



Three Trails EFAP

812 S David
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CONNECTIONS

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Specialties in Psychotherapy

by Don Benson

What does it mean to have a specialty in psychotherapy? Does a specialist always and necessarily have an advantage over a psychotherapist who is not a specialist? These are important questions for consumers of psychotherapy to consider.

The answer, in short, is "yes and no". A specialty is likely most helpful when it is referring to a certain problem. For example, a person with a substance abuse concern or an eating disorder will generally benefit from a therapist who has a specialty with the population in question. Although the identification of a specialty does not guarantee the expertise in question, in general, the specialist will have more education, training, or experience with that particular problem than the average therapist. Some jurisdictions may even require the therapist who holds herself out as a specialist to meet a credentialing process required by law. Often, however, this is not the case. The consumer of services would do well to investigate the claim that a therapist is a specialist with a certain problem.



A potential drawback to seeking a specialist could be too narrow a focus. Many clients who seek therapy have broader issues that are not easily put into a limited category. A therapist who is able to approach the clients' problems from a wider perspective may be more helpful.

Sometimes, specialties refer to a certain form of therapy. Various schools of therapy will offer workshops, trainings, and continuing education to qualify a professional as a specialist. They may even offer a certification to be displayed as proof of mastery in this form of therapy. I find these specialties to be less useful to the average consumer. Let me explain.

The profession of psychotherapy is more of an art than a science. With no disrespect to the scientific approach, a professional therapist brings her whole self into the service she provides to the client. She is not merely a technician who reproduces a set of techniques learned in a workshop. While her skills and training are very important to her effectiveness, her experience and intuition play just as important a role. Viewing a client through a narrow lens of one specific school of therapy, often the most current fad at the time, does not do justice to the complexities of the client's life or her concerns.

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Three Trails Employee & Family Assistance Program

New Board Chairperson Announced

Congratulations to the new Three Trails EFAP Board Chair, Gayle Schnorenberg, who took the helm as of January 1. Gayle is the only founding member of the Board and we are pleased to have her in this position. We thank the outgoing Chair, Matt Kaiser, for his leadership over the past several years.

The Board of Directors serves in a voluntary capacity and provides leadership for the program. While they are not involved in the day-to-day operations and are removed from any knowledge of users of the service, they are valuable resources for promoting and developing an ongoing vision of Three Trails EFAP that maximizes our value to our membership. It is important to recognize these individuals from time to time. Our current Board includes Gayle Schnorenberg, Crystal Mueller, Leanne Woodfill, Matt Kaiser, Linda Toohey, Sharon Bell and Reed Barr.

"Step-parenting" & "Stress Management" Groups Offered

Three Trails is offering two groups beginning in March and April. "Step-parenting" will meet on Monday nights beginning March 24th from 5:15-6:30. This group will meet for 4 consecutive weeks and both the step-parent and spouse (biological parent) are encouraged to attend. However, the step-parent is welcome to come alone.

Also, beginning Tuesday, April 22, a group on "Stress Management" will be held. This group will be conducted for 4 consecutive weeks from 5:15-6:30 pm. Please call to be included.

307-237-5750

Three Trails Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a counseling agency designed to respond to the needs of eligible active and retired employees, spouses, and dependent family members of participating businesses and organizations.

Our mission is to provide professional assistance early and in a timely manner so that problems do not worsen. Such concerns may include workplace stress, marriage and family tensions, alcohol and drug abuse, and other difficulties that may impact individuals. Counselors at Three Trails assess the scope and nature of the presenting concerns and will either provide counseling or refer the individual(s) to specialized services as necessary.

Three Trails EFAP is staffed by two full time counselors, one part time counselor, an intern and an administrative assistant. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 237-5750 or stop by the office at 812 South David Street.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday – Wednesday	9:00 to 6:00 pm
Thursdays	9:00 to 8:00 pm
Fridays	12:00 to 5:00 pm

We are closed through the noon hour, although noon sessions may be arranged.

REMEMBER...

you can access and read this newsletter online by going to www.threetrailsefap.com. While there, we would like to encourage you to take advantage of additional information within the site. Three Trails EFAP provides a small, but concentrated library on a variety of self-help topics. The list of books and materials are listed in the Library section of the site. Books, audio cassetts and CDs are available for checkout. Before planning to check out a book, please phone ahead to make sure it is available.



PROBLEMS . . .

by Wesley Bertagnole

As human beings, we all have problems that temporarily or permanently halt our progress and prevent us from achieving our goals. Our problems might include relationship issues, fear, depression, or anxiety. Problems can act like barriers and, all too often, our response to the problems only makes them worse. As a result, we place limitations on ourselves.

The word problem originates from Greek and literally means "to throw forward" (Ellis, 2006). If we look at the word problem in this light, we can change the way we think, and instead view problems as an opportunity to gain new skills. With this approach, problems can literally "throw" us forward.

One way to deal with problems is to pretend they don't exist. We avoid them, deny them, and lie about them. The problem with this approach is that it leaves the barrier in place and we keep running into it. A second approach is to fight the barrier, even struggle against it. This usually makes the problem grow larger because of excessive worry, depression and anxiety.



The third alternative is to accept the problem. When we accept the problem, tell the truth about it and meet it head on, the barrier or problem loses its power. "When we accept the fact that we have a problem, we are more likely to find effective ways to deal with it" (Ellis, 2006). Accepting a problem does not mean escaping from it or giving

up. It means admitting there is a problem, learning about the details, and finding effective solutions for dealing with the problem.

Ellis, Dave, Becoming a Master Student, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 11th edition, 2006

10th Year Anniversary

Three Trails EFAP is entering its tenth year of service. During this time, we have had seven counselors in various capacities and four administrative assistants. Currently, we have 2 full-time counselors, one part-time counselor, an intern and an administrative assistant. We have provided close to 18,000 counseling sessions during this time. Approximately 40% of usage is by family members, either with or without the employee.

Concerns have ranged from relationship and parenting difficulties to depression and grief. We have lead a number of groups, conducted a variety of presentations on topics related to emotional well-being, and facilitated critical incident stress debriefings. Three Trails EFAP makes every attempt to respond to employees' needs in a prompt and timely manner. Your feedback to us has been of great value in helping us identify problems in our service delivery and to rectify these concerns. We will continue to listen to your needs and make adjustments accordingly. Thanks for your support all these years and we look forward to many more!

Entering the 21st Century

As of January 1st, 2008, Three Trails EFAP began implementation of an electronic record-keeping system. The number of paper files is full to overflowing in our limited space. This new system will allow us to efficiently maintain client records. Because client confidentiality is of paramount importance to Three Trails EFAP, the system is equipped with several levels of security. We are also utilizing a state-of-the-art scheduling software program that has allowed us to abandon the old appointment book. We are confident these new procedures will streamline our ability to serve our clients better in the years ahead. We have entered the 21st century!

Coffee and Cups (anonymous)

A group of alumni, all highly established in their respective careers, got together for a visit with their old university professor. The conversation soon turned to complaints about the endless stress of work and life in general... Offering his guests coffee, the professor went into the kitchen and soon returned with a large pot of coffee and an eclectic assortment of cups: porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal - some plain, some expensive, some quite exquisite. Quietly he told them to help themselves to some fresh coffee.

When each of his former students had a cup of coffee in hand, the old professor quietly cleared his throat and began to patiently address the small gathering... 'You may have noticed that all of the nicer looking cups were taken up first, leaving behind the plainer and cheaper ones. While it is only natural for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is actually the source of much of your stress-related problems.'

He continued...'Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In fact, the cup merely disguises or dresses up what we drink. What each of you really wanted was coffee, not a cup, but you instinctively went for the best cups...then you began eyeing each other's cups....'

'Now consider this: Life is coffee. Jobs, money, and position in society are merely cups. They are just tools to shape and contain Life, and the type of cup we have does not truly define nor change the quality of the Life we live. Enjoy your coffee!' The happiest people don't **have** the best of everything, they just **make** the best of everything.

:: Live Simply :: Love Generously :: Care Deeply :: Speak Kindly ::

(Specialties cont...)

It is my belief that a professional psychotherapist is able to incorporate pieces of many therapeutic models into her developing knowledge and to integrate this information into her personality in a way that optimizes her effectiveness. This is not to say that she doesn't operate from a theory of psychotherapy, but only that her theoretical approach is in a dynamic interplay with her personal self. This is why the effective psychotherapist is a professional, artist, and scientist all wrapped up into one. What she is hopefully not, however, is a technician.

There is a final point to consider in this opinion. Certain problems do have scientific backing with certain approaches. Some anxiety disorders, for example, respond to therapies that expose clients to the source of their anxiety. Still, this is merely a demonstrated technique that does not replace the need for a fully engaged therapist to facilitate an effective therapeutic relationship with the client. Otherwise, reading an instruction manual is all that would be required of the client if mere technical expertise were all that were needed.

Our Position on Calling Clients

We have at times been asked to call clients to either remind them of their appointments or to encourage them to return for counseling. It is our policy, however, not to do this. The volume of appointments at Three Trails keeps us very busy and there is little time for the administrative assistant or the counselor to be calling clients for these reasons. Counselors may call clients for other reasons, including ones that advance the goals of counseling.

Also, we respect the rights and responsibility of the client to remain aware of the appointment time and the need to make his/her appointment and/or reschedule. Please be assured that this in no way suggests a disinterest in those who are using services. It is merely a matter of logistics and therapeutic responsibility.

Finally, we remain sensitive to the confidential nature of clients' concerns. Phone calls can inadvertently jeopardize that confidentiality, even when handled sensitively. We must reserve calling clients for the most necessary reasons.

Our rate of "no shows" at Three Trails has always been manageable and consistently lower than many other similar agencies. In general, clients do an excellent job following through with their appointments. Furthermore, we encourage clients to call us for whatever they need. Thank you for your understanding.