

What to Expect from Counseling Services

A child's reactions to abuse will vary from mild to more serious effects. Some children show signs immediately while others may have delayed symptoms. Even if your child is not showing any symptoms at this time, it is best to let a professional therapist assess your child. Many caregivers feel a child should just forget about the abuse are reluctant to let the child talk about the abuse. Unfortunately, denial will not make it go away. Most children do not just forget about abuse and need help to recover from the experience.

The purpose of counseling is not to dwell on the details of the abuse, but to help your child deal with the feelings they are experiencing and to help them heal.

Counseling may help your child develop a healthy self-image, learn to trust again, identify ways to stay safe, and find ways to feel more in control.

What is therapy? There is a unique opportunity for your child to meet with a trained professional who is willing and able to work together to establish goals for treatment and a pathway toward achieving those goals.

How will counseling help my child? The counseling relationship is a safe place for your child to label and express feelings and thoughts related to the abuse, such as anger, fear and sadness. Your child will also be assisted in re-establishing personal boundaries and a sense of self-worth taken away by the abuser. Your child will learn the abuse was not their fault.

How long will my child need to come to counseling? The length of time in counseling varies. Your child's counselor will help them set goals to be reached in therapy. An individual treatment plan will be made and reviewed periodically. Your child may need to seek counseling in the future when leaving home, getting married or having children of their own.

How do I request counseling for my child? You can request a referral be made for your child through any of the professionals dealing with your child's case.

Questions to ask when seeking a therapist.

1. Is your area of expertise children?
2. Are they experienced with trauma informed care?
3. What methods do you use? Are they evidenced based?
4. Do you have experience counseling children who have experienced trauma?
5. Do they recognize and build on the family member's strengths?
6. Do they have experience engaging schools on creating plans to benefit my child?
7. What evidence based treatment techniques are used for my child?

Questions to ask after your first few sessions?

1. Was my child comfortable with the therapist?
2. Was my child validated and heard?
3. Do I feel the therapist responded appropriately to my child?
4. Did you and your child feel better after the session?
5. Did your child feel safe while in session?
6. Was your child given coping mechanisms?
7. Were you supported as the caregiver in parenting your child?