



# The Institute of Family Living

## GP PSYCHOTHERAPY AT IFL

Here at IFL, four general practitioners offer marriage and family therapy with a "family systems" approach and also provide medically-oriented "GP psychotherapy."

As biological beings, our emotional state is influenced by how our brains work in terms of chemical and neurological processes. Therefore GP psychotherapy includes taking a medical history of our counselling clients. We ask about a client's medication, drug or alcohol use, exercise habits, and so on, since all these things can influence one's emotional state.

We use the fourth edition of *the Diagnostic-Statistical Manual* as a guide to classification of mental states. Most conditions listed in the *DSM-IV* have a biological component. Our assessment may lead to a clinical diagnosis of depression or other mood disorders, anxiety, psychosis, eating disorders, substance abuse, etc. During the evaluation, we determine if we can provide treatment to the client or if they should be referred to another mental health provider such as a psychiatrist or addiction therapist.

In each case, we assess the need for medication and discuss any potential side effects with the client. We also discuss the length and benefits of psychotherapy. For example, cognitive-behavioral therapy and interpersonal therapy have proven to reduce the risk of a recurrence of depressive episodes. Anxiety disorders can be improved with the use of relaxation techniques.

In addition, IFL's physician-therapists usually address the spiritual aspect of mental disorders. Most clients appreciate our raising this issue since spirituality is very much a part of who we all are as human beings.



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