



Inner Peace Coaching & Counseling

POTENTIAL RISKS & BENEFITS OF COUNSELING

Before giving your consent for mental health services such as counseling, it is important that you are informed of possible risks and benefits of treatment.

Potential Benefits: While no one can guarantee or promise a specific outcome, there are a number of positive outcomes that can result from both short-term and long-term counseling. The extent of benefits usually depends on such things as the specific issues or difficulties you hope to address, the goals you have set, and the degree of follow-through with treatment. Following is a list of some common benefits of counseling. Not all benefits may apply to you at this time. This list is not comprehensive; there are certainly other potential benefits not listed.

Commonly Identified Benefits of Counseling:

- Improvement in your general mood
- Increased self-esteem and self-confidence
- Increased ability to set realistic goals and accomplish them
- Increased ability to manage stressful life circumstances
- Increased ability to manage strong emotional reactions such as anger, fear, or sadness
- Increased ability to trust, feel close to, and communicate your feelings, thoughts, and needs more openly to others
- Increased ability to stop behaviors that are not serving you well and start engaging in healthier behaviors

Potential Risks: Like any healthcare service, there are also potential risks associated with counseling. The following is not a comprehensive list and not all of these risks apply to every client's situation. Special circumstances may be associated with specific, unique risks.

Examples of Potential Risks of Counseling:

- You may not experience improvement or movement toward achieving your goals. If progress is not being made, you or I may decide to change your treatment, discontinue treatment, or refer you to a different type of therapist, specialist, or program.
- In the beginning some feelings or behaviors may get worse. For example, if you talk about a very upsetting life event, you may experience strong negative thoughts and emotions or a belief that things will never get better. The intensity of these thoughts and feelings is usually temporary. Discussing these with me is often an important part of therapy and I will help you identify ways of handling them.
- Important people in your life may not support your decision to be in therapy. If you are concerned about others' reactions, tell me. We can then discuss how and to whom you wish to disclose that you are in therapy.
- Some health insurance companies deny coverage for certain diagnoses, which could affect the expense you incur.
- If you apply for a job that requires a security clearance, an in-depth background check may be conducted and in some cases your mental health treatment history may be cited as grounds for denying you employment or advancement.
- You may develop strong positive feelings for me and feel sad or distressed when therapy ends. A trusting therapeutic relationship is a vital aspect of counseling that enables clients to be able to discuss personal thoughts, feelings and experiences; however, it is never appropriate for the client/counselor relationship to become romantic/physical/sexual. I will assist you in finding a different counselor should these feelings develop.

You are strongly encouraged to discuss any fears, concerns, or doubts you have with your counselor, including specific risks and benefits not listed that may be associated with your situation.