



EDWARDS PSYCHOTHERAPY

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CHOOSING A COUPLE THERAPIST: IMPORTANT FACTS

COUPLE THERAPY IS NOT A STANDARDIZED PROCEDURE

There are many approaches to couple therapy, sometimes with contradictory ideas. You will have very different experiences depending on your therapist's approach. Some are more educational in nature and focus on behavioral solutions or communication skills. Other approaches focus on emotions and underlying patterns that affect your emotional connection. Some approaches are based on a large body of professionally accepted knowledge and their efficacy is documented by research; others are based on more limited theories that have not been extensively researched.

LICENSED THERAPISTS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO HAVE SPECIALIZED TRAINING IN COUPLE THERAPY

Some therapists working with couples rely only on principles derived from their general training or from their work with individuals. While breadth of training is important, a competent couple therapist should be able to clearly explain the specialized approach they use when working with couples.

THERAPISTS DOING COUPLE THERAPY VARY WIDELY IN THEIR EXPERIENCE

Some therapists who have worked with couples for many years may only see a few couples each week while other therapists who specialize in couple therapy may have considerably more experience. Therapists who have obtained some specialized training may not have much experience in actually using that therapy model with couples. Finally, some prominent trainers have developed programs that provide certificates to document training in their approach. While this is a useful indication that the therapist has developed basic competency in the model, many people mistakenly believe that a certificate indicates an advanced level of expertise and experience.

QUESTIONS FOR A POTENTIAL COUPLE THERAPIST

Any competent, experienced couple therapist will be happy to answer the following questions to help you make an informed choice.

- Have you had any specialized training in couple therapy?
- What is your approach to couple therapy?
- What are your goals for therapy? What is your view of an ideal relationship?
- How long have you been using this approach? How many couples have you seen using it?
- Over the last ten years how many couples have you typically seen each week?
- How many couples have you seen in your career?