

Therapy, Counseling, and Coaching for Boys and Men

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Therapy, counseling, and coaching can be of enormous benefit to boys and men. Why? All of these activities have a common focus and that is the welfare of the individual being helped. When a highly trained person in the helping professions works hard with a client, good things can happen for the client. A positive outcome is good for the client and also provides career fulfillment of the practitioner.

Men have an assortment of, very human, difficulties but they often feel very uncomfortable asking for help. They may feel elevated levels of the common distress emotions of anxiety, depression, or anger and do not know why these feelings are so strong or what to do about them. Anger is one of the few emotions that many men feel free to express—like the knothole in the wall where feelings flow through. So, the anger often indirectly expresses other things like fear, sadness, and low self-esteem.

Men usually do not grow up, like women, talking to their best friends about their feelings or the feelings of their friends. They often do not have the words or methods of doing this. Male singers are one of the few groups that are permitted to express themselves emotionally. I grew up as a male athlete—it is great training for life as in “get up when you get knocked down”, “play as a team” and “work hard” but not for learning to be emotionally expressive.

We all have problems; that is part of being human. I like the phrase “In the morning, if you don’t have problems it means you are dead!” The inability to address problems constructively is when things can get serious. Being unable to accept accurate feedback about oneself means that problem solving gets delayed. Learning to hit a baseball while blindfolded makes it so much more difficult in part because the person can not correct his errors through feedback. One of the reasons addictions are so destructive is because the normal feedback loops get distorted.

There are many admirable male traits like being strong and tough, risking oneself to care for others, providing economically for one’s

family, becoming very accomplished, and being able to go it alone. Yet, these traits also make it hard for men to seek out and use help like therapy, counseling and coaching.

Therapists help men understand themselves and help them improve their lives.

I have worked with many men over many years and have enjoyed these working relationships. Being able to manage people better at work, being helped through painful loss like divorce or losing a job, being a better intimate partner, having less constant anxiety-depression-anger, learning how to be a great father. These kinds of things can make men's lives richer and more fulfilling for themselves and those around them.