

Important Questions to Ask Marriage Counselors

People considering marriage counseling should learn to ask questions to learn about the therapist's training and value orientation. Hopefully, the information is already contained on the therapist's website. Also, they can ask a therapist on the phone or in the first session the following kinds of questions:

“Are you a Christian?” “Do you purposely include Christian faith and principles in your counseling?” “Do you pray with your clients?” “Do you use the Bible as part of your counseling?” If not, then consider going elsewhere.

“Can you describe your background and training in marital therapy?” If the therapist is self-taught or workshop-trained, and can't point to a significant education in this work, then consider going elsewhere.

“What is your attitude toward salvaging a troubled marriage versus helping couples break up?” If the therapist says he or she is “neutral,” or “I don't try to save marriages, I try to help people” look elsewhere.

“What is your approach when one spouse is seriously considering ending the marriage and the other wants to save it?” If the therapist responds by focusing only on helping each person clarify their personal feelings and decisions, consider looking elsewhere.

“What percentage of your practice is marital therapy?” Avoid therapists who mostly do individual therapy.

“Of the couples you treat, what percentage would you say work out enough of their problems to stay married with a reasonable amount of satisfaction with the relationship.” “What percentage break up while they are seeing you?” “What percentage do not improve?” “What do you think makes the differences in these results?” If someone says “100%” stay together, I would be concerned, and if they say that staying together is not a measure of success for them, I'd be concerned. If they do not mention at least Jesus and the Gospel as important differences for results, I'd look elsewhere.

Remember, this is *your* marriage and you have the right to ask questions that are important to you about the kind of counseling you are going to receive from your counselor.