Talking to a Counselor

*Why should I go to counseling?* It can help you make sense of your experiences. Help identify triggers that make your symptoms worse. Help develop strategies to reduce your symptoms. The goal is to get you to a place where you are not suffering. Where you can function and enjoy life again.

*Will I have to lay down on a sofa?* Not unless you want too.

*If I need counseling, does it mean I am “weak”?* Most people can benefit from counseling when they are experiencing high levels of stress, depression, and/or anxiety.

*Can’t I just take medication?* The best outcomes usually comes from a combination of medications and counseling.

*What if I feel uncomfortable about this?* It is normal to feel uncomfortable in the beginning. Don’t expect to get well with only one visit. After a couple of sessions, you should be able to tell if you and the counselor are clicking. If not, it is OK to ask for a referral to a different counselor. Go to your appointments. Counseling can’t help if you are a no-show.

*What if they ask me about my “feelings”?* Describe your symptoms. Fatigue? Aches/pains? Trouble sleeping? Restless? Feeling irritable? Feeling angry? Reoccurring thoughts? Thoughts of talking your own life? How are things at work? Are you able to go to work? How are things with your family? Tell the counselor if you are taking any medications. Also let them know if you are using alcohol or any other drugs.

*What if I say the wrong thing?* There are no right or wrong words. Describe things the best you can. Be open and honest. The counselor is there to help, not judge.

*How do I find a counselor?*
- For locations of behavioral health programs in Missouri, visit [www.dmh.mo.gov/mentalillness/helpinfo](http://www.dmh.mo.gov/mentalillness/helpinfo) or call 1-800-364-9687.
- For a treatment referral anywhere in the United States, call the National Helpline 1-800-662-4357.

*Suicide is very much preventable. For more information, go to HelpHimStay.org.*