

Q & A Mindline



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Q I consulted a psychiatrist recently and we spent 45 minutes talking about my issues. However, I left unsatisfied at the end as I wanted proper advice on resolving my mood problems that has troubled me for 18 months. He has asked me to see him again for further exploration, but I am not sure where it's all headed. I feel frustrated. Please advise.

It's hard to offer advice on the resolution of problems without more details about the nature and degree of emotional issues, likely underlying causes and triggers and other contributors including physical health, personality characteristics, perception and expectations one has from self and life in general.

Unlike other medical specialties, psychiatry and psychology require a holistic approach where the body, mind, soul as well as thoughts, feelings and emotional reactions and interconnectedness to family, friends and the world are all taken into consideration in the process of treatment and healing. Thus, the sessions can be laborious.

I can understand that it is quite difficult for those seeking help to recall, collate

and talk about all the issues that are sensitive and overwhelming and which are unconsciously or subconsciously suppressed from the conscious mind to maintain emotional balance. Nevertheless, the process of unloading your inner feelings has enormous therapeutic benefits.

Impatience can be a manifestation of underlying stress, anxiety and depression, but in many individuals, impatience itself is the ailment. You have delayed seeking help and suffered unnecessarily. But now, be patient, trust yourself, allow for conversation to flow and awareness (about your difficulties) to take root. These are prerequisites for lasting change.

Invest time and effort in understanding yourself and for this, attending several therapy sessions may be essential thereby allowing the psychiatrist to know you and provide independent, objective guidance and support with your inner engineering. Eric Erikson (a well-known developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst) stated, "The more you know yourself, the more patience you have for what you see in others."

Q My husband (48) is an alcoholic. He drinks on a daily basis and prefers it over other family outings or obligations. He drinks as he wakes up and often gets intoxicated early in the evening. Thus, it has become embarrassing to go out to parties with him, as he is either already drunk, or gets drunk and then misbehaves. He doesn't want to see a psychiatrist now, as the previous psychiatrist he saw, suggested that he should be admitted in a rehab and de-addiction facility. Your advice will be much appreciated.

It is not essential to admit your husband or individuals with a similar history like him, in a rehab facility etc. Individuals like him can be helped to overcome an

alcohol addiction on an outpatient basis, provided they accept the problems in question and are willing to attend required clinical and therapy sessions, so that safe prescribing and monitoring to the medicinal detoxification regime can be put into effect. Equally, the process of reversing the habit requires motivational factors that can be unravelled by the clinician or ignited in a therapeutic environment.

Other important factors for outpatient based detoxification includes absence of associated significant psychiatric ailment(s) and absence of previous history of severe withdrawal symptoms such as fits and delirium (an acutely disturbed state of mind characterized by restlessness, illusions and incoherence). Equally, the individual health too must not be compromised. The support of good family or friends is necessary for a home based treatment.

However, it is difficult to offer home treatment options, if the above criteria is not fulfilled. Thus, perhaps the options for treatment weren't discussed well enough and the pros and cons for each of those options were not fully considered. It is suggested that you talk to your husband openly and accept him and his problems. Instill hope for change and encourage him to take that first step again. Offer to be his anchor and keep an open mind about home based treatment. Also, ensure that the next specialist you see offers a comprehensive assessment of his needs with advice on essential early (and ongoing) steps in the planning of a personalized treatment plan.

Remember, assessment is not a process that happens to someone, but one in which they are actively involved, to the fullest appropriate degree and about which they develop their own understanding of their situation alongside the understanding provided by the clinician. And the recovery plan that may result from this comprehensive assessment must be developed collaboratively, so that it is personally relevant and 'owned' by the patient.