6 Myths about Psychotherapy or Counseling

**MYTH**  Seeing a therapist is a sign of weakness.
**TRUTH**  Seeking out a therapist is a brave step and a sign that you realize that you don’t have to do everything yourself. Therapists can be helpful for both people with Parkinson’s and their caregivers.

**MYTH**  The therapist is going to share my business with others.
**TRUTH**  Therapists are trained professionals, and everything you say, short of wanting to harm yourself or others, is confidential. Your therapist will not share your issues with a mutual friend, but a friend might do so by accident.

**MYTH**  Only “crazy” people need counseling.
**TRUTH**  Just as individuals may need physical therapy to increase their mobility or speech therapy to enhance their voice, many people can benefit from mental health therapy to help increase their ability to cope and strengthen their mental adaptive strategies.

**MYTH**  They’ll make me talk about my childhood, and I’ll be stuck going forever.
**TRUTH**  Therapy doesn’t mean you will be talking about your childhood. In fact, cognitive behavioral therapy involves goal-directed steps to help change your thinking and behavior patterns, so you can feel better. Treatment can also be short-term.

**MYTH**  My friends can handle and provide advice for all my problems, and they want to help.
**TRUTH**  Your friends are not professionals. Although they can listen and are well-intentioned, they may have their own struggles and may not be able to take on yours. Also, your friends’ advice doesn’t come from years of experience working with people in similar situations, like a therapist’s advice does. Therapists have specific skills, knowledge, and techniques for dealing with depression and anxiety.

**MYTH**  As a caregiver, it is my job to make my loved one happy and constantly try to lift their spirits.
**TRUTH**  You are not responsible for making your loved one happy. Trying to keep someone else happy all the time is the surest way to develop caregiver burnout. Report depression, anxiety, or mood changes to the doctor and a therapist, who will use their professional skills to help.

For more information on mood and Parkinson’s, order the book Mood: A Mind Guide to Parkinson’s.

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