

Getting the Most Out of Counselling

I think there is a common myth about counselling. It is something like this:

*If you attend some appointments with a professional counsellor,
you walk away from those sessions changed and improved.
Just because you were there.*

Counselling is not like sitting through a movie. A movie is a passive, spectator event. You go to the theatre. You sit-down and watch the movie. You leave. Done.

To get the most out of counselling, don't go with the movie approach.

Taking a class is more similar to counselling. As a student participating in a class, you are more active than a moviegoer. You take notes. You ask questions. You write and exam.

However, a class is still not the same as counselling. You attend a class to learn new information from a teacher. The teacher then checks to see if you understand the information correctly.

Counselling is not completely different. It certainly involves learning some new information. However, you are not always the student. Often, you are the teacher. The counsellor is then the student, trying to learn and understand correctly. (In fact, I encourage you to give me a passing or failing grade, depending on how well I am "getting it" with you!)

Counselling has another similarity with a class. I often give homework. (If you dislike the word "homework," it can also be called "between-session tasks.") As discussed in the [Rights and Responsibilities](#) link, working on these between-session tasks is usually quite helpful; promoting faster, better changes and progress toward your goal(s).

So in classroom terms, if you want to make the most of counselling, try to be like a keen student. Ask questions. Take notes. Study (or practice) outside of "class." Let me know when you do not understand something, or run into difficulties while "doing homework."

But you will also be the teacher. To get the most out of counselling, take your teaching seriously. I will be a very keen student, and my goal is to make your job as a teacher easy. At times, I may be such a keen student, that you find me a bit irritating!

Try to remember that when I am in the student role, learning and trying to get an A+ is not actually to benefit me; but my teacher.