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HEALING PARTNERSHIPS BY RICHARD J. CLOFINE, DO

Developing a healthy relationship with therapeutic caregivers brings good things into your life. Finding care that suits you is not always an easy task. Once accomplished, the benefits are many. I encourage my clients to develop multiple layers of healing support. As a holistic physician, I like to expand options for supporting their growth. For the purpose of this article I am going to discuss professional therapeutic relationships. Professional implying that there is a monetary, or other, exchange for the services provided. So I am including all interactions with physicians (Medical, Chiropractic, Naturopathic or Osteopathic; Homeopathic, etc) therapists, counselors, bodyworkers, nutritionists, energy healers (and all other healers, of any variety, that I certainly don't want to leave out.). These relationships may or may not be sanctioned by the state (through licensing, etc.).

Often times patients and I discuss their satisfaction with the caregivers they see. When I hear people express particular satisfaction, I have found that the relationship contains certain qualities that define it as a Healing Partnership. The criteria that define a Healing Partnership are not about the specialty of the practitioner. It is an archetype that crosses boundaries of specialty, culture and politics. While influenced by consensus reality, it really is about the relationship between two individuals.

I'd like to define some qualities of Healing Partnerships. If these qualities are recognized in the relationship, then I feel fruitful healing work will come out of it. Probably no healing relationship meets all these criteria. This is not a checklist; rather it is more about general qualities. Here are some things I often find present in Healing Partnerships:

HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP

Healing partnerships are just that, a partnership between two people. Working together toward a common goal in this case creating health. Traditional medicine was about vertical relationships with the physician above dictating orders to the patient below. Healing Partnership are about working together and sharing power.

REVOLVES AROUND YOUR STORY

The work is focused on your personal story. It is not a cookbook method; you could read the cookbook yourself! Your evaluation and intervention is designed around the unique story that is you. Utilizing the benefit of consensus common knowledge (e.g. medical knowledge) helps to guide what is done. But the decision of what to do is made by YOU.

YOUR LIFESTYLE CREATES HEALTH

Care that fits this archetype continually tries to refocus attention to our day-to-day lifestyle: how we eat, sleep, exercise and experience emotions for example. The daily baseline circumstances of our physical, emotional and spiritual worlds have the greatest impact on health over a lifetime. Healing Partnerships seek to empower US to transform dysfunctional aspects of lifestyle and self.

THE PRACTITIONER IS LISTENING

If your story is not being heard then care cannot revolve around your needs. If you feel that the practitioner is not hearing you, they probably aren't.



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PROPER EXPECTATIONS

The practitioner provides you with some framework of what to expect from your work together. If instituting a new therapy, it is helpful to understand what is a reasonable trial period before expecting results. If something takes a month to work and you are expecting results in 2 days, you will be very dissatisfied. Also clear expectations of approximate financial and time commitments are very reasonable expectations.

SERVICE, NOT PRODUCT, ORIENTED

Tests and products are extremely beneficial when integrated into a healing program. Most importantly, any program should be about empowering you make positive changes in your life. Beware of any practice that seems to revolve around selling products. Practitioners providing products through their office (such as supplements) can be a great benefit to their clients. This service can often save clients a lot of time and money preventing confusion about what they should use.

AYNI (Sacred Reciprocity)

“Today for me, tomorrow for you”; Quechua speaking Andean peoples understand the sacred relationship between people and between people and the natural world. Giving and receiving allows flow of energy to occur. Giving without receiving causes emptiness. You can give more if you are receiving because you are just making more room to be filled up.

EXPLAINS OPTIONS AND AVOIDS DOGMA

Optimizing your healing journey includes expanding options for care. Having more tools to work with is a good thing. This needs to be balanced with focus so that the work isn't too scattered. Any time something is presented dogmatically as “the only way” options are immediately limited. This leads to a path of resistance. Spirit based approaches are receptive to choices. This expands opportunity and works best walked as a path of surrender.

ENCOURAGES THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER HEALING PARTNERSHIPS

Most individuals benefit from many layers of support and should actively cultivate this in their lives. Friends and family can do things a therapist can never do for you. And a therapist may help you in ways friends and families are unable to. Develop a webwork of support in your life nurturing you on many levels; body, mind and spirit.

Work with your healing partner will generally take place over long periods of time, months to years. They are relationships that often develop into friendships as well. The intensity of the work often waxes and wanes depending on the flow of life circumstances. At first it is useful to do more frequent and intensive work. As issues resolve and transform, the work may lighten; only to once again naturally intensify at a later date. The ebb and flow usually is a reflection of inner and outer circumstances of the individual's life. When there is more turmoil, the work is more fruitful and frequent. When things are more stable, the work is less. Occasional maintenance is a good thing, regardless of circumstances. That's called preventative medicine and is an opportunity to utilize intuition. Then you can be proactive in creating health, rather than just reactive. Safe Journey!