

***Success Factors in Psychotherapy***  
***at***  
***The Resiliency Center of Santa Barbara***

by

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Psychologist



***THE RESILIENCY CENTER  
OF SANTA BARBARA***

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**Psychological Solutions to Improve Your Quality of Life**

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## Introduction

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Psychotherapy is a health treatment designed to: resolve psychological problems; reduce stress and uncomfortable symptoms; change behaviors and perceptions; and increase well-being. It is a focused method in which I help patients work on seven aspects of themselves: Self, Behavioral, Social, Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual. In treatment, I work with individuals, couples, groups, parents and families. Although I am trained in a number of treatment approaches and specific problem areas, I am not able to treat all psychological problems. I have my professional limits.

There are a large number of patient factors or determinants that facilitate successful treatment in psychotherapy. I will focus on presenting you the ingredients that I believe are the most important contributors to reaching a successful outcome with me.

If you have these abilities or strive to practice them, then you are more likely to reach your treatment goals and improve your quality of life. You will not utilize all of these factors or qualities. However, the more you engage in a wide variety of these determinants in and out of therapy, the more likely you will get the benefits and results that you are hoping for. You may already have some of these qualities. Others you will need to strengthen and experiment with.

Review the list of success factors below and determine which ones you want to focus on when participating in therapy. I encourage you to take risks and to try new ways of communicating and making adjustments in your life. By taking risks, experimenting and purposefully allowing yourself to be uncomfortable, you will probably realize the gains you desire. If you are interested in some of these factors but are unfamiliar with them, during one of our sessions please ask me to explain them in more depth.

Personal change is always a challenge. Be prepared for some turmoil, pain and fear as you try new behaviors. Change usually takes courage and effort before developing a lasting effect. Psychotherapy is a valuable and unique opportunity to transform your future life experience. So, take full advantage of it.

## 25 Success Factors that Help You Reach Your Therapy Goals

There are many different ways you can think and behave that will assist you in psychotherapy. If you want to improve your life, you need to commit to regularly utilizing some of these strategies in treatment. I have personally distilled these qualities down to 25 prioritized factors that will aid you to attain your favored outcome. If you commit and focus on some of these 25 factors, I feel assured that you will receive valuable benefits.

All of these Success Factors are important and powerful. However, you must choose those that work for you. They are not presented here in order of importance.

## Choose the Success Factors You Want to Use

**\*\* Please check off any factors that may work for you in psychotherapy.**

- Be vulnerable and courageous by taking risks to disclose humiliating secrets and shameful thoughts, feelings and behaviors that are difficult to reveal
- Be deadly honest and forthright, no matter how difficult
- Expect and commit to struggle and work hard on your issues and goals
- Put in effort to fight against harmful habits and strive to replace them with healthier behaviors, thoughts and beliefs
- Prepare before each meeting to focus on significant current issues and experiences in your life to discuss in therapy
- Take time after each session and between sessions to contemplate and write notes about your feelings, thoughts and issues that we have discussed and you are wrestling with
- Have faith in yourself and the treatment process; expect a positive outcome
- Accept who you are and what life dishes out
- Come to each session regularly and on time
- Pay your bill as agreed
- Value and carefully consider the issues that we discuss
- Express your feelings openly and directly
- Follow our agreed treatment plan to achieve your goals
- Take responsibility for the direction and intensity of your sessions
- Develop a visionary image of the future you want to strive toward
- Confront and explore issues head-on, no matter how difficult
- Muster all your will-power and assert it to initiate changes
- Let go of unhealthy relationships, behaviors and assumptions that hold you back

- Test and challenge your personal limits, strengths, courage and power
- Persevere and don't give up on yourself or your goals
- Ask for help to overcome emotional obstacles and mental barriers
- Be grateful for small incremental changes and progress
- Be willing to periodically suffer and struggle as the price of change
- Recognize and reward your victories and successes
- Differentiate between your "needs" and "wants"

\*\*\* Save this list for future reference.

## Your Top 3 Success Factors

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Now, review the success factors that you checked off in the list above. You may have marked many. However, you will probably be able to focus on using only a very few at a time. So, choose only your top 3 success factors that you'd like to focus on. Limit your selection to your 3 most burning factors. These can now become the three determinants that you have targeted for yourself. They represent the most important success approaches for you pay attention to. Over time, you can implement and master others. Eventually you will be using a number of methods to escalate your desired changes.

**Write-in the Top 3 Success Factors that you'd like to utilize below:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Congratulations!** Now you know what to focus on now to successfully engage in psychotherapy.

## Summary

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We reviewed some effective patient success factors in psychotherapy. By exercising and reminding yourself of these factors, you will achieve more in treatment. If you master some of these qualities or strategies, you can transform yourself, improve your quality of life, and generate new future possibilities.

Always remember that you need to take risks to change. You must earn a transformed life. That means you need to start doing things differently. You must put in personal effort to create shifts and develop a new life. No single healer, doctor or psychotherapist can change you with their personal power, insight or magic. However, they can inspire, help and guide you. But they cannot do the work for you. You must actively participate. Treatment is a cooperative effort.

What worked for you in the past may not work for you today or in the future. What delivered you here will not deliver you there. You must let go in order to reach out for the next thing. And, you probably already know what to do, but you aren't doing it.

**Isn't it time to start taking action so that you can improve your life?**

## Recommended Reading

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In this article, I presented the success factors that you can leverage when actively engaged in psychotherapy. I have written an additional article that explains what benefits, results and outcomes you might strive for in psychotherapy. The title of that article is *The Potential Benefits of Psychotherapy*. Go to our “**Resources**” web page to read or download it.

There, you will also find a number of recommended Articles, Books and Website Links on various topics related to specific problems and issues you may be facing. The more knowledge you acquire often makes it easier to accomplish desired changes. Build insight and understanding 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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**Revel Miller, Ph.D.** is a clinical psychologist, consultant and business coach committed to helping people clarify and achieve their personal goals.

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