



How to Get the Most out of Individual Therapy

Congratulations

People often struggle for months or even years in patterns that have not been working. Imagine yourself finally taking the plunge and reaching out for a guide, a therapist, to help you navigate whatever it is that is making your life difficult. This is your big first step towards less suffering and more harmony. And, for some, it takes courage. Most likely you have tried many things, yet something's missing; you are still not getting your desired outcome. Feeling helpless or frustrated is not uncommon.

Your First Steps

Become clear on your purpose or intention for therapy. What do you want to create? What are your fears and limiting beliefs that keep you from your intention? What prevents you from having what you say that you want?

In individual therapy, the counselor cannot magically fix your problems. But she will work with you to help you understand the reasons or challenges that are bringing you into therapy, and she will teach you in the event that there is a skill gap. The rest is up to you: your attitude and determination will set the stage for success in your sessions.



So, what is therapy about?

So, you find a therapist that can help you. Now what? You have had the courage to seek assistance to help yourself feel better and do better. Now you may be wondering what you need to do to get the most out of the time and money you will be investing to improve yourself and your relationships. After working in the mental health field for over 21 years, I have developed a few concepts and principles that I believe give you a better chance to succeed.

Therapy's intention is to relieve pain by learning life's lessons and processing them.

The major aim of therapy is to:

- Increase your knowledge base about yourself and your intrapsychic patterns that keep you from having what you want.
- Gain insight into how you display these patterns in the world, which impacts your relationships and your progress towards your life goals.
- Improve your ability to apply new knowledge to break ineffective patterns and develop better ones.
- Increase your ability to communicate in a way where you are more apt to be heard.
- Challenge yourself to make small shifts in how you act.



Please answer these questions

By answering the following questions, you will inform your future journey. *Please bring your answers into our next session.*

- What are some of the challenges you find intrusive?
- Which of your behaviors are you most proud of?
- Do you feel fearful, anxious, or depressed? To what extent?
- What have you tried in order to resolve these issues?
- How will you know when you are done with therapy?

(See below for ideas for answering these questions.)

Imagine Yourself..

One way to increase your likelihood of seeing this change take shape is to put your intention there.

- Imagine yourself being more patient with yourself and others.
- Imagine yourself not taking things quite as personally.
- And, imagine yourself feeling more compassionate towards yourself and others, taking in stride behavior that used to bother you.

Commitments that will bring results

In our fast-paced society, we've come to expect things to happen instantly. But, long-lasting change takes time and persistence. Therapy takes work. Things that will improve your experience and results in therapy include:

- Commit to regular weekly sessions and, then, show up each week
- Follow through on the Action Plan (i.e. practice new skills or experiment with new behaviors).

What can you expect from me?

I will do my part as your guide. My job is to help you make adjustments and change responses that have not been serving you without violating your core values or deeply held principles. My intention is to work at your pace, though sometimes you may feel challenged. Together we will work to help you heal from past wounding, calm extreme emotions and thus change subsequent actions, gain insight into why things aren't working and what you can do to change your present dynamics.

So, If You Are Committed to...

- ... Taking a deep dive into what is causing you pain,
- ... Taking the necessary action and challenge yourself to change the things that are not working and
- ... Attending regular appointments and following through with your action plans, let's set up some appointments, so we can get to work.

I can be reached at 319-332-2055 or email me at gail@garwoodcounseling.com to schedule an appointment.

I also offer a 15 minute [Complimentary Phone Consultation](#).



How to Maximize the Rewards of Therapy

Did you ever have the experience that something was bothering you but you had no idea what it is?

- I can help you gain an awareness of your underlying thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and desires

Do you find that your communications patterns leave you feeling frustrated and angry?

- I can help you learn to communicate in a way that others will hear you.

Do you have thoughts and feelings that others are not showing up in your life the way you think that they should?

- I can help you to gain a self-assurance and self-affirmation even when people don't show up the way that you want them to.

Do you find yourself suppressing your true feelings because you are afraid that it might "rock the boat" and you don't like conflict or expressing your feelings seems futile?

- I can help you build the fearlessness to express yourself with more courage.