



CENTERSTONE

Wellness Program

How to Know When It's Time to Seek Counseling

7 Signs for Seeking Help

Have you ever felt like life is just too hard? Worried that you can't take the pressure, stress and anxiety anymore? Sometimes the stressors of life –whether situational or ongoing and dire– can be significant prompts to seek professional counseling.

Everyone, including counselors, needs guidance, support and tools to navigate through taxing phases of life. If you or someone you know recognizes any of the following signs, it may be an indication to ask for help and seek professional counseling.

Seven Signs for Seeking Help

When you feel like you should

If it has already occurred to you that you need help and you would benefit from talking with someone to help tow you out of the ditch you're in, then you should seek help. The greatest warning that we need additional assistance comes from our own sense of need. Even if you cannot identify the cause of your distress, you may feel an overwhelming need to remove it. A supportive counselor or therapist can help pinpoint the issues that keep you stuck and facilitate a plan for renewal. Asking for help is a significant step in the right direction.

When family friction is high

Elevated stress from family friction is an invitation to seek outside help. In today's culture of divorce, single-parenting and blended families, the challenge of maintaining harmony in our homes has become difficult and complex. Today's families also have temptations brought on by the Internet, such as gambling, pornography or any number of other luring enticements that cater to our vulnerabilities. If you want better conflict resolution skills, parenting skills or tips to manage your own stress, remember, you do not have to solve your dilemmas by yourself. Caring professionals with experience in problematical family issues can help.

When grief lingers

Grief is painful. When grief is complicated or suppressed it can linger and cause unbearable effects on our lives. People commonly experience painful grief over losing a loved one, but grief can result from events as well. Disenfranchised grief reflects a loss that cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned or socially supported. Examples of this can be failed dreams, failed relationships or even failed expectations. It is healthy to grieve losses in your life but if grief overtakes you and you cannot move on after a period of time, find support through individual counseling, support groups or both.

When denial has failed

When attempts at escaping your problems have failed, and when you have become tired of being sick and tired, you can make a new decision and take a new direction. There comes a time to accept the

realities of your sorrow and uncover the make-believe shelter your denial provides. Maybe you're trading one painful way of life for another. It's common for people in denial. Many mask their problems by feeding their addictions to alcohol, drugs, sex or even shopping. When denial has had its last day as the epicenter of your life, your healing can begin.

When being controlled

If you are in any type of relationship where you are manipulated, dominated or controlled, then you need help. If you believe your actions, your involvements, your finances or any part of your lifestyle has limited freedom due to someone placing restrictions on you, you should seek help. You can discover healthier ways of coping and for thriving. Do not let your valuable life slip into seclusion and submission. Rage and resentment can build up, and you can find yourself in what seems like a trapped position. Professional help is available, ready to offer you avenues of strength, safety and of success.

When confronted with crisis

Survivors of traumatic events are frequently in such a state of shock that simply enduring each day becomes the primary task. Examples of traumatic events could include a sudden family death, a spouse announcing an affair or learning that a child that has been arrested. A crisis or critical incident is any incident that challenges your normal coping skills. If you don't have support systems, or don't know of resources for recovery, the crisis can be alarming and intense. Skilled professionals can guide you through the journey of recovery.

When surrounded in sadness

If your life feels dark and lonely and you feel like you are surrounded by sadness, then there is a great indication that you could benefit from counseling. Depression is more than feeling "blue" or having a bad day. Being depressed is like having the sun no longer shine on your soul. Your life may feel hollow. You may feel invisible. You may feel hope and joy are out of reach. If you have no interest in normal or fun activities or are very tired but sleep does not make the emotional or physical pain go away, don't wait another day before asking for help.

Centerstone (615) 460-HELP (4357)

About Centerstone

Centerstone, a not-for-profit organization, has provided a wide range of mental health and addiction services to people of all ages for more than 50 years. Through more than 60 facilities and 170 partnership locations across Middle Tennessee, Centerstone serves more than 50,000 children, adolescents, adults and seniors each year. Centerstone is accredited by The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). For more information about Centerstone, please call 888-291-4357 or visit www.centerstone.org.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.