

## *Special Therapy Techniques:*

There are many kinds of therapy besides the traditional “talk therapies”. Here are some different ways of working through problems.

### **Expressive Therapies**

Sometimes talking about a problem is not the most effective way to handle it. Expressive therapies have developed from our understanding of how the human mind expresses itself in nonverbal ways. Expressive therapy provides other ways for the mind to process and heal emotional wounds and grow to a new level of functioning.

Art/Music Therapies  
Body Psychotherapy  
Journaling  
Music Evoked Imagery

### **Trauma Resolution Therapies**

Traumatic experiences can cause physical and emotional reactions. Individuals may experience immediate or delayed effects, including visual flashbacks, panic attacks, phobias, tremors, a sense of mental disconnection. It is possible to have a traumatic reaction and not even realize it is connected to a trauma. The trauma memory can be triggered at any time by any/all senses. There are several very effective ways to deal with trauma:

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)  
Eye Movement Desensitization (EMDR)  
Traumatic Incident Reduction (TIR)

### **Relationship Oriented**

Conjoint  
Imago  
Group

Having relationship problems? These therapies look at how two or more people are interacting and the patterns and dynamics that make the interaction effective or painful. While it is possible to work on inter-personal skills through individual therapy, it is certainly not the only option and in some situations may not be considered the most effective therapy.

## *Tips on How To Choose The Right Therapist*

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Adolescents and Adults  
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## *What does “Best Practice” mean?*

Some counseling techniques have been around long enough that we have collected a great deal of data on how well the technique works for most people with a specific issue. Insurance companies LOVE this stuff because it gives them a reason to provide, deny or cut off benefits.

Some techniques, are newer OR they are so individualized that we can't really compare one person's progress to another's. If you compared 100 people's outcomes, they may be positive in different ways or in ways that we cannot directly measure. Just because it doesn't work in the same way for everyone doesn't mean it doesn't work well.

Not so long ago, Hypnotherapy, Art Therapy, EMDR techniques were regarded as “gimmicks”. Now, these are regarded as very effective treatment methods and research data is being accumulated. It may take years before a treatment is sanctioned by the insurance companies... sometimes it is helpful to check it out for yourself and make your own decisions about whether it could be helpful to you.

Special therapy techniques usually require special training – ask the therapist to tell you about the training procedures, and about information that supports the use of a certain technique.

The best therapy technique is one that works for you and your particular situation. Sometimes, a very different approach from what is “time honored” can be extremely effective.

Despite the fact that your therapist may be extremely well trained in a method or technique, the insurance company may not pay for that treatment. You ALWAYS have the choice of paying for these special sessions or treatments yourself. Therapists will negotiate individual contracts and prices; they may even cut you a deal to avoid messing with the insurance paperwork at all!!!

## ... the Right Therapist

Just like anything else in life, one size doesn't fit all. The most important element in choosing a therapist is finding one who can inspire, teach, and empower you to grow.

### Getting a referral:

The best referral sources are people you know. First of all, you can see for yourself if they are making progress on their own issues. Second, ask them – they will tell you who has been helpful to them. If you like this person, chances are you will also like their therapist. Birds of a feather flock together...

### Interview! – you are hiring a consultant

Never forget that you are hiring this person to help you with a project – your life! To help you choose wisely, here are some areas to ask about.:

- What kind of training and/or experience do they have that is useful to you? Just because they are qualified in one area doesn't mean they are the best therapist for ALL types of problems.
- How do they view the world? Every therapist has a favorite theory to explain why people do what they do (or how they can stop doing what they don't want to do!). Ask them what their theoretical perspective is. Don't be shy. Find someone who can see the world as you do. It will be easier to talk to them about it.
- Here are some theoretical perspectives translated into English... Remember that the line between one theory and another can be a very fine line.
  - *Behavioral* – looks at how you have learned to do/not do something and how to retrain yourself to be more effective. This is a GREAT tool for parenting!
  - *Cognitive-Behavioral* – looks at how you talk to yourself about problems and how your thinking can make or break the problem. Good for changing patterns.
  - *Psychoanalytic* – there are several types, but overall this looks at what's going on

deep down that makes you do what you do. The goal is to gain insight into why you do what you do and heal emotional wounds that may be holding you back now.

- *Reality Therapy* – looks at what you do and what exactly your actions bring you. Want a different outcome? – change your actions.
- *Existential* – Who are you in the world and who do you want to become? This is a great approach for those who feel empty – like they can't quite figure out why they are on the planet in the first place.
- *Transpersonal* – This is the point where the human-you connects with the spiritual-you. HUGE growth potential!
- *Systems Theory* – the WHO and HOW you are, in the group you are with. Very useful in family situations.

Few therapists are “purists”; they may borrow ideas and techniques from other theories – if it will work, they will do it. BUT - beware of the therapist who only says they are “eclectic” –or won't say how they make sense of the world. Maybe their world doesn't make sense either, in which case maybe you two can get a group rate with a therapist who can make sense of things!

- Some theoretical approaches are noted for their success with certain kinds of problems. Ask the therapist what approaches are recommended for your problem. Also ask what types of approaches DON'T work well for your type of issue.
- Do they have a sense of humor? Does it match yours? Having a sense of humor doesn't mean you can't be serious. It just means you know when to be serious and when to give in to laughter. And laughter can be healing all by itself.
- Will they talk with you for free the first time? Lawyers give a free consult to make sure you are on the right track – so can therapists!

- If you TRULY don't know “what is wrong with you” ask for an evaluation. There is a charge for this, but it may save you a lot of trouble in the long run.
- What are their policies on payment, cancellations, snow days, returning telephone calls, homework between sessions, telephone calls between sessions.

There is NOT a right or wrong way for a therapist to do address these topics, but choose the therapist who handles these in a way that will be therapeutic for you. (This may mean choosing the person who expects you to do your homework between sessions, expects you to keep your word, or one who won't put up with your slick tricks!)

### Make a commitment to yourself

“Having a therapist” is not the same as “seeing your therapist”. You'd be surprised how many people view their therapy time as an “option” or a “convenience”. If you don't show up, how do you expect to make the changes you say you want to make? And yes, it really is that simple.

Make a commitment to attend a certain number of sessions. And go to every session. At the end of your commitment, review how things are going. One of three things will happen –

1. You will have resolved your issue
2. You are making progress and decide to continue
3. You aren't making progress and need to figure out why.

Whatever you do - don't quit on yourself.

Remember that you are choosing a therapist to help you make changes – not to justify why your life is how it is. Choose a therapist who can get you to your goal. The more you ask about their work, the more they can tell if they are the right therapist for you!

**SUCCESSFUL THERAPY  
IS A TEAM EFFORT!**