

# *We Need Counselling!*

*By Dr. Peter W. Kujtan, B.Sc., M.D., Ph.D.*



There are things that some fellows have real trouble stomaching. Formal psychotherapy or counseling is one of those. Guys view counseling much like they do driving. They would sooner wander aimlessly for hours rather than admit to being lost and ask for directions. The admonition seems to provoke pain in the primordial “I’m always right” center of the brain. Guys encounter a similar nausea when told that they **MUST** go see the doctor or therapist. Echoes of “no one can tell me what to do” and “depart to a devilishly warm place doc!” abound at the mere mention of counseling. The trick lies in how you define the subject. The difference between guys and gals in approaching this delicacy is often merely superficial. Counseling is a journey into exploring your inner self, examining your own feelings and learning to communicate for the resolution of differences. A true therapist will never utter a judgmental comment. Rather, the experience is one of reflecting your own feelings and viewing them from other angles. This alone can enhance communication and understanding. But therapy comes in many shapes and sizes especially for the guys.

Take my group for example. Yes, that’s right I admit that I attend informal therapy sessions. My sessions are rather ritualistic. They take place in the cold of night at massive rock temples specifically built for the sessions. My group consists of men only, but I have personal knowledge of women only groups involved in similar therapy sessions. It is rare for the session to commence before sundown, but at the same time it quite informal. There are a few rules though. To enter, each member carries a hand decorated wooden staff and carefully places it next to the entrance. Then, as funny as it sounds, it is customary to disrobe completely or at least into ones underwear. Next it is essential to find a comfortable spot on one of the primitive wooden benches that line these caverns. All the worldly goods that you carry with you must be displayed on the floor in front of you for all to see. That is when the magic begins. Free-thought association begins from within the gathered group members. It is amazing what strangers come up with when sitting in their underwear. We share our inner most feelings and thoughts about the world, ourselves, our friends and even about the nature of relationships. We may not be able to solve all the problems in the world, but by gosh I think we came close on an occasion or two. Everyone is encouraged to participate. It is understood that no information can leave the hallowed cavern. Somehow this experience lifts great burdens, eases guilt and can build self-esteem. But, it doesn’t end there. Once the great roar ceases, we adorn our ceremonial warrior suits and retreat to the great arena attached to the caverns. Here, mock battles are enacted with great speed using the hand carved staffs that we brought. It is simply a way of expending the enormous energy that was created in the therapy session. It all ends in a ritualized cleansing of the body with cold water. We then adjourn to share an elixir specially prepared for such events. The experience is invigorating for both the body and the soul. Best of all, it is relatively inexpensive and easily accessible. In one form or another, these types of men’s support groups have been around for millennia. I recommend it for any guy who thinks counseling is not for him. It may resemble a pagan rite of passage, but I call it Men’s Hockey! No lock outs here!