



*ideas to assist with life's challenges*

 **LiVe Well**

## Getting the Most from Couples Counseling



- 1. Come Prepared:** Come to your session with specific topics, issues and concerns that you would like to address.
- 2. Be Honest:** The heart of all successful couples counseling is sincere and honest communication with your partner and the therapist. The old adage that “truth hurts” may at times be accurate, but just remember that “lies can kill”.
- 3. Change Yourself Rather Than Your Partner:** It’s almost instinctive for us to want to change our partner rather than ourselves. However, relationship research has shown that if you want to change the quality of your relationship, you need to start by looking at your own behavior and being accountable for making change.
- 4. Couples Counseling Is Not A Contest:** It’s not uncommon for couples to treat counseling as if it were a contest to see who is going to win and lose. This is a very unproductive strategy that often leads to an individual “winning” while the relationship “loses”. Consistently trying to convince your partner and the counselor of your “rightness” usually causes an impasse in counseling.
- 5. Rely on Effort, Not Magic:** It’s very common for couples to expect that couples counseling is some sort of magic that happens in the therapist’s office that changes the relationship for the better. You must be willing to work hard outside of therapy. For example, the therapist may recommend reading or homework that can help to make the most out of counseling.
- 6. Change Negative Cycles:** The counselor will help you identify negative cycles that affect the ability to be close, feel safe and be available to each other. The goal is NOT to alienate one partner or blame one individual for all of the relationship problems, but rather about making suggestions to help you get out of negative cycles with each other.



For more information or free counseling call Intermountain EAP at 1.800.832.7733.

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