

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Is Psychotherapy Right for You?

If you are thinking about making positive changes in your life but are concerned about how difficult those changes might be, you may want to consider psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is the treatment of mental and emotional disorders using psychological techniques through the establishment of a psycho-therapeutic relationship with a mental health professional. Mental disorders may include severe and recurrent psychological conditions or less severe and short-term emotional problems and disturbances that interfere with your life.

Psychotherapy is both an art and a science. Studies show most people report success in making the changes they want with psychotherapy.

If you are considering psychotherapy, here are some questions to ask yourself...

■ HOW DOES PSYCHOTHERAPY WORK?

Psychotherapy works through the establishment of a relaxed, comfortable, trusting, respectful, psychologically safe, and therapeutic relationship with a mental health professional. This relationship becomes a “tool” to help you reduce anxiety and fear so you can successfully examine and confront issues and problems that interfere with your life and your happiness.



■ WILL I BE IN CONTROL?

Your psychotherapist will be a qualified and trained mental health professional who will work with you to help clarify your goals for therapy and solve problems. However, you have the right to direct your own life. Your therapist will expect you to achieve solutions in your own way, and your successes will be your own. This is called “client self-determination,” and it is an important ethical principle in practicing psychotherapy.

■ WILL PSYCHOTHERAPY WORK FOR ME?

Research shows that active clients who want to make changes do better in treatment than clients or patients who are passive. When

you choose a psychotherapist, be sure to discuss qualifications, the therapist’s experience, the frequency of your meetings, and their duration. You should try to be as open as possible. Ask for an explanation of your diagnosis and any unclear terms. Do the homework or tasks the therapist suggests, avoid canceling sessions, and discuss your feelings about the therapy and your progress.

■ WHAT THE EACC CAN DO

An EACC staff member can talk with you more about psychotherapy including the different types of psychotherapy available and how to make the best use of it. Contact the EACC by visiting uab.edu/eacc to learn more.