

## Getting the Most out of Therapy

You should be discriminating when choosing a professional to help you through the most trying times in your life. In fact, research shows that the most significant factor contributing to successful outcome in therapy is the quality of the therapeutic relationship (Lambert, 2001). A common misconception is that it is not okay to speak up in therapy. However, an honest conversation with your therapist about your worries, hopes, or grievances will help ensure a more sustainable, positive working relationship – and thus, help you be more successful in reaching your goals.

The therapists at Therapy Changes welcome feedback and look for opportunities to make any necessary adjustments so you feel more comfortable. Below are suggestions on how to get the most out of therapy and the benefits of speaking your mind.

### ✓ TELL YOUR THERAPIST YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Your therapist is available to serve as your guide during your unique journey. An important part of therapy is learning to express your expectations to another person in a healthy, assertive way. Consider sharing with your therapist your goals, how long you had anticipated being in therapy and what you hope to achieve during this time.

### ✓ TELL YOUR THERAPIST WHAT WORKS

The decision to participate in therapy is an investment in you. To help ensure that you get the most out of your effort, try communicating your preferences. You can help your therapist by teaching her the style and type of questions that work best for you. Your therapist will have expertise and good reasons for doing what she does, but a good therapist also has some room for flexibility. If you have been in therapy before and found some aspects or method to be particularly helpful, please let your therapists know.

### ✓ TELL YOUR THERAPIST WHAT *DOESN'T* WORK

Just as it is helpful to tell your therapist what works, or what has worked, it is also important to share when something *isn't* helping. Your therapist might not realize if she has said something that is upsetting to you. Because your therapist has no intention on hurting your feelings, knowing what she has done to upset you is invaluable information to have. Providing this type of feedback will give you the chance to practice using assertiveness techniques and provide your therapist with the opportunity to make any necessary changes.

### References

Lambert, M. (2001). Research summary on the therapeutic relationship and psychotherapy outcome. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*. Vol 38 (4), 357-361.