

## When Is It Time to Consider Counseling?

At some point in everyone's life, we face situations that test all of us emotionally and psychologically. While many issues correct themselves with time and a strong support system, there are other times when an issue may become overwhelming and seemingly unable to be resolved. These are the times when professional mental health counseling can help.

Seeking counseling for a mental health issue that is affecting you or someone you love is a sign of courage, love, respect and hope.

How do you know when to seek professional assistance? Here are some simple guidelines:

1. Signs of withdrawal. This can include withdrawing from friends and family, intentionally refusing to take part in regular activities that used to be commonplace, refusing to eat, excessive sleeping or insisting on extended periods of solitude. If thoughts or questions about suicide or whether life is worth living begin to arise, it's time to seek professional counseling as soon as possible.
2. Depression. It is normal to feel sad or "lost", especially after experiencing a loss or separation in your life. Grief is a normal part of the healing process. However, in some people, the sadness does not resolve itself and becomes deeper and harder to ignore. Professional support can help you work through your feelings and begin to heal and see the world through a new lens.
3. Abuse behaviors. Often people who are experiencing feelings of being overwhelmed or out of control will turn to other "crutches" to help them cope. This could include alcohol, drugs, food, sex or excessive physical activity. Addiction and/or compulsive behaviors can come on quickly, or sneak up on you over a period of time. When it gets to the point where you cannot stop the behavior despite knowing the damage it is doing to you physically or emotionally, or to those around you, it's time to seek help.
4. Unresolved trauma. In many people, there are experiences that have happened that were so bothersome or overwhelming, they were "tucked away" and hidden in their memories. Often without consciously realizing it, these memories result in behaviors and actions that can be detrimental in everyday life. They can show present themselves through abusive behavior, chronic illness or relationship problems. Talking with a therapist can help bring this hidden issues to an understanding and acceptance that will allow individuals to move forward.

Counselors at LCFS are just a phone call away at 414-536-8333.