



10 Reasons
Why
Traditional
Talk Therapy
May **Not**
Work For **You**

By Ray Doktor Psy. D

10 Reasons Why Traditional Talk Therapy May Not Work For You

Ray Doktor Psy. D

During an internship, the poor results that my peers were experiencing when counseling clients and the low expectations that the supervisors had for clients to improve completely disheartened me. When I spoke up in the group regarding the positive changes my clients were experiencing, I was met with a lot of skepticism. During a training course that was mostly attended by psychoanalysts, my mentor shifted a participant's perceptions toward greater happiness in one 90-minute session. The audience was shocked. One psychoanalyst joked and said, "This is going to put us out of business." My mentor never held back and replied, "Isn't this *why* we are in this business? You might want to reevaluate why you are in this field."

I was blessed to be trained by mentors who expected change. My first mentor was part of a movement that happened in the 1960s and took a different and more radical approach than that of traditional therapy. Many of these progressive therapists embodied a more spiritual and Eastern approach. I was taught to look at the entire person—his journey, his soul, his environment—where he has been, and where he wants to go. This new approach did not put people in boxes. I now know people can change. The unconscious mind is like a child: if you build rapport with the child and show her the way, she will find the path back to heart and joy.

In traditional talk therapy, the intentions might be to help a client. However, the therapists are using an old manual. Below I list the challenges I see with this archaic approach:

- 1) **There is no resolution:** Traditional talk therapy is usually more about the "process" than it is about finding any solutions. This means you could be going for years or even decades to a traditional therapist without experiencing any positive changes. It is healthy to express yourself and for you to gain a deeper understanding about why you do the things that you do. However, if she limits herself to talk therapy, a client might become a great narrator of her past story without ever changing her current circumstances. Talking about the same story over and over again can reinforce the psychological processes and victimization that created the problems in the first place.
- 2) **They often focus on the behavior and not the root cause:** Many therapists believe that if you change the behavior then you can fix the problem. They may tell you that if you stop looking at other women, your wife will no longer get jealous. If you stop eating candy you will lose weight and feel better about yourself. But what if the jealous woman has deep

abandonment issues that are triggered when her husband looks at another woman? What if the woman in the second scenario is eating the candy because becoming overweight means getting less undesired attention from men? She might instead be dealing with a fear intimacy. We will naturally revert back to old negative behaviors if we are still not getting our most profound needs met. It is important that we replace old behaviors with new behaviors that we can fully embrace and enjoy. I am not implying that it is mandatory to know the full history of the problem to change it but that understanding it could help you uncover the roots. Understanding the hidden causes of the problem can help turn the problem into higher learning, which is the precursor of true change.

- 3) **The therapist becomes part of the problem:** It is essential to have consistency in a relationship with a therapist, especially if a client never bonded with her parents or doesn't have anyone else she can talk to. Unfortunately, a client could project the same disappointments and drama onto the therapist. While therapists believe that these projections could be healthy to process during the sessions, this is also risky because the therapist still experiences human emotions and can easily be enmeshed in the confusion. Clients can also develop the same dependency for the therapists that they have for family members, friends, and intimate partners.
- 4) **It takes too long:** Who actually has the time to keep going back for counseling? With our busy schedules, it is hard enough to spend time with your loved ones, let alone with an ineffective therapist. You wouldn't keep bringing your car back to the mechanic if you received no solutions after a few visits. In this scenario, you would fire your mechanic. And surely, improving mental health involves many more factors than improving car performance—that much is understandable. However, it is common and disconcerting to know that most traditional therapists expect you to be in therapy for at least 2-5 years. This is why many popular traditional therapists have a waiting list. It might not necessarily mean that they are good. Often the reality is that they see most clients for over 2 years with stand-in appointments. Some psychoanalysts see their clients 3-5 times a week. All this time adds up to a lot of money!
- 5) **It's not a real relationship:** Some therapists might share bits and pieces of their personal life, but many of them prefer keeping a distance to prevent entanglement in a client's judgments and projections. This creates a false foundation and disconnect from the client. A real relationship is a connection in which people share openly, allowing both people's vulnerabilities to surface. This doesn't mean that the therapist makes the conversation about him or talks about things that do not pertain to the session. However, developing a rapport with the client fosters genuine trust and connection. On the other hand, if a client were to put a traditional therapist on a pedestal, she might think that she could never

achieve that higher level of awareness herself. When a client can witness firsthand the very human way in which a therapist overcomes a challenge, she is provided with attainable goals she believes she can reach.

- 6) **Rehashing the past can make things worse:** When we talk about the past, it brings up a negative emotional charge if the experience hasn't been fully integrated. If a client has been traumatized, he could unconsciously regress to a state of victimization and helplessness. This is why you and many others may have left a therapist's office only to feel worse after talking about something disturbing. A therapist must be qualified to work with someone who has been traumatized. There are techniques to uncover the past without launching a person back into past trauma. We all have visceral responses to words, images, and old stories. It is paramount that a client also experiences a better future outcome on an emotional level. Traditional therapists emphasize too much in the past instead of guiding a client to empowering herself in her life as it is today.
- 7) **Being diagnosed could have its drawbacks:** Being diagnosed could save your life. When it comes to determining a treatment, there is value in putting a client into a classification. However, there are many ways in which each person has come to be the way he or she is. While supervising and working with colleagues, I noticed that when they diagnosed clients they would also attach fixed ideas and judgments to them. While diagnosing a disorder makes it easier for professionals to talk about common traits found in their clients, who can be the final authority on someone else's behavior? If a therapist puts you into a box and believes she has you figured out, how advantageous will that be to your progress? Lastly, when given a diagnosis, clients will often define themselves as the disorder. Instead of looking at themselves as having the potential to change, they blame their disorder for their problems. This prevents them from realizing that everyone has the potential to change for the better.
- 8) **Spirituality is often left out:** Some therapists implement spirituality into their practice, but their approach might be entirely *religion*-based. Conversely, if a therapist doesn't have his own faith, how will he understand yours? I believe that most clients, not only want to work through their everyday human problems, but they also want to discover what their purpose is and why they exist. If a therapist doesn't look at the entire person before them as both human and spirit, then she will only spend time working on rudimentary human needs. Like a spiritual guide, a therapist has the potential to show a client how powerful and radiant she is. If the therapist refuses to view more than the human conditions, then there will be limitations to the client's potential for enlightenment.
- 9) **Lack of education in sexuality:** Most therapists have limited education on the subject of sexuality. While they are taught how to find and diagnose inappropriate behavior, they lack understanding of sexuality

on an energetic and personal level. Fetishes, polyamory, same-sex encounters, and everything outside of the scope of traditional sex could be construed as a disorder. Traditional therapists might only understand sexuality in relation to genital sex, reproduction, or by using Freud's model. They do not realize that our sexuality is our essence—our way of being in the world, of polarizing or repelling each other—and the most powerful source of our vitality. Because of this lack of knowledge, many therapists (mostly males) end up crossing boundaries; they do not understand their own sexuality and healthy ways to transform it and to diffuse sexual attraction. While sexual polarity is a beautiful and natural energetic response that has very little to do with our genitals, if it is not understood and harnessed properly, it could manifest as destructive patterns. We have all witnessed these downfalls in men of authority within important institutions like the Catholic Church and our highest levels of government. A therapist needs to be trained in helping clients harness the sexual energy to better serve others and themselves.

- 10) **It's too analytical:** There is consciousness in every cell of our body. Most of our behaviors are unconscious. Talking about it in our heads often just keeps the story going. In fact, when we are in our heads too much, we are not in our hearts. You can talk about reasons why you want to experience happiness, but unless you actually have an emotional response to your words, you will remain in your head, only talking about the problem. Often the trauma that we have experienced comes from experiences that we are not able to communicate. This means that they are unconscious and in the body. If you do not have words to describe what you felt, what happened, or what was factual, then you might be disconnected from the real experience. Talking and thinking are frequently defense mechanisms. Some people are brilliant, but are not present in their bodies. The knowledge of the experiences needs to be brought back to the body. The client is otherwise just saying the same things over and over again without bringing about any real change.

Does any of this sound familiar in your past experience with therapists? If so and you are ready to experience tangible results, then I invite you to contact me today. I'm happy to offer a free consultation where we can get to know one another a bit and evaluate how well we can work together. If we make a great match then the choice is yours to step into a new world of rapid transition into the happiness you know you desire.

With love,
Dr. Ray

Call today @ 310-692-4866

Or click here to request online: <http://www.wholeminds.com/schedule-a-session/>

Cover Photo Credit:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/cblue98/>

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/legalcode>