

Prepare for Your Appointment

Before you go to see a counselor, it may help to know what to expect and how to prepare for your session. That way, you will more likely get the help you want and feel more at ease.

Here are a few notes and suggestions to help prepare you for your experience.

Consider the Counselor a Resource

Some people may feel uneasy or embarrassed about seeing a counselor for personal problems. However, nearly everyone is faced at some time with challenges that are difficult to resolve independently. **Seeking assistance for personal problems is just as important as receiving assistance for medical problems.**

Having personal problems doesn't mean "I'm crazy" or having a "nervous breakdown" or "I'm a failure." Quite to the contrary, seeking assistance with a problem is usually a prudent and wise step and a **sign of personal strength.**

All services are provided in strict confidence. The personal information that you share with your counselor is confidential and not shared outside the program unless you sign a release of information or if law requires disclosure.

How Counseling Sessions Can Help

Counselors are available to assist you with a wide variety of situations. The counselor will help you:

- **clarify a problem**—assess and evaluate complex situations.
- **develop an action plan**—identify steps to resolve the situation.
- **handle a crisis**—help you sort through your options.
- **resolve a problem**—many concerns can be resolved quickly, in just a few sessions. Your counselor can work with you to reach these short term treatment goals.
- **engage in a treatment process**—the counselor will help you resolve more complex issues requiring extended treatment.

What to Bring to the First Session

- **Written list of questions.** Write down your questions and concerns and bring the list with you. Sometimes it's hard to remember all the problems or issues, especially in a new situation.
- **Notes about problem.** Bring any notes, documents, or records that will help you remember and describe the problem to the counselor.
- **History of problem.** Include how long you've had the problem. Also include similar problems you've had in the past and how you resolved them.
- **Medication.** Bring all current medications with the pharmacy label, if possible. It will help your counselor provide a more complete evaluation.

- **Significant others.** Where appropriate, bring family members or other significant people who are involved with the problem to the first session.

Understand the Session Process

- **Environment.** A counselor's office is typically a private office in an accessible location. The office will be comfortable, quiet, and designed for private conversations.
- **Assessment.** You will be asked to fill out some forms. The counselor will ask you some questions to better understand your concerns and talk with you about available options.
- **Referrals.** The counselor may refer you to specialists or other clinicians.

Resources Are Available – Call your Magellan EAP at 1-877-704-5698

Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at www.MagellanHealth.com. Or call us for more information, help and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.