Counselling for Menopause

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How Counselling Can Get You Through Menopause

Women spend their adult life dimly aware that one day they will enter this slightly mysterious state known as “the change” usually with no real knowledge of what to expect from the menopause and its precursor, the peri-menopause.

Even those who have some expectation of hot flashes, mood swings and physical manifestations of the decline of estrogen can be taken by surprise if they are unlucky enough to experience dramatic symptoms which may affect their daily life.

Dealing With the Symptoms

Depression, anxiety, stress and sleep disorders can all be caused or exacerbated by the hormonal turmoil of menopause and although the menopause itself is not an illness there is no shame in seeking help for those aspects of it which you find distressing or inconvenient.

There are of course practical steps you can take to lesson the impact of certain hormone-related changes, including simple diet and lifestyle changes, hormone replacement therapy or relaxation techniques like yoga or meditation.

However there is another avenue to explore – counselling – which can work especially well for some women who find themselves feeling anxious, depressed, stressed and looking for menopausal rage treatment.

Finding Your Therapist

There are many different techniques to explore but whatever type of counselling you try, it is crucial that you find a therapist who is qualified and experienced. It’s an added benefit to have a therapist that comes recommended by your healthcare provider or a friend or family member you trust.

Don’t be embarrassed to ask to see evidence of credentials – qualified counsellors will have a certificate, diploma or some other evidence that they have met specific educational, professional and ethical standards.

You wouldn’t let an unqualified surgeon operate on your physical body so don’t let an unqualified counsellor mess with your thoughts and emotions!

Types of Therapy

So what types of therapy might help with menopause-related issues?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) challenges negative thoughts and beliefs about the world and the patient's life. You are encouraged to identify and change negative inaccurate or unhelpful thoughts and beliefs, problematic behavior and distressing emotional responses.

The cognitive approach basically teaches the patient the tools to change their own behavior so eventually they are able to apply their new skills to various difficult situations independently.

Next Page: Types of Therapy, Which Type is Best For You, and Talking to Your Doctor

Types of Therapy

Psychodynamics

Another method of counselling for menopause is psychodynamics, otherwise known as dynamic psychology. Not heard of it? Possibly not but I bet you've heard of Sigmund Freud who was the founder of this kind of therapy.

Broadly this system involves systematic study of the psychological forces that underlie human behavior, feelings, and emotions and how they might relate to early experience. Counsellors work assuming a theory of inner conflict, wherein repressed behaviors and emotions surface into a client's consciousness while generally, the conflict is actually subconscious. The therapist helps you become aware of the conflicts and tensions which might manifest as symptoms and then you work together to resolve the tensions.

As an example, you may have a negative view of menopause because your mother had a hard time with her menopausal transition. Additionally you may have various experiences in childhood that have shaped your feelings on womanhood, menstruation and menopause. All of these are seen as root problems in the psychodynamic approach.

Person or Client-Centered Therapy

Approaching counseling in a slightly different way are therapists who practice person or client-centered therapy. Unlike other therapies you as the client are responsible for improving your life, not the therapist.

This is a different from both psychoanalysis and behavioral therapies where the client is diagnosed and treated by a doctor. Instead, the client is supported as they consciously and rationally decide for themselves what is wrong and what should be done about it. The therapist listens and encourages on an equal level.

There are other counseling methods and some therapists blend methods to best help cope with stress, anxiety or depression.

Which Type of Counseling Is Best for Menopausal Symptoms?

Many experts believe that rapport between the counsellor and the client is the most crucial path to a successful outcome, regardless of the method of therapy.

It's important to find a counsellor based in an environment you find comfortable enough to talk openly and honestly about yourself. If you can't relax enough to talk about what is bothering you during menopause even the best therapist will find it hard to help.

If you find you feel uncomfortable or unhappy with your therapist then find another. A good therapist will understand that sometimes personalities clash or just don't "gel" and may even help you find someone more suited to you.

Talk to Your Doctor

Even if you book counselling sessions privately and independently it’s worth mentioning the fact that you are in therapy to your doctor. They may be able to support your therapy of choice with HRT or medication to relieve anxiety, or help with depression, or sleep issues.

If your healthcare insurance doesn’t cover counselling it might be worthwhile checking out if there are church or charitable organizations which might offer free or cheaper sessions. Try doing an internet search or asking at your doctor’s office or the hospital.