

Myths about Therapy

When you break your arm, you see a professional. If you hurt your back or are plagued by migraines, same thing. But what if you are stressed out or you dread each new day so much that you don't even want to get out of bed? Are you as quick to seek professional help? Very often, the answer is "no."

When you want to make the soccer team or the basketball team, you go to the gym. What is it that prevents us from seeking help for very treatable though sometimes debilitating mental health conditions?

For many of us it comes down to one or more of these three things:

- **Stigma:** There still still exists the fallacy that seeking treatment for a mental health issue makes you weak and needy; or that therapy is for "crazy" people.
- **Fear:** If we open up the floodgates, what will we learn about ourselves? Suddenly we will have to deal with all of those issues that we have been repressing for years. What if we really have a problem, then what?
- **Lack of Understanding:** How many people truly understand what therapy entails? Therapists and their craft have never received a fair shake in pop culture, and that's where we tend to get our images of them.

In order to break through these barriers and make seeing a therapist as comfortable as seeing any other specialist, we need to understand what therapy really is, and more importantly, what therapy is not.

Therapy is NOT:

- Dark, smoky offices with pictures of Freud on the walls.
- Lying on a leather couch staring at the ceiling.
- Intrusive questions about your relationship with your parents or your love life.

Imagine a conversation where you are able to open up about what bothers you most. Imagine a person whose sole purpose is to listen to you and to understand your perspective.

In therapy you can put your issues on the table and leave them in that space until the following session. A good therapist will begin the discussion where you're at and work at a speed that is comfortable for you. There are no judgments and no one telling you to just deal with it.

Therapy is far less tiring than we imagine it will be. The anticipation turns out, very often, to be the toughest part of the process. Mental health is as crucial, if not more so, than those broken arms and sore backs. You owe it to yourself to take care of it.