

DO I REALLY NEED A THERAPIST?

To many people, the idea of therapy is scary—shameful—something that must be kept a secret. People think that if psychologists work with people who have mental illness that means if they meet with a psychologist, there must be something wrong with them. Because of this type of thinking, people are afraid to find outlets to improve emotional health; despite that emotional health is a critical part of a person's well-being. People are not concerned about addressing their physical health needs (e.g. "I went to my doctor today about my headaches," "I met with a personal trainer to get in better physical shape," "I am going to meet with a nutritionist to learn a better diet"); however, when it comes to mental health and well-being, it is private. Because of the privacy, secrecy and shame, people are in more distress.

While it is unrealistic to think that we can get rid of the stigma that you might feel, we can tell you that what we do works. At Psychology Consultation Specialists, we have psychologists and social workers on staff with extensive training in identification and treatment of mental illness. But, our goal is not to diagnose everyone who walks through our door with a disorder. At different points in our lives, most people experience life events (a move, change in job, conflict with loved one) that can be more easily endured with help and guidance of a therapist who has expertise in the areas of relationships, cognitive and emotional development, and stages throughout the lifespan.

A very common stressful life event that many people are embarrassed to seek help about is parenting. To many, parenting is one of the most amazing and miraculous experiences in life; however, it can also be one of the most challenging. Parenting is not easy. Children are unique. Each child presents with their own temperament, interests, strengths and weaknesses...and those might be polar opposite to one's parents—or sometimes worse—exactly the same. While parents are sent home from the hospital with their newborn baby and a handbook about how often to feed them, when to start solid foods, when to expect that they sit on their own, that they shouldn't sleep on their stomach and more; there are no manuals for how to parent—that is because there is not one parenting strategy that works for every parent and child. But, you don't need to struggle to figure out what works best for your parent-child dyad. It is OK to seek advice, support, or coaching from a therapist.

So, in response to the question, "Do I really need therapy?" If you are struggling with adjusting to a life event, if parenting feels overwhelmingly challenging and stressful, it does not mean that you have a mental illness, but therapy can help. If therapy sounds off-putting, then call it life-coaching, parenting education, counseling, or emotional fitness. Whatever you call it, know that our goal is to help you find solutions.