

Do You Need Help in Your Relationship?

Specialist in couple, marriage and family therapy, Dr Christina Pillai explains what you can expect from couple, marriage and family therapy and how you can benefit from it.

Recognised as one of the best relationship counsellors in the country, Dr Christina Pillai is known for her intimate approach at handling patients with psychiatric and emotional related dilemmas. Dr Pillai graduated with a Psy.D (Doctor of Psychology) in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) from Alliant International University, USA. She offers her advice on how couples can improve their relationship with one another from these therapy sessions.

1 What are couple, marriage and family therapists?

Couple, marriage and family therapists (CMFT) are relationship specialists who treat individuals, couples and families. CMFT focuses on repairing, rebuilding and restoring relationships. They take a holistic approach to healthcare and treat from the perspective that "relationship matters."

CMFT prioritises on how individuals in our society choose partners, establish households and form family groups. They are concerned with the overall, long-term wellbeing of individuals, couples and families. CMFTs assess, diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders, and other health and behavioural issues to achieve more adequate, satisfying and productive relationships, marriages and social adjustments.

2 Why use a couple, marriage and family therapist specifically?

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated the effectiveness of couple, marriage and family therapy in treating a full range of psychological and emotional disorders and health problems. Adolescent drug abuse, depression, alcoholism, obesity and dementia in the elderly, as well as marital distress and conflicts are just some of the conditions CMFT effectively treat.

They are often able to treat a patient's condition quickly to resolve problems or reduce symptoms in the shortest time possible—a prime reason so many physicians refer patients to a CMFT. However, some patients require more intensive, long-term treatment to relieve various psychological and emotional conditions.

Patients who are treated by CMFT are more productive at work, have better co-worker, family, marital and partner

relationships; improved emotional and overall health, and social life and community involvement.

Those who have received this therapy have better socially acceptable behaviour, increased self-esteem, better tolerance for society in general, and increase capacity for intimacy, work, maturity and responsible functioning. This ultimately results in less unnecessary utilisation of medical services as well.

3 When should a couple or family seek couple, marriage or family counselling?

Couples therapy is recommended as soon as discontentment develops in the relationship. Couples usually wait until the situation becomes dire before seeking help. According to studies, the average couple wait for six years of unhappiness before seeking help. Couple's therapy should not be taken as a "last resort" to save your marriage or relationship; go seek help as soon as you can.

Many couples seek therapy to enhance their relationship by keeping it healthy or learn to navigate through relationship and marital terrains. These couples develop the skills that free them to thrive in the future and help create goals to improve their relationship. However, if a couple has decided to separate, they can still pursue couple therapy to end the relationship amicably and respectfully.

If you have an unsettled family argument or you need someone to mediate among family members, family counselling may be beneficial. Since family dynamics can vary, each situation may be different. Counselling can include couples therapy, parent and child therapy, individualised therapy or alternating therapy sessions between different family members.



DR. CHRISTINA PILLAI COUPLE, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY CLINIC

No 1, Jalan SS26/2 Block A, 2nd Floor Mayang Plaza, Taman Mayang Jaya, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Enquiries: +6012-822 8667
P-02-3A, Tropicana Avenue, Persiaran Tropicana Golf & Country Resort, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Enquiries: +6011-2145 8702 / +016-266 1095
Website: www.drchristinapillai.com