Understanding the Counseling Process

Counseling and psychotherapy is practiced in a variety of ways depending upon the setting, presenting issues of the client, theoretical orientation of the counselor and other factors. However, the following information is offered to give you a better idea of what to expect. If you have any questions concerning this information of anything else related to the counseling process, please do not hesitate to ask.

Counseling

• Counseling is a “conversation with a purpose”
• Counseling is not “advice giving” … you are the expert on you, not the counselor
• The counselor strives to meet the client where he or she is … to see the world through the eyes of the client
• Counseling is about helping you:
  1) to learn about yourself (insight, understanding),
  2) to become more self-aware (self-talk, environment)
  3) to use what you learn to make real and significant changes in yourself and your life

The Process of Change

• Change takes time and can be difficult … you didn’t become the person you are today overnight and you won’t make significant changes overnight either
• Change comes slowly … the focus of counseling is on making small changes
• Change is a process that involves stages: pre-contemplation, contemplation, planning, action, maintenance
• Setbacks are a part of the change process
• Change is often times about changing your perspective … you cannot control events in your life but you can control how you react to them
• Real change is accomplished from the client’s efforts and hard work … it requires taking what you learned during the counseling session and applying it in your life

The Counseling Process

• Counseling is a process that involves the client’s active participation and full commitment to the therapeutic process
• The focus of counseling is on:
  a) how you see yourself
  b) how you see your world
  c) how you see yourself in your world
• The goal(s) of counseling is determined by the client and counselor together usually during the first therapy session
• Various therapeutic techniques are used to help you gain insight and achieve the established goal(s) of counseling
• “Homework” is assigned periodically to help you address a specific issue discussed and/or to keep you fully engaged in the counseling process between sessions