



Counseling Individuals Who Are Taking Psychiatric Medication

Additional Notes:

Many counsees will be taking medication when they come to counseling.

- a. CDC statistics 13.2% were taking an antidepressant.
- b. NIMH statistics 1.7% were taking antipsychotic medications.
- c. 11.4% of US children aged 13-17 take ADHD medications.
- d. 4.4% of US adults aged 18-44 are diagnosed with ADHD and treated.
- e. 19% of US adults in any year may be labeled with an anxiety disorder and treated.

I. It is likely that many whom come for counseling will come with a DSM5 label and taking medication. How should we respond to both?

A. Case history:

1. 40-year-old female came with labels of depression and Anorexia Nervosa.
2. She had been hospitalized three times and was taking three medications.
3. Her first question was could she quit taking them.

B. How to approach this situation and offer hope.

1. The counselee has come to counseling because her current medical regimen has not solved her struggle.
2. Always keep in mind that this person is suffering.
3. Do not engage in arguments about the validity of the labels. Note them.
4. Ask the counselee what behavior, thinking and emotions were involved in assigning the label.

**Additional
Notes:****II. Sorting through the labels.**

- Always remember the counselee you see is likely to be suffering!
- I will never call anything a disease that the Bible calls sin.
- I will never call anything sin unless the Bible clearly does.
- I will always look for pathology to support the diagnosis.
- Humility is essential when sorting things out: James 2:12-13

III. Apply Biblical principles to the thinking, behavior and emotions present.

- Deal with their suffering: Psalm 13, John 11.
- What is the goal of the counselee's thinking behavior and emotions?
- Help them move to the primary goal of Christian living: 1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Corinthians 5:9, Matthew 22:37-39, John 14:21, John 13:17.

IV. Medication: right, wrong or neither.

- Taking medicine is a Romans 14 Christian liberty issue.
- Not spoken of in Scripture.
- We have the privilege to choose in the context of all of Scripture.
- We should always keep in mind the effect our choice may have on others.

V. How should I answer a counselee who asks if they should stop their medication?

- Biblical counselor should never encourage counsees to stop medication.
- We should not be giving medical advice. Refer the counselee back to their doctor.