

MYTH ABOUT MEETING PSYCHOLOGIST / PSYCHIATRIST

The instant we get unwell we go to a doctor and get ourselves treated and the symptoms go away after a few days. If the treatment persists we go to a specialist who tells us to go and take a few tests and base his pills based upon our ills!! However there are some ills which keep coming in one form or the other for which the doctor has no clue. Acidity IBS, headache, body pains, constipation, tiredness, feeling groggy, getting injured often and the like. These are psychosomatic diseases. Psycho means “mental” and soma means body. Diseases of the mind results in diseases of the body. Such illness cannot be cured by a medical practitioner but visiting a Psychologist well bears fruit.

In times past, it was generally thought that only when someone was crazy or someone who has had a nervous breakdown had to see a psychologist.

Today Psychologists treat a lot of mental diseases and they provide services for other reasons as well. Recognition of a problem at an early stage is the best step toward solving any problem; this only precedes prevention is better than cure.” Everyone experiences sadness, grief, stress and conflict, depression, anxiety, fear, phobia, intense anger at some point in their lives. If the problem persists with respect to both the intensity and the frequency and is there in the mind for an extended period of time it is better to definitely seek professional help from psychologist. People suffering from mental disorders go to a psychologist. There are some basis differences between a psychologist and a psychiatrist. They are:

Psychologist – Psychologists have a doctoral degree in an area of Psychology, the study of the mind and human behavior. They are not medical doctors. Psychologists are trained in giving Psychological tests like IQ tests or personality tests.

Psychiatrist – Psychiatrists are medical doctors (MDs) who graduate from medical school, have an year of medical internship, and have 3 years of residency in the assessment and treatment of mental health disorders.

Psychologist – do not prescribe medicines.

Psychiatrist – can prescribe medicines

Psychologist – deals more with the software – i.e. the mind functioning.

Psychiatrist – deals more with the hardware – the Biology and Neurochemistry.

Psychologist- Psychologists will track sleep patterns, eating patterns, eating patterns, and the negative thoughts that might be causing or contributing to the problem.

Psychiatrist – Before they call someone depressed they rule out vitamin deficiency and Thyroid problems. Once they have a mental health diagnosis they will prescribe medicine.

Psychologist - deals with therapy for phobia, anxiety, stress, family issues, health issues, performance enhancement, spiritual issues, trauma and PTSD – Post traumatic stress disorder.

Psychiatrist – deals with suicidal or irrational tendencies and mania.

If you are struggling with the decision between Psychology and Psychiatry talk to your primary care doctor first. One size does not fit all. At the end of the day both Psychology and psychiatry are built around strong relationships on trust and confidentiality.

There are however myths that going to Psychologist are only for abnormal people. This thinking is wrong. The mind (physically it is brain) is only within the body and so part of the body. Getting treated and living a quality life is one of the most fundamental requisites, isn't it? We look at someone and say he is handicapped because he is going by a wheel chair since his limbs are not alright. Little do we say that most of us are handicapped because we are wearing spectacles to see!!

Some of the myths going to a Psychologist.

Myth No. 1 : Psychology teaches people how to judge personality of the other person

Explanation: personality is a mask. Everybody including myself has the 'ability' to change masks according the time, place and person. One's personality is completely known to one's own self only. Even in personality questionnaires, one has to give the honest answers to let the other person know about him/her. Seeing a person once and judge - 'he/she is like this' is completely irrational and unscientific. We need at least 30 instances / samples data to day anything scientifically.

Myth No.2: Psychologists can solve problems in one sitting of counseling / Psychotherapy.

Explanation: Psychologists are facilitators in the counseling/psychotherapy sessions. The outcome of the session is based on the collaborative efforts put

forth by both psychologists and the client. More often, the clients bring a big list to consult and it is not humanly possible to address all the issues in a single session scientifically. Rapport building, developing trust, understanding the issues of the client are the things that can be done in the first session. Psychologists are not magicians to vanish all the issues in one sitting!

Myth No.3: Psychology is the study of mind

Explanation: psychology literally means study of soul (Greek: psyche means soul and logos mean 'study of')

Since soul could not be defined objectively, Greek philosophers changed it to 'study of mind' but failure to define the term mind made Wilhelm Wundt to define psychology as 'study of consciousness' and again the term consciousness was criticized and rejected on similar grounds. Finally in 19th century, modern and scientific investigations made people define psychology as 'the study of behavior' since behavior can be studied objectively and visible outwards, psychology is defined as "SCIENCE OF BEHAVIOR"

Myth No.4: Psychologists have readymade solutions for all the problems in life.

Explanations: every individual is unique. Thus every individual's problems are also unique. For example, though all relationship issues among the adolescents look similar at the outset, everyone's perception of the problem varies. So the help given by psychologists varies from individual to individual. And most importantly, clients have to come up with solutions because problems are theirs.

Myth No. 5: Psychologists can do 'mind reading' explanation: Psychology is no more study of mind. It has become 'science of behavior' since mind could not be defined and studied objectively. So, mind reading is NOT a part of Psychology at all. By looking at one's face, everybody has the ability to say something like 'he/she is sad'. The reason(s) behind sadness and what goes inside his/her mind are secrets known to one self only. If you know the person for a long time, your guess MAY BE right (Not always right).

Myth No.6: Counseling / Psychotherapy is just talking.

Explanation: to solve the problem and understand oneself, talking is done in counseling/ psychotherapy sessions. The talking consists a lot of cognition to help the client to perceive the problem situations objectively. Behavioral exercises and role plays are also part of the sessions. Counseling is proven in researches to be effective in helping the clients solving the problem. Talking to friends and well-wishers often yields advices which are from the person's

experiences and will not be useful always to solve somebody else's problems most of the time.

It is best to seek professional advice after getting directions from your doctor, Whether to go to a Psychologist or to a Psychiatrist. There is nothing wrong these days to seek professional guidance in order to lead a quality life.