

Myths vs. Facts about Counseling

- Myth: Counseling is only for people who are “crazy” or have serious emotional concerns; “My problems aren’t serious enough to see a counselor.”
- **FACT:** While counseling can help people with serious concerns, also helps for average people with average concerns. Having serious concerns doesn’t mean someone is “crazy.” It means they may need some help with their concerns.

- Myth: People who are in counseling are weak.
- **FACT:** It can be very hard for people to admit that they need help. It takes a lot of strength and courage to seek counseling.

- Myth: A counselor has the answers and will tell you how to fix your problems.
- **FACT:** There are no easy answers. You decide the goals that you want to work on in counseling. A counselor will help you identify ways to reach your goals and the possible pros and cons of your choices.

- Myth: A counselor can’t help you unless he or she has had a similar experience.
- **FACT:** Counselors are trained to be sensitive to individual differences and concerns.

So what IS counseling?

Counseling can provide help for people who are experiencing concerns that cause difficulty in their lives. Many people could benefit from counseling at some point in their lives. Counseling helps people understand and solve problems and make decisions. It may also help keep small problems from turning into big ones. When you seek counseling, you can expect a place where you can be honest, open, and free to express your feelings without fear of criticism.

What are examples of reasons to seek counseling?

- The demands of school, work or home become difficult to handle
- Life changes (death of loved one, end of relationship, or loss of job)
- Loneliness
- Physical problems with no apparent medical cause
- Anxiety
- Feeling unhappy, withdrawn, or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Irritability or suspiciousness
- Concentration difficulty; having a hard time getting things done at school or work
- Sudden mood or behavior changes
- Under a lot of stress and pressure
- Uncertainty about identity or focus in life

What should I expect if I do seek counseling?

You will meet with a counselor for about an hour. During the first session, the counselor may ask a lot of questions to understand you and your concerns. You can expect to do a lot of talking. Sometimes things may seem worse or more painful before they get better. A counselor can be an objective person who can help you see things about yourself and your situation that you may be unable to see at the time. A counselor can help you understand yourself and your concerns better. For counseling to be successful, you have to be willing to seriously look at yourself, make changes, and work on your concerns between counseling sessions.

Things you talk about in counseling are confidential. They will not be shared with anyone without your permission. There are some limits to confidentiality. They will be explained to you in writing at the first session. The counselor will talk to you about options for addressing your concerns, which may include on-campus counseling or off-campus counseling or medication if that might better address your needs.

Is there a cost for counseling?

SMSU Counseling and Testing Services are available at no cost to all currently enrolled SMSU students.