

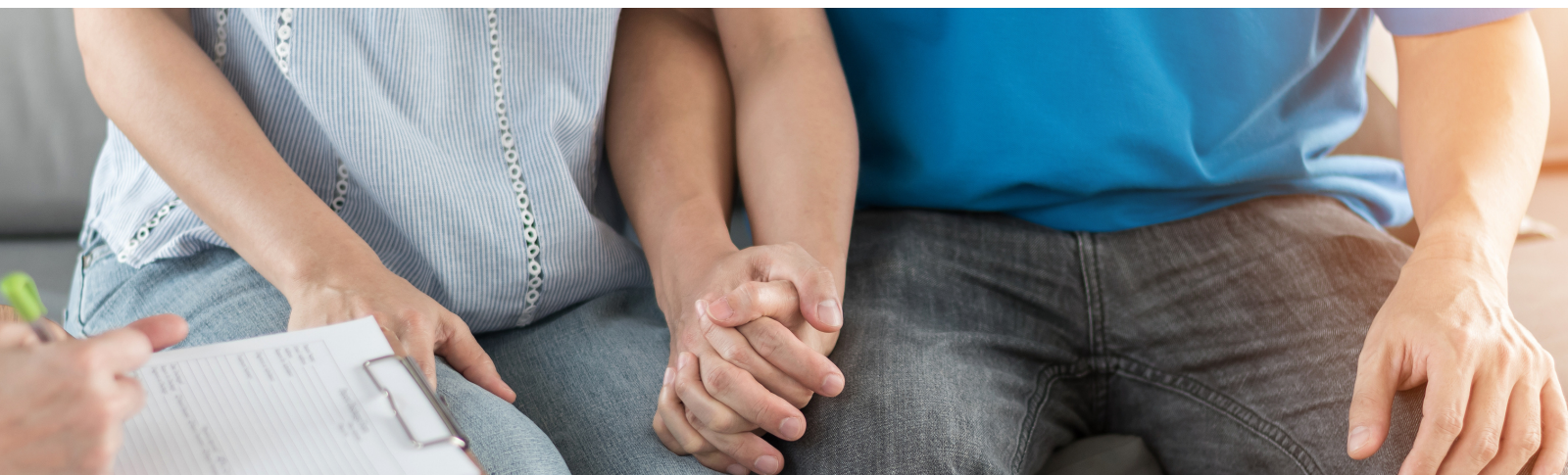
OUR PRINCIPAL PSYCHOLOGIST CARMEL BOB
TALKS US THROUGH

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR FIRST COUPLES SESSION

Your first couples therapy session may feel quite daunting. There is so much to say and one of you may be feeling overwhelmed and the other shutdown. You may feel aware of your difficulties and yet feel unable to communicate those in words. You may feel defeated by the pattern that has developed between the two of you. You may be feeling hopeless and confused by your relationship. Your couple therapist is skilled at helping you to find the words to describe your relationship difficulties and also to see your relationship strengths. You may have seen a couples therapist previously and not found the experience helpful. One of you may want to seek couples therapy and the other partner may not. This is the way that many couples present in their first session.



Prior to your first session you will be asked to complete some questionnaires your responses will give your therapist some baseline information regarding your relationship. Within the first few minutes of your session your therapist will introduce herself to you and tell you a little about how couples therapy works. At this time she will ask about previous couples therapy. You don't need to recall the model of your previous couple therapy. Your therapist knows many therapeutic modalities so she will be able to determine what form of therapy you received previously. She will ask what was helpful and what was not. This introduction helps to calm and educate couples and helps your therapist begin to understand your unique relationship structure.



Next she will ask you about your relationship concerns each of you will be able to speak uninterrupted about how your relationship distress is impacting on you and on your relationship. Your couples therapist will listen intently and ask questions to help her understand your experience. Your therapy session will explore your relationship style in detail and give you a greater understanding of your couple relationship dynamics. You will start to understand how the way you grew up and the relationships that you were familiar with as a child and young person continue to affect your present adult relationships. Your initial session will leave you with a clear understanding of the work that could be done to help your relationship and the state of your relationship in the present time. Your therapist will teach you to recognise when you are escalating into unhelpful patterns. She will show you how to reduce these.



At the conclusion of your first session your therapist may give you an indication of the number of sessions to achieve your goals or she may recommend that you try a number of sessions and reevaluate goals at that time. This will be done in collaboration with the two of you.