

## **Couples Counseling--What to Expect**

My approach begins with a solid assessment about what's been happening in the marriage, an introduction to some important tools, feedback about the strengths and challenges and targeted interventions/activities.

### **What to expect for your first 2-3 couple of session**

The first 2-3 sessions are the couple's opportunity to paint a portrait of their relationship. This is an opportunity to discuss the history of the relationship and the current challenges. At the second session, I will meet with each person individually and provide feedback by the third session.

During the feedback portion of the session, I will present some basic information on relationships and work with the couple to set some goals.

From the assessment, these are some possible areas of focus for the couple:

- Deal with the immediate crisis/challenge
- Create blueprint to make discussions about conflict more constructive
- Improve friendship, emotional connection and intimacy
- Discovering shared life goals and how best to support each other

### **Core Assessment Questionnaires**

Prior to the second session, the couple will complete some brief assessments that will help me get a clear picture of the potential strengths and conflicts within the relationship. In addition, many individuals claim that they developed insight about themselves or the relationship while completing the forms. Almost all of the information involves check boxes and should take about 30-40 minutes to complete.

### **Secrecy**

Please know that couples therapy must be an open and transparent process. As a couples therapist, my client is the relationship and I cannot hold secrets. This means that clients should be prepared to disclose any issues that are putting their relationship or partner's health in jeopardy, such as an active affair. Secrecy about important issues that directly impact the relationship makes creating intimacy impossible. As a couple's therapist, I will encourage openness and honesty in our communication and therapy. In some cases, when one partner is not prepared to be open and honest in therapy, it may be best to start with individual therapy.

*Most important, changing old patterns of communication and problem-solving takes time. Ultimately, couples therapy does not promise to fix every problem, but to provide the tools to better communicate, feel closer and resolve differences.*