COUPLES THERAPY

Couple therapy is the process of therapeutically helping partners in a relationship to recognise and better manage or reconcile troublesome differences, conflict or repeating patterns of distress. In couple counselling we recognize and acknowledge that each person has a unique personality, perception, set of values and history that might be different and at odds from their partner's. Individuals in the relationship may adhere to different value systems such as social, religious, group and other collective factors which shape a person's nature and behavior; these are all considered in the process of counseling and therapy.

In couple counselling I:

- Provide a confidential conversation between the counsellor (myself) and the partners; the counsellor is nonjudgmental and neutral to both
- enable each person to be heard and to hear themselves
- Reflect the relationship's difficulties and the potential and direction for change
- Provide a place and a space for difficult and conflicted thoughts and emotions to be spoken of and heard in a more responsive and less reactive way with a third party
- Empower the relationship to take control of its own destiny and make vital decisions
- Deliver relevant and appropriate information about relationships in general
- Let you say what's really on your mind

Most relationships will get strained at some time, resulting in them not functioning well and producing self-reinforcing, conflicted patterns. There are many possible reasons for this:

- poor communication/understanding or problem solving
- mental health problems such as depression, anxiety
- affairs
- changes in financial situations
- physical health problems
- even the influence of other family members can have a profound influence on the conduct, responses and actions of the individuals in a relationship.

What does Couple Therapy involve?

I will weigh up the couple's personal and relationship story as it is told, interrupt wisely, facilitate both a de-escalation of unhelpful conflict and the development of realistic, **practical** solutions.

I will seek to help you:

1. Communicate mindfully, pausing and learning to respond and not **react** to each other

2. Nurture your appreciation for each other. This means creating and sustaining a positive view about your partner, respecting and affirming their differences.
3. explore your couple fit: there are 3 areas of couple fit-shared ideas about goals for the future, a shared sense of origins-your social fit and an unconscious fit-what you bring to each other as partners but might not even realize it
4. **Turn Toward** each other Instead of away or against each other. You don't have to agree with your partner, but listening with respect and not turning away from them or against them will help assure a more successful relationship
5. create mutual influences. It is important to maintain your own identity in a relationship, but it is equally important to yield to your partner and give in. If both partners allow one another this influence, then they will learn to respect one another on a deeper level. **A healthy relationship is balance between togetherness and separateness**
6. Overcome sticking points. Major issues that cannot be resolved because both partners' views are so fundamentally different involves an **acceptance** of the other person, an understanding of the other person and deep communication. The goal is to get to a position that allows the other person to empathize with the partner's view, even if a compromise cannot be reached.
7. commit to a more enriching relationship
8. help facilitate the ending of a too difficult of conflicted relationship-especially where domestic violence is present

What are the Benefits?

- Learning ways to communicate better
- Learning how to argue in a healthier way
- Learning how to resolve conflict and problem solve in a productive manner
- Learning appropriate expression, disclosure and resolution of painful emotions
- Learning how to state your needs clearly and openly within your relationship
- Learning how to work through unresolved issues
- Learning how to negotiate for change within your relationship