

Counseling and therapy changes lives — for the better

In this day and age there are many reasons for going into therapy. It is an "in thing" for a few, a necessity for others, and it is also a way to work towards growth and self-understanding. For whatever reason you have, it is a decision you will have to make yourself.

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Below is a tool called the SES, developed by Kevin Grolld, Ph.D. It will point out the major areas in your life that may need improvement and ask you to do a self-evaluation. You may discover issues that you did not know could be changed. It is important to realize that there is hope — and with the desire to grow, you can accomplish great things!

NOTE: This is not a standardized psychological test.

DIRECTIONS: Read each numbered sentence. Then write down the number that feels most appropriate for you. If you are unsure about the meaning of the sentence, then read the paragraph below the scale. If the question appears fairly straightforward then answer it, and then skip down to the next question. Continue through all of the questions this way. When you are finished, go back and thoroughly read the paragraphs below the questions that interest you. Pay special attention to the questions that received the lowest scores.

1. How has your mood been lately, as compared to your normal state?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
unhappy average very happy

Your mood is a good indicator of how things are going in your life. If you find yourself upset more easily, more often, or for longer periods of time then therapy may be of help to you.

2. How is your sleep pattern?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
don't sleep well no problem sleeping

Your sleep pattern can easily be affected by your psychological state. If you find that your sleep pattern has changed and you are sleeping too much or not enough (insomnia) then therapy can be of benefit to you. Recurrent nightmares, snoring, and sleepwalking, can also be signs of emotional problems.

3. How much transition or change is occurring in your life?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
major or several changes few changes

Any change, even seemingly beneficial changes can cause stress in your life and upset your mental health. If you have several changes at once, then this can be especially stressful. If you find that you are having trouble coping with transitions in your life, then therapy may be of help to you.

4. How is your health?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
health problems excellent health

Your health can easily be affected by your psychological state. If you find that you are becoming sick frequently or if you are having headaches, or other aches or pains, therapy may be beneficial. Your body may be telling you that you are having trouble dealing with the problems of life.

5. How are your relationships with friends, family, spouse?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
very unhappy very content

Difficult relationships can be the source of a great deal of emotional pain, especially if there is a friction which has lasted for some time. If you find that you do not have enough bonding with friends, or if any of your primary relationships are unsatisfactory or painful then therapy may help you to develop this part of your life in a healthy way.

6. Do you have trouble expressing your needs and feelings and saying no when you don't feel like doing something? Do significant others report that you have trouble expressing your feelings?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
trouble expressing needs assertive with my feelings

You may have been taught to put your own needs aside. If you have trouble expressing your needs and wishes and saying no when it is appropriate, or sticking up for your own rights and values, then seek out assistance to learn these essential skills.

7. Have you noticed problems with your memory?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
trouble with memory perfect memory

Often times significant difficulties with your memory can be a sign that there is something not right with your mental health. If you find memory problems re-occurring, or getting worse, then contact a therapist for an evaluation.

8. Do childhood memories cause you any distress?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
yes unsure no

Everyone has some childhood memories that cause distress, but some people have memories that interfere with their adult life. If this causes you distress, then talk to a counselor.

9. Do you accept the way that you look and feel good about your body?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
hate my looks feel good about my looks

There is a lot of emphasis on appearance in our society. If you have trouble accepting yourself and the way that you look, then seek out a therapist for help.

10. Are you taking time out for you?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
don't have time self-nurturing

It is important to take time for yourself. If you neglect your own needs then this can cause any problems you are having to get worse. If you are not taking time for yourself, then a therapist can help you to learn how.

11. Do you have excessive feelings of anxiety, fear, or distressing phobias?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
regularly never

Whenever fears or anxieties become excessive, then it may be time to bring in a professional to help you to deal with these problems. A therapist's job is to help you cope more effectively when feelings become excessively troublesome.

12. Are you having occupational, school problems, or problems taking care of your family?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
problems no problem

Problems with your job or with school are usually a strong indicator that a therapist can be of assistance. If taking care of your family is causing you significant distress, or you are having trouble in these other areas, or in trying to juggle responsibilities, then a consultation is highly recommended.

13. Are there any stressful situations occurring in your life?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
high stress low stress

The time to seek out a professional is when stress is building. A therapist can be extremely helpful during times of crisis.

14. Are you or someone close to you faced with a life-threatening illness?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
yes no

If you are facing a life-threatening illness then make sure you get some professional support. If someone close to you has a serious illness, then that can be very stressful and it is okay for you to receive support. It may even help you to more effectively assist the person who is ill.

15. How has your energy level been lately compared to your normal state?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
large change little or no change

A significant loss of energy and interest in things that previously made you happy, signals that therapy can be helpful. Sometimes, even a large boost in energy, especially if this feels beyond your control, coupled with a substantial reduction in your need for sleep, can also signal the need for therapy.

16. Do you find it difficult to understand and express your feelings?

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
difficult able to express

It can be difficult to understand your own feelings. As a result it can be even harder for you to express these feelings. It can even be hard to allow ourselves to cry even when we desperately need to. It is also common to have trouble expressing positive emotions. If you have difficulties in any of these areas, then consult with a therapist to learn new ways of relating to your feelings.