

The Potential Benefits of Psychotherapy

by

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Psychologist

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Introduction

In this article, I will present some of the potential benefits you may experience with me in psychotherapy. These benefits can also be referred to as goals, results and outcomes. You may derive these benefits whether you engage in individual, couples, family or group psychotherapy at *The Resiliency Center of Santa Barbara*.

I do not guarantee that you will experience any benefits or reach your desired goals. I do not know which results you may eventually receive, if any. And I make no promises that you will achieve the outcome that you desire. But nevertheless, by seriously engaging in and committing to your own growth and change, you should receive some valuable benefits that will impact your life. Hopefully, you will have reached your intended goals and surpassed your original expectations. That is my intention when working with you.

The modification of some distinct symptoms may be fairly rapid. But many lasting behavioral and inner personality changes are usually incremental and slower, step-by-step. At times we may surge ahead and make quantum leaps as we move forward. But more often, we change slowly and progressively, bit by bit. At times the transformation is quite obvious and noticeable. At other times, we feel as if few improvements are occurring.

In treatment with me, we work together to reach your desired goals. It is a cooperative venture. Together, we assess your concerns and situation, define your treatment goals, agree to a treatment plan, and follow that plan to attain your goals. Our treatment plan is customized to your unique issues, abilities and desires.

Psychotherapy is always a cooperative effort. It is not done to you. It is conducted with you as an active participant. We must work together as a 2-person team to achieve your desired outcome. The benefits are the value you receive from treatment. In order to realize them, together we must

invest our energy, time and talents to work toward success. You will earn from psychotherapy what you put into it. And, you will need to give up some old familiar ways of thinking and behaving to gain new abilities or strengths.

My treatment approach is goal-oriented and results-driven. We will monitor your progress from beginning to end. We will be focused. We won't meander for very long into non-productive areas. We both must work in concert to succeed at reaching your goals. Over time, your goals may change and new targeted goals may arise. As we move forward in treatment, you may uncover new areas or issues to work on. There will be some surprises and new discoveries along the way. When this occurs, we review our plan and decide what revisions to make and what new course to take.

By reviewing the lists of potential benefits below, you may clarify and focus your goals, refine what you want for yourself, or get inspired to put in more effort to change. Remember, the results you experience are your responsibility to achieve. You must strive for them. And I will be by your side all the way. But make sure your expectations are realistic and that what you want is achievable.

Type of Possible Results to Expect

This is only a partial list of what you can strive for. It does not include all possible concerns and outcomes. But it should provide you with some significant ideas about what you might work toward and achieve in psychotherapy. Remember that your expectations must be realistic. And, you must be patient and put in effort to follow our plan.

I categorize these benefits by problem areas. Find your area(s) of interest and see if any of the benefit examples fit for you. These categories also indicate what types of problems I treat most often. This list is not exhaustive and you may strive for and attain a number of outcomes not shown here. Hopefully, you will find some results here that you'd like to achieve.

Choose the Benefits You Want to Achieve

Please check off the goals and benefits that you want to achieve in psychotherapy. And, in the empty bullets at the end of each category, please write down any additional desired outcomes that you are motivated to pursue. There are many desirable benefits and results listed here. Try to limit yourself to marking only those results of great personal significance for you now.

Categories and Benefits

General Benefits of Psychotherapy

- Enhance the overall quality of your life
- Reduce your daily emotional pain and distress
- Solve difficult problems that plague you faster
- Increase your self-understanding
- Shed guilt and shame that keep you down
- Learn how to manage and tolerate intense feelings
- Develop a more positive and optimistic attitude
- Make decisions more readily without dread or regret
- Learn how to recognize and express your emotions more openly
- Accept what you cannot change
- Feel more mental clarity
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Depression, Grief & Loss Benefits

- Elevate your mood and begin to experience more pleasure in life
- Re-vitalize your energy
- Reduce your hopeless and pessimistic attitude
- Feel more enthusiasm and passion for your interests
- Look toward the future with more hope and optimism
- Enjoy interactions with friends, co-workers and loved ones
- Sleep better through the night
- Increase your sexual appetite and pleasure
- Lose or gain weight as needed
- Become more organized and productive
- Put an end to death wishes
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Anxiety & Panic Benefits

- Reduce painful feelings of anxiety and panic
- Overcome fears and worries that dominate and limit your lifestyle
- Reduce compulsive behaviors that interfere with your life
- Reduce repetitive obsessive ideas that keep you entrapped
- Decrease your daily worries and tension
- Feel more comfortable in a variety of settings
- Stop feeling aroused, nervous and on guard as frequently
- Reduce flashbacks, recollections and dreams about frightening past events

- Stop feeling restless, fatigued, irritable and tense
- Eliminate needless suffering
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Sleep Benefits

- Gain control of your sleeping pattern and routine
- Get enough sleep to recharge your energy
- Sleep soundly through the night
- Fall asleep easier and more rapidly
- Feel more energetic and less fatigued during the day
- Restore your physical stamina and alertness
- Experience a more upbeat and positive attitude toward work and life
- Stop over-sleeping
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Life Change and Transition Benefits

- Transition to your next phase of life successfully
- Overcome daily challenges and stresses associated to transitional changes
- Move past overwhelming experiences toward a renewed life
- Deal with loss, tragedy, set-backs and unexpected events more effectively
- Make the desired changes you hope for
- Overcome the daily pain, struggle and anguish related to change
- Stop resisting inevitable and necessary changes
- Begin to welcome and view change as a positive and desirable experience
- Move past barriers and blockages to necessary change
- Flow with inevitable changes you have no control over
- Look ahead toward a better and more gratifying life
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Purpose, Meaning & Self-Identity Benefits

- Feel more secure, stable and proud
- Improve your self-esteem and self-concept
- Feel more grateful for what you have and who you are
- Discover more meaning and purpose in your life
- Overcome obstacles and barriers that hold you back
- Liberate yourself from dysfunctional commitments, relationships and repetitive thoughts
- Reduce your negative inner “self-talk” and automatic self-criticism
- Increase the strength of your positive “inner voice”

- Become more self-directed and free
- Stop the pain and struggle related to your gnawing uncertainty and doubt
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Interpersonal & Social Benefits

- Enjoy your social interactions more
- Correct your misconceptions about how others view you
- Learn how you affect others
- Discover that you are more likeable and capable than you believe
- Learn new social skills to improve your social comfort
- Become more assertive to take care of your needs and wants
- Feel less needy, dependent and unattractive
- Withdraw from unhealthy relationships that keep you isolated
- Stop feeling so self-conscious and lonely
- Feel more significant and worthy as a human being
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Love & Intimacy Relationship Benefits

- Increase the intimacy and love in your relationships
- Feel understood, worthy and loveable
- Become more courageous in your pursuit of a lover
- Uncover the barriers that impede finding a mate
- Decide what you will not tolerate in a relationship
- Overcome your fears and negative self-worth
- Start dating again with less anxiety and frustration
- Enjoy more intimacy, connectedness and pleasure in your love relationship
- Re-build trust that has been lost
- Feel more self-pride and gratitude
- Get more love and personal needs met from your partner
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Sexual Benefits

- Re-build trust and courage to try again
- Stop being withdrawn, avoidant and ruled by fear
- Re-build the passion and spontaneity
- Open your mind to new sensations and possibilities
- Bust out of boring and repetitive sexual patterns
- Put an end to needless worry, shame and negative anticipation

- Re-ignite your desire and engage in sex more frequently
- Re-awaken your sexual energy and body pleasure
- Get erotically turned-on and sensually fulfilled more often
- Experience more intense and prolonged pleasure
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Marital & Partner Conflict Benefits

- Cease the aggressive behavior and hostile verbalizations
- Feel safe and more relaxed again
- Stop living in fear of confrontation
- Protect yourself and your children from persistent harm and terror
- Stop instigating, blaming, bickering and arguing
- Get back in control and stop being a perpetrator-victim couple
- Get more of your needs and wants met
- Become better role models for your children
- Decide to stay or leave the relationship
- Start a re-uniting process with hope for your future
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Affairs & Infidelity Benefits

- Work through the shock, shame and crisis
- Prioritize your needs and decide your limits
- Decide whether to stay or leave the relationship
- Re-build your relationship and get past the affair
- Start effective, sincere and courageous communications
- Find out what needs and wants have been unmet in your relationship
- Envision and work toward a new possible future
- Protect your children from the chaos, fear and anger
- Start a recovery process with or without your partner
- Build effective relationship skills to restore intimacy
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Relationship Doldrums & Apathy Benefits

- Enrich and re-vitalize your love relationship
- Re-awaken love, excitement and joy
- Put an end to boredom, despair and hopelessness
- Feel more appreciation and respect for your partner

- Engage in more fun and intimate activities together
- Re-ignite your sexual desire, pleasure and frequency
- Share more openly without fear of criticism
- Feel more attractive, secure, alive and hopeful
- Demonstrate a positive marital relationship to your children
- Work through difficult problems and impasses to resolution
- Forgive your partner for their flaws so that they can forgive you for yours
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Chronic & Terminal Illness Benefits

- Decrease stressors magnified by your illness
- Reduce the number of flare-ups and medical symptoms
- Feel less fear and dread about your illness and future
- Reduce behaviors that contribute to your condition
- Re-set your life priorities and goals
- Reduce physical symptoms that are triggered by stress
- Stop isolating yourself and feel more desire to socialize
- Feel listened to and supported
- Learn how your emotions and beliefs impact your chronic illness
- Get back in control to manage your life and symptoms
- Cope better with the demands, complexity and stresses associated to your illness
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Men's Issues Benefits

- Build upon your existing strengths, pride and positive qualities
- Learn how to interact with men and women more effectively
- Discover what it really means to be “courageous”
- Stop feeling responsible to “fix” things for others
- Expand your ways of being and behaving
- Learn how to identify, communicate and express your feelings more effectively
- Become more of what you'd like to be
- Build stronger and more gratifying bonds with friends, co-workers and family members
- Put an end to being isolated, solitary and alone
- Overcome depression, disappointments and poor self-esteem
- Stop feeling guilty if you haven't been heroic and successful
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Family Benefits

- Open up more communication
- Improve sibling relationships
- Reduce hostilities and conflict in the home
- Identify your mutually agreed values for your family
- Follow and maintain your values in your home
- Stop blaming and scapegoating individual family members as the problem
- Increase joy and pride in the family
- Feel more grateful, cohesive and supportive as a family
- Develop functional roles for all members in the family
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Highlight the Top Benefits You Seek

Now, review the benefits and results that you checked off or wrote down in the list above. You may have marked many. However, you will probably be able to focus on accomplishing only a few of these goals at a time. So, choose only 3 top benefits that you'd like to achieve. Limit your selection to your 3 most burning goals. These can now become the three outcomes or results that you have targeted for yourself. They represent the most important benefits for you and/or your partner or children.

Write-in the Top 3 Benefits you'd like to work on and achieve below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Congratulations! Now you have highlighted the three priority goals that you would like to work toward in psychotherapy. Keep these in mind and put in effort to reach them.

Summary

Although reaching goals and attaining benefits cannot be guaranteed in psychotherapy, they can be strived for. Some may be easier and faster to achieve than others. To attain your desired results takes a cooperative effort on the part of the patient and the therapist. There is no other way to succeed. To increase your likelihood of reaching your goals, you must be results-driven and prepared to make changes. Expect to struggle at times in order to create lasting shifts in your life.

Hopefully this prioritized list of your Top 3 Benefits helped you to focus on the most important results that you would enjoy realizing in psychotherapy.

Recommended Reading

In this article, I addressed the types of benefits that you may derive from psychotherapy. I have another article for you to read that explains what it takes to successfully reach your therapy goals. The title of that handout is *Success Factors in Psychotherapy*. I encourage you to read this other article because it complements this article. You can locate it in my website under the “**Resources**” web page. There, you will also find a number of recommended Books on various topics related to specific problems and issues that you may be facing. Acquiring knowledge often makes it easier to accomplish desired changes and builds insight into the issues that you struggle with.

In addition, you may also review the questions and answers on the “**FAQ**” (Frequently Asked Questions) web page on the website. There, I address a number of questions about the psychotherapy process and experience.

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