

LEE BERNARD PGDip

COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Couples Counselling

AREAS OF FOCUS

Communication

We work on what is said, how it is said through voice tone, body language, conscious and unconscious cues and gestures as well as what is not said. I also analyse how information is received. 'Understanding', it is said, solves all problems, which for a successful couples relationship relies on an effective interface; the giving and receiving of information rather than restriction and deflection which prevents relationship growth and development. This area of focus will assist in balancing communication flow ensuring both individuals are strongly expressing themselves to each other. This ensures 'difference' is embraced, rather than suppressed and 'reciprocity' rather than compromise is an active element of the relationship.

Meeting Needs

We work on what is said, how it is said through voice tone, body language, conscious and unconscious cues and gestures as well as what is not said. I also analyse how information is received. 'Understanding', it is said, solves all problems, which for a successful couples relationship relies on an effective interface; the giving and receiving of information rather than restriction and deflection which prevents relationship growth and development. This area of focus will assist in balancing communication flow ensuring both individuals are strongly expressing themselves to each other. This ensures 'difference' is embraced, rather than suppressed and 'reciprocity' rather than compromise is an active element of the relationship.

Context and Commitment

We work on ascertaining a joint understanding of the fundamental meaning and value of the relationship to each individual; a relationships value can be primarily physical in nature, or the value could be to serve as a distraction and a preoccupation to escape the challenges of life; therefore a romance. Or, it could be to commit and build something far more substantial over the long term with someone, to gain a sense of belonging of ones own; that is separate and better than the environment (family) that one was raised.

A misalignment or misunderstanding here between the couple gives rise to confusion, doubt and concern regarding the perceived level of commitment. These difficulties can be further impacted by the over involvement of others outside of the relationship; friends, family and colleagues. The work here is to analyse the context of the relationship until clarity and consensus is gained. The couple either gain a confident and clear commitment to invest and work on developing the relationship from a realigned understanding of the relationship or, agree to amicably uncouple and work to a planned (emotional, physical and practical) permanent separation.

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Sex and Sensuality

Here we work on an understanding and resolving the underlying cause of physical dissatisfaction and unfulfillment in the relationship dynamic. Issues relating to commitment, communication and meeting needs can be the cause of losing what was once a fulfilling physical relationship and these aspects are explored. However, difficulties with arousal and sensuality can also be caused by physical, psychological, physiological, and spiritual factors; as well as being relational rooted and therefore all of these areas are explored. The aim of the work is to improve understanding, confidence, desire and bring about a more fulfilling sexual and sensual aspect to the relationship dynamic.

Change of Circumstance

Here we work on supporting a relationship to manage and work through the tension placed on it by a significant impact; this could be a promotion opportunity, a redundancy, a geographical move away, a pregnancy, a death or retirement. Whatever the change might be, the bedrock of the relationship will be, or, already has shifted that creates uncertainty and vulnerability that might be difficult to talk about and navigate through.

I facilitate the couple to make sense of what is taking place, work through and gain clarity on the meaning and priorities for both in an unthreatening way whereby both individuals can regain a new understanding of certainty. The outcome is either to stabilise and reset the foundations of the relationship with a new normality or to support the couple to come to terms with a separation and sensitively work to bring the relationship to a close.

Monogamy and Affairs

The work here is to establish what has taken place and how the relationship has been impacted. Sometimes an affair can be the wake up call the relationship needed or it can be the final straw for one or both of the individuals; coming to couples therapy, this may be what we first need to establish. What is certain, with the relationship at stake, this will be an incredibly sensitive and difficult time for both individuals and whilst the pain can't be taken away it can be given meaning. If the relationship is to survive and thrive then we must establish the trigger and the cause which can be due to unfulfilled expectations, unrealistic ideals, boredom, lack of excitement, unavailable partner, lack of sexual desire, unresolved family trauma, problems with emotional expression and intimacy.

Identifying and working on the cause of the affair places power and control back into the hands of the couple and with this understanding we can begin to establish a new framework for a relationship that can be committed to, and invested in for the longer term. It is also sometimes the case that identifying and working on the causes of the affair leads to a realisation that a new framework for a relationship cannot be found and we decide to work towards an uncoupling and a permanent parting; one whereby that supports both individuals to move forward into single living with clarity, strength and confidence.

GET IN TOUCH



THAXTED, ENGLAND, CM6 2FX
UNITED KINGDOM



L.BERNARD1@ME.COM



LEEBERNARDCP.CO.UK



07947563305