

## The Benefits of Therapy

By Linda Riley, LMFT & Certified Sex Therapist

Emotions are normal and we experience them everyday. How we deal with them affects us in positive or negative ways. Not dealing with them at all will lead to problems in our relationships with others, either at home or at work. When we are struggling with negative emotions we expend a lot of negative energy which tremendously affects our productivity and can leave us feeling drained and depressed. Therapy provides a constructive way to process these emotions and prevent us from remaining stuck and developing self-defeating behaviors. First of all it can help us better identify and understand our emotions by recognizing where they come from and how to manage them.

Challenging life circumstances provide opportunities to grow and develop a stronger sense of who we really are. How we chose to respond to our circumstances leaves us feeling positive or negative about ourselves. Each choice we make affects us in either a small or large way, and slowly over the course of time we become either a healthy and happy person or an unhealthy and unhappy person. Therapy can help you make better choices. It is only when we let go of negative energy that positive energy can flow into our lives. The biggest difference between happy and unhappy people is that happy people chose to deal with the negative things in their life so they can let go of the negative energy and focus on what's good and positive. Sometimes this means letting go of the past so you can move forward into your future. Getting stuck in the past interferes with accomplishing our goals and aspirations. Therapy can help you choose how to respond to difficult circumstances and people. Holding on to negative emotions not only causes stress and depression but recent research also clearly demonstrates that it causes heart disease as well.

### Therapy can help you...

1. Recognize dysfunctional patterns of behavior that keep you stuck in negativity.
2. Realize how damaging negative emotions are, like anger, shame and guilt.
3. Develop the ability to make choices that positively impact your life.
4. Improve your relationships at home and at work.

5. Take control of your life so you have more positive energy to work with.
6. Become an emotionally healthier and more confident person.

### **How to Choose a Therapist...**

- First of all check the therapist's education, credentials, knowledge and experience in dealing with your problem.
- What is the therapist's reputation in the community or is the clinic reputable? How long has the counselor been in practice?
- Was the therapist referred by a physician office, other professional or prior client? This adds credibility to the therapist's work. If any of your friends or family have ever consulted a therapist, ask them what their experiences were like. Did they like their therapist and was the treatment helpful?
- Ensure that your therapist's moral values are similar to yours. A therapist's role is to guide you in the choices that you make. If your therapist's views are too different, the advice that they offer may not make a lot of sense to you. Therapy, however, is an adversarial process and you shouldn't start looking for a new therapist just because your current therapist challenges your views and attitudes. That's part of their job. What is important is the outcomes of the sessions. If the therapist is successful in making you think about the choices you make and their outcomes, then you have probably found a therapist that will satisfy your needs.
- After the first session did you feel a connection? Did the therapist listen, understand and respect you?
- Did you feel liked and valued as a person?
- Did you feel comfortable and was the therapist easy to talk to.
- Does the therapist's approach make sense to you? Psychiatrist, psychologist and therapist can all offer you counseling and advice. However, only medical doctors and psychiatrists can prescribe drugs.
- Do you feel that the therapist is genuinely interested in you and your personal story?

- Does the therapist remember important details from session to session?
- Does the therapist inspire you to accept life challenges and help you make positive changes towards growth and healing?

Written by: Linda Riley, A Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist and Certified Sex Counselor who has counseled family's and couples for over 22 years. Her focus has been with enriching relationships and improving communication while improving relationship dynamics. She believes in promoting personal growth and building healthy self-concepts to help her clients achieve maximum results in their personal and professional lives. For additional free articles by Linda, please visit <http://www.lifeworksgroup.org/> or call 407-647-7005 to arrange for a complimentary :15 minute phone consult to answer your questions about the benefits of professional therapy.