



The Gatehouse: Risks and Benefits of Engaging in Counseling/Therapy Services

We do not and cannot guarantee any “cures”. Individual experiences and the way we process thoughts, emotions, and behaviors vary greatly from person to person. Below are some potential risks and benefits associated with attending our counselling/psychotherapy services.

Risks:

- **Emotional Discomfort:** The therapeutic process may evoke uncomfortable or painful feelings such as sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, or frustration.
- **Revisiting Painful Memories:** Counselling might bring up distressing memories and may even impact your relationships, especially if you're working on establishing healthier boundaries, which could upset those accustomed to disregarding them.
- **Vulnerability:** Therapy may involve sharing personal information that leaves you feeling exposed and vulnerable, such as disclosing self-critical thoughts that were previously used against you.
- **Temporary Worsening:** Sometimes, things may get worse before they improve, as therapy often entails focusing on unpleasant issues, leading to an increase in symptoms in the short term.
- **Challenging Change:** Successful therapy often requires some form of change, which can be uncomfortable and may involve feelings of loss, even if the change is ultimately positive.
- **No Guaranteed Outcome:** Therapy is not a guaranteed solution, and results may vary from person to person. The relationship between therapist and client plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of the process.
- **Cost and Time Commitment:** Counselling and therapy services can be expensive, and attending sessions regularly may require a significant time commitment.

Benefits:

- **Hope and Relief:** Just scheduling the first therapy appointment can lead to initial improvements, as it offers a sense of hope and relief.
- **Supportive Ally:** Engaging in therapy provides you with a supportive person offering trauma-informed, strengths-based, and culturally informed services.
- **Enhanced Relationships:** Therapy can lead to improved relationships with others.

- **Effective Communication:** You may develop better communication skills through therapy.
- **Coping Skills:** Therapy can provide stress relief by helping you develop improved coping mechanisms.
- **Clarity in Personal Goals:** Counselling may help you gain clearer insights into your personal goals.
- **Boundary Setting:** You can learn to establish healthier boundaries.
- **Increased Confidence:** Therapy may boost your self-confidence.
- **Resolving Past Experiences:** Addressing and coming to terms with past experiences can be achieved through therapy.
- **Reduced Depression and Anxiety:** Engaging in counselling can lead to decreased levels of depression and anxiety.
- **Supportive Listener:** A caring and attentive therapist or counsellor-in-training will be focused on helping you throughout the process.
- **Self-Acceptance:** Counselling can facilitate increased self-acceptance.

Please note that the risks and benefits mentioned above are not exhaustive, and individual experiences in therapy may vary. Your Therapist/Counsellor-in-Training will work closely with you to navigate these aspects and tailor the treatment to your specific needs.

Confidentiality

All information shared in a counselling session is private and confidential except in the following instances:

- There is a risk of imminent danger to an identifiable third party or to self.
- There is suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- A disclosure is ordered by a court.
- There is a reasonable belief that a health professional is guilty of sexual abuse.
- There is a reasonable belief that abuse or neglect of residents living in Long-Term Care Facilities or Retirement Homes is taking place.
- There is a need to share information with the College of Psychologists of Ontario or the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario or the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers for supervision or auditing purposes.
- The counselling services patient would like us to share information with a third party (their doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist etc.). In this case, the participant must sign a consent to disclose information form via The Gatehouse. Please reach out to your counselling practitioner or karen@thegatehouse.org to request this form.