this is a good fit. How would you know this is a good fit? The professional has experience in treating the issues or symptoms clients want to find solution to. Most importantly, clients want to know if the professional has empathy combined with authenticity which predict a therapeutic benefit for clients. That is why a higher education is not necessarily a mark of competency in providing counselling or psychotherapy.

Counselling allows the mental health counsellor to support clients to resolve psychological problems. Counsellors are less likely to explore past experiences with clients, rather they would enable clients to explore some aspects of their life, allowing clients to express their emotions such as anger, fear, guilt, without entering the spectrum of their past. Exploration of childhood experiences in counselling may have the purpose of understanding clients' reactions to circumstances in the present and how the past could interfere with the present. This overlook to the past may help clients in considering ways to change their behavior in order to get out of the vicious circle (relapses in addiction, negative thinking in depression) or repetition of scenarios (dating the same type of person, getting in the same conflicts at work). In counselling, clients can learn some skills, getting the relevant tools to allow them to operate the positive and effective changes in their life regarding the challenges they are facing.

Psychotherapy is a treatment that enables clients coping with their daily challenges, whether they are issues started in the past, dealing with the impacts of a trauma or current issues. Therapy sessions help clients to address their issues in order to guide them eliminate their symptoms or help control them. Psychotherapy is also called talk therapy where both client and psychotherapist are actively involved in the process. There are different modalities in psychotherapy to treat specific mental health disorders. Some modalities may work better with particular issues.

Engaging in psychotherapy, clients will look for a psychotherapist, psychologist, a mental health counsellor. The psychotherapist holds a master's degree whereas a psychologist possesses a doctorate.

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