

## **ACA COMMUNITY**

HOME > ACA COMMUNITY > LEARN ABOUT COUNSELING > FIND A COUNSELOR >  
OVERVIEW

## **WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING?**

### **PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO HELP PEOPLE NAVIGATE LIFE'S CHALLENGES**

According to *20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling*, the delegates comprised of 31 counseling organizations agreed upon a unified definition of counseling:

*Professional counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals.*

Counselors work with clients on strategies to overcome obstacles and personal challenges that they are facing.

### **A PERSONAL CHOICE**

Deciding to see a counselor is the first step. Finding the right counselor to help you takes some research. ACA offers some valuable information to help you find the right one.

[Find a Counselor Near You >](#)

## **COUNSELING Q & A**

### **What is professional counseling?**

Counseling is a collaborative effort between the counselor and client. Professional counselors help clients identify goals and potential solutions to problems which cause emotional turmoil; seek to improve communication and coping skills; strengthen self-esteem; and promote behavior change and optimal mental health.

### **How long does counseling take?**

Ideally, counseling is terminated when the problem that you pursued counseling for becomes more manageable or is resolved. However, some insurance companies and managed care plans may limit the number of sessions for which they pay. Check with your health plan to find out more about any limitations in your coverage.

## **TYPES OF COUNSELING**

**INDIVIDUAL  
COUNSELING**

**COUPLES  
COUNSELING**

**FAMILY  
COUNSELING**

**GROUP  
COUNSELING**

Individual counseling is a personal opportunity to receive support and experience growth during challenging times in life. Individual counseling can help one deal with many personal topics in life such as anger, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, marriage and relationship challenges, parenting problems, school difficulties, career changes etc.

Every couple experiences ups and downs in their levels of closeness and harmony over time. This can range from basic concerns of stagnation to serious expressions of aggressive behavior. Marriage counseling or couples counseling can help resolve conflicts and heal wounds. Overall, couples counseling can help couples slow down their spiral and reestablish realistic expectations and goals.

Family counseling is often sought due to a life change or stress negatively affecting one or all areas of family closeness, family structure (rules and roles) or communication style. This mode of counseling can take a variety of forms. Sometimes it is best to see an entire family together for several sessions. Common issues addressed in family counseling are concerns around parenting, sibling conflict, loss of family members, new members entering the family, dealing with a major move or a general change affecting the family system.

Group counseling allows one to find out that they are not alone in their type of life challenge. To be involved in a group of peers who are in a similar place not only increases one's understanding of the struggles around the topic but also the variety in the possible solutions available. Typically, groups have up to eight participants, one or two group leaders, and revolve around a common topic like: anger management, self-esteem, divorce, domestic violence, recovery from abuse and trauma, and substance abuse and recovery.

## COUNSELING SPECIALTIES



There are many types of counseling. Such as:

- Addictions Counseling
- Child / Adolescent Counseling
- Gerontological Counseling
- LGBTQ Counseling
- Military Counseling

## AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

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