

Psychotherapy on trend

Therapy can transform our lives

**RELATIONSHIPS**
With Joanne Wilson

IMAGINE the power of unleashing the torrent of thoughts and emotions whirring around in your mind without fear of judgment. What if you could metaphorically punch those words out in the air with an unbiased professional and gain clarity for healthy decision making and flourishing relationships?

Have you bought into the stigma about counselling? In Australia, therapy is often regarded as something for 'crazy' people, or more commonly known here as 'nut-bags'.

Nothing could be further from the truth: therapy has the power to transform lives, save relationships, and treat mental illness.

Current research in psychotherapy has shown without doubt, that what therapists do in psychotherapy is incredibly effective on a neurobiological level.

Research suggests at least 27 per cent (if not many more in other studies) of Americans have been to therapy at least once and 80 per cent found it effective.

There may be quite a few things you don't want to follow in the American way, but they're very healthily seeking assistance they haven't found in other areas of their life. This help may come in the form of support, information, guidance, self-awareness and/or the space to learn and practise new tools.

In Australia, by contrast, I believe far less people seek therapy to improve their lives or the help they really need.

If you or a 'friend' are on the fence about therapy, it's time to make up your mind and consider seeking help to achieve the life of your dreams.

Here are six reasons therapy is totally on trend, according to me.

1. It's the preferred choice of the privileged

If you envision a person in therapy, you may well picture a wild or dotty-type person. In some cultures however, therapy is synonymous with celebrity and money. These clever and prosperous people routinely seek out therapy because they know it helps propel them to the life they want. If you admire those you consider successful and famous, you'd be well served to follow their lead.

2. It helps you achieve your dreams

Everyone feels stuck from time to time. There's no magic pill to achieving your dreams, and no one else can meet your goals for you. You are the expert in your life. A counsellor however, can help sort out what's holding you back and empower you to stop procrastinating to begin living the life you want.

3. A focus on holistic health

Anxiety, depression and stress are all correlated with obesity and poor health; not to mention dying younger. Talking therapies affect neural activation through chemical balance, neural firing, neural structure and neural networks. In a safe and trusted environment, your stress response is down-regulated to encourage new habits that allow you to relate in new improved



► Open your heart and mind to better relationships.

PHOTO: PEXELS

resilient ways facilitating greater control for a happier life.

4. Psychotherapy means better relationships

No relationship is perfect and we all have room for improvement. You and your partner – not your parents, your bank account, or your job – control the direction of your relationship. Counselling helps heal insecure attachment styles, fostering healthy relationships. A therapist can help sort through your role to arrive at a happier, more loving relationship – not to mention a better sex life.

5. Break family cycles

Like it or not, our childhood environment shapes so much of who we are. The exciting aspect of psychotherapy is an external perspective on helping choose those parts of your family culture you wish to flourish for future generations; and those you don't. Furthermore, you can learn to provide healthy mentoring and make conscious choices about the best possible care for your children.

6. Psychotherapy clients ARE normal

Just as you go to the doctor or dentist for your annual check-up even when you feel fine, a regular session with a therapist can serve as a check-in for your emotional health and gain a fresh new perspective.

Choose your therapist wisely. Check their qualifications, seek out recommendations and ensure they are a member of a relevant association such as the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia.

The only way to end the stigma of therapy is to be willing to try it yourself. If you need help sorting out your goals, achieving dynamic and flourishing relationships, or just getting better control of your emotions, therapy can help. Kick back and enjoy the therapeutic, sacred and safe space over a cuppa. It changes lives every day, and it can change yours, too.

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