

*The Practice*  
*of*  
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INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

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*Frequently Asked Questions About Psychiatry*

**WHAT IS PSYCHIATRY?**

Psychiatry is a specialist branch of medicine concerned with helping patients and their families achieve mental and emotional well-being through the use of "existing therapy" counselling, psychotherapy and medication.

**WHY SEE A PSYCHIATRIST ?**

It is just as important to see a psychiatrist about any mental and emotional problem as it is to see any doctor about physical problems.

Many people and families experience problems similar to yours. Such problems affect people in different ways. Some people get a stomach ulcer, or high blood pressure, others get anxious and depressed or may have a nervous breakdown. These "mind-body" or psychological symptoms often upset the person who is experiencing them and may interfere with the person's ability to lead a satisfying life.

**WHO SEES A PSYCHIATRIST?**

Most of the patients seen in this office often do not have very severe symptoms, some have no symptoms at all. So you do not have to feel self conscious about seeing a psychiatrist.

Symptoms are most often associated with stress, or burnout, anxiety, depression, sickness etc.. These often stem from marital and other family problems, problems at the work place and at school, problems in relating to people and other types of difficulties in adjustment to life and to one's self.

For those who have had a more severe illness due to a chemical imbalance **it is quite possible to make a recovery, experience wellness and to function productively in society.!**

**DOES PSYCHIATRY WORK?**

No matter what your problems or symptoms are, you can be helped in some way. The effectiveness of your recovery will depend on four factors:

understanding and accepting your challenging situation or your illness,

a willingness to help yourself with your doctor's assistance,

attending sessions regularly and taking your medication as prescribed,

letting your doctor know of any problems with psychotherapy, medications and the other services that you receive at the centre.

It is good that you have decided to do something about your problem at this stage. **This investment of time, effort and self-discipline in your therapy will enable you to make the type of adjustment to living that you wish.**

# What Will Happen In Your Treatment?

## TYPES OF PSYCHOTHERAPIES

Counselling and psychotherapy are also offered to **individuals, couples** and **families**. Also referrals can be made for **group counselling** with other professionals within or outside the centre.

We offer group counselling activities for individuals and families who may be interested. These will relate to personal growth, dealing with crises and special problems, as well as providing education about various illnesses and life situations and how to deal with them.

## STAGES OF YOUR TREATMENT

You have now started your interviews in psychiatry and psychotherapy.

Usually they begin with an **initial assessment**, where an effort is made to work with you in determining the nature of your symptoms and problems and the best method of approach in coping with them. This usually requires more than one session.

The initial assessment session would involve **crisis intervention** or early treatment for someone who is having distressing symptoms.

Then there will be the **ongoing follow up treatment** for personal growth and maintenance of health.

Therapy will include a **treatment plan** and regular **evaluation** which will be discussed with you periodically.

## NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS

### **Crisis Intervention**

In some cases, no further treatment is necessary after the initial assessment and crisis intervention, or, there may be **one or two follow-up sessions** if the problem is a mild one.

### **Brief Psychotherapy**

In most cases, therapy takes between four to ten interviews - usually about six.

### **Long Term Psychotherapy**

Where the problem is more lasting, especially in cases of personality problems, severe marital or family problems, or repeated nervous breakdowns, you may need to receive psychotherapy and/or medication and support over a longer period of time.

## THE CONTRACT

For short-term psychotherapy, a **special contract** can be established between yourself and your therapist as to treatment goals and number of sessions. This contract can be reviewed over time.

## SPIRITUAL SHARING WITH PATIENTS

In my practice I seek to provide a whole person perspective. This includes spiritual aspects, **where desired**, in the following forms:

Getting an idea of what your **spiritual life is like in general, your practices, feelings about God, and experience** of Him.

Discussing any **spiritual problems** you may be having and **how you would like to deal with these.**

I will leave it up to you to take whatever steps you desire in order to improve your spiritual life. This you could also work out with the help of your pastor, prayer partner or spiritual support group.

Opportunities may present themselves for us to consider spiritual interventions as part of your therapy. It is best if

the request for spiritual help comes from you.

Also **you can make it clear if you wish no references to spirituality.** This will be respected.

Spiritual activities in therapy would be within a Christian and Biblical framework of belief and would include the following:

- sharing of relevant scriptures
- prayer
- counselling about spiritual growth.

You would be asked to be as active as possible in this process, for example, doing some of the praying yourself.

As time is limited, our spiritual activities in the regular sessions would be relatively brief. **If you wish to have special sessions dealing mainly with spiritual issues you could request this.**

Persons with religious persuasions other than Christianity will be encouraged to seek to apply the positive benefits of their spirituality to their emotional and life situations.

### **RIGHTS OF THE PATIENT**

You may talk (or not talk) about your therapy to anyone you choose, but the therapist is ethically obligated to maintain **confidentiality** (with some legal exceptions\*).

It is **your right to ask questions** about your problems illness, or medication; also methods of therapy, the techniques used, the duration of therapy, fees and any other relevant facts about the therapy or therapist.

**You may refuse any technique in therapy** which makes you feel unduly uncomfortable.

**You have the right to terminate therapy** at any time,

You are entitled to a **second opinion**.

The initial stages or early sessions of therapy are sometimes difficult and uncomfortable for most people. **If, at any time during therapy, you develop negative or positive feelings towards me, please let me know,** so that we can discuss them openly.