

Ask Your Boyfriend/Husband to Try Couples Counseling

Please don't force anyone into therapy

You can do a soft sell, let them see you in counseling and that it does not hurt and that you have made improvement and have not become dependent. If he does not want to come to counseling, consider a DVD, Workbook or book together. That way he feels a bit more in control. If you see my site, show the YouTube of my office and me welcoming, the articles on my website can be helpful, show him the style. He might recognize that I deliberately set it up so that men feel comfortable. It is important that women feel comfortable, as well, so I make it work for both of you.

Sadly, some counselors are more focused on just one of you. That rarely works.

Wording to Try

1. "It is time for us to go to counseling as a couple. We are really affecting the children and I know how much you love them and would do anything for them. Let's go and see what he has to say. The kids need us to turn this around. Besides, this guy says he is really pro-marriage, that he fights for a marriage until it is dead."
2. "I have been unhappy for awhile. I have made some changes in my life and I still cannot seem to reach you. I need you to know that I want to stay together and I am not sure how much longer I can stay with you if we are not working on this together. I sometimes think that my feelings, my preferences don't matter to you and that means we would have to be done. I want to know that I can rely on you. Again, I want to stay with you, if you are willing to do your part to improve the relationship. It is time for us to schedule an appointment with a couples counselor. We have waited long enough. Do you want to call or shall I?"
3. "I have been looking for couples counselors for us. I have a male counselor and a woman counselor. Which would you prefer we go to? I have their websites so you can look at how they work. If you would like to call them first and interview them, that would be okay with me. If you want to listen to a presentation of theirs, we can do that on-line right now. We need a tune up so we can keep our relationship together. Let's do it before it is beyond repair."

4. "I have been interested in couples counseling for awhile. I have this guy who sounds more like a relationship consultant than a counselor. There are some good articles on his website that would be helpful. Let's go see him a couple times and see if he works for us. I would like to get in before it is too late and it is getting awfully close to that for me."

Thoughts to consider

Roughly 30% of the people in therapy are men. If you include people who are forced into therapy, the number is substantially higher.

Many men simply do not like therapy/counseling or the stigma they believe is attached. So they do not go. Some women have told me that they feel the same way. By the way, we men don't go to doctors, either. When we do, we do not do so well there. This article is not about women, it is about men. Please excuse the exclusivity.

How do you get someone to do something that is in their own best interests? How do you get them to see that it would really help?

First, counseling with me is rarely what the guy thought counseling was. They saw TV shows that scared them about counseling.

They may think that counselors are going to make them weak or just talk about feelings or do the psychobabble.

Most guys appreciate knowing what they are in for.

I suggest they talk with me and read my website to get a flavor of who I am and how I work. I suggest they go at their own pace and try me out, test me and then make a decision. There is no rush. It **takes serious courage for a man to walk through the doors and hand over hard earned power** to a complete stranger. Many women have told me this makes no sense to them, but the guys always get it.

Second, when they get here, **I am really straightforward with them**, which they appreciate. They know where they stand and what is expected of them in the process.

Couples counseling means the problem is with us as a couple.

Men tend to assume that individual counseling means they are the problem and that everything would be fine if they were “fixed.”

Third, feelings are simply not the focus.

Results are the focus.

If we need feelings to get the results, we then teach about feelings. (By the way, try getting promoted at work if your people skills are not acceptable. You will reach a place where the emotions, regulating them, knowing them and being able to communicate them are vital.)

Fourth, they focus on practical things such as **problem solving**. It is very research based, not touchy feely.

Skills are what they depend on, not the therapist.

Fifth, they simply can recognize that they are welcome.

I do not hold men in contempt.

I ask a lot of men and I do it in a direct manner. I know men can be better husbands, partners and fathers and I challenge them to create a life they want to live.

Sixth, I honor the struggle of men.

While men often have it easier than women, our existence is not easy.

Seventh, I make sure that I speak in “guy” when I am talking. I am fluent in both “guy” and “woman” so I do a fair amount of translating.

Guys really appreciate this.

Most guys do not have a clue what women are saying and why they are saying it. This is painfully obvious in counseling and I help them understand, which helps them get closer to you.

Eighth, I give homework. Men appreciate spending as little time in counseling as they can (at least at first).

When I give homework, I am shortening the time they have to spend in this awkward world of counseling.

They are doing something; they know the expectations and they can be successful in it. They are not dependent on a therapist or counselor.

The National Institute of Mental Health wanted to reach more men and came up with a campaign featuring the following: ***It takes both courage and brains to ask for help.***

The VA offered a twist ***It takes the courage and strength of a warrior to ask for help.***

Give us a call and schedule that appointment. No more excuses. 585.544.5342