



Making the most of your therapy

Dear Client,

You are coming to see me for your first session, so I thought I would write to you to explain a few things about the whole business of counselling.

To understand better how counselling works, it's worth thinking about what it's not. It's not the same as going to a doctor or other expert where you can expect to be advised, instructed, interpreted or directed. Our relationship will be somewhat different from this. Between us the power will be more equally shared. You will be in charge of the 'agenda', I will do my best to understand what you want to achieve and help you achieve it.

We will spend most of our time together talking but it won't be like the conversations you are used to. Because my job is to understand you as much as possible, I will spend most of my time listening while you talk. It won't matter how long it takes you; you will find that there are times when you don't really know what to say or you might want to think about something before you say the words. You can take as long as you like; you might even feel like saying nothing for a while, which is fine by me. I'm happy to wait until you want to talk. When you do, what I will be doing is trying to understand how you are experiencing your world and what is happening to you. So when I do join in the conversation it will often be to reflect back what I have understood you to be saying and how you might be feeling. Sometimes I will be right and sometimes wrong, so you will have the opportunity to check on how well I am understanding you.

Another important element in our relationship is that I have no interest in judging what kind of person you are. My interest is in helping you understand yourself and to explore how your life can be as satisfying and happy as possible. If you change anything at all about yourself it will be because you want to, not because I think you ought to. For instance, supposing you are feeling very unhappy about something. It won't be my job to make you feel happier-my job will be to help you fully experience and understand your feelings. The reason for this is that a distressing feeling does not disappear if it is ignored-it may fade for a while but it can come up again and again. Counsellors believe that expressing emotions can be a healing process, so that you don't have to use a lot of energy in keeping old hurts and pain buried. We could explore the options you might have and might go on to decide to do something to change things

-but this part of it will be in **your** hands.

I look forward to meeting you. Take care,

A Counsellor

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