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Pensacola

National Alliance on Mental Illness

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When to See a Counselor & Is a Counselor the Right Choice? Q & A with Nancy Turner, Behavioral Health Counselor, Wolff Center

The Fourth Thursday Educational Meeting this month will address “When to See a Counselor & Is a Counselor the Right Choice?” a Q&A with Nancy Turner, LMHC, NCC, NCBF. Nancy has been a healthcare provider to children, adolescents, adults and families for over 20 years and currently sees patients at Wolff Center for Child & Adolescent Health. The role of the counselor, or therapist, in mental health treatment is often misunderstood, according to Nancy, and is different from the role of the psychologist and the psychiatrist.

The psychiatrist is an MD who specializes in psychiatric medicine and will prescribe and manage the medication for the client. The psychologist has a PhD in psychology and will perform specialized testing to help determine if the client meets criteria for a mental illness. The counselor or therapist or psychotherapist has an MA in psychology and will evaluate the client to determine a diagnosis and plan of treatment. All three professionals strive for the same goal, to improve the level of function of the client.

The levels of need can best be illustrated by a visit to a primary care physician. “When it comes to a psychological struggle,” Nancy said, “people typically rely on their village of support like friends and family, or they proactively seek information on the web for anything from homeopathic remedies to blogs and support groups. But if these measures don’t help the situation, then it’s time to discuss your struggle with your PCP and a referral may be made to a counselor. When you feel physically sick, you go see your PCP who may diagnose the problem by just listening to your explanation of symptoms or they may refer you to a specialist like a pulmonologist or a cardiologist for further opinions and tests. A counselor works the same way, listening to your psychological symptoms and diagnosing your problem or referring you to a psychologist for further tests. The psychologist has specialized training in psychometric testing and with this information, the counselor may tailor a better treatment plan. The counselor may also refer you to a psychiatrist if you don’t respond well to therapy or if you need medicine to reduce your distress so that you may perhaps respond better to therapy.”



Nancy Turner

What is talk therapy? What is behavioral cognitive therapy? What kind of therapy is right for me or my loved one? Nancy can discuss different types of therapy in case the family and friends of those who need it want clarification. Sometimes the family and friends need it for themselves! In any event, this promises to be an interesting program. Come join NAMI’s Q & A session so you can better navigate mental healthcare.

The Educational Meeting will be held Thursday, June 22, 6-7:30pm at the Pavilion, West Florida Hospital, 2191 E Johnson Avenue (corner of Johnson & N Davis Hwy).

Take Action on Advocacy Issues

Support NAMI national's goals on advocacy! Add your voice to those of other NAMI members and supporters by going to the nami.org website and signing up to receive alerts when legislation is pending, either on your computer or on your phone. Click on Get Involved, Take Action on Advocacy Issues and Join our Movement. It takes just a couple of clicks to send a personalized email to your state and national legislators on the issues that are so important to our families. Our loved ones deserve better. Advocate today!

