



Senior Peer Counseling Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS)

What is senior peer counseling program?

Our program offers confidential counseling services to seniors who are facing the challenges of aging. Trained and supervised volunteer counselors offer emotional support, guidance and empathy to people from the age of 50 years and up who may be facing the stresses of illness, loss of spouse or friends, isolation from family and friends and other life transitions.

Why does peer counseling work?

Peer Counseling works because the client is paired with a counselor who is old enough to have lived through and survived some of the same life events. Often talking to someone who is a peer with similar experiences, values, wisdom and common sense can help individuals work through feelings or make decisions about difficult life issues.

Where do counseling sessions take place? And how much does it cost?

Peer counseling takes place in a variety of places – in the client’s home, in group settings, as well as, in our professional counseling office. Peer counseling services are charged on a sliding scale basis for individual counseling.

What is the typical profile of a peer counselor?

The typical peer counselor is a caring, compassionate person with good listening skills combined with a desire to help others and a willingness to work with the senior population and their families.

What are a few examples of how peer counselling has helped?

Over the over 30 years, we have helped seniors in the Santa Barbara area live better quality lives. Here are a few examples of how our peer counselors have made an impact:

“Helen” in her late 90’s was unhappy with the quality of medical care she was receiving but was afraid to speak up. She was helped by her peer counselor to enroll in Medi-Cal and received a needed hearing aid and care from a dermatologist. Her outlook improved dramatically. Helen celebrated her 100th birthday with her “Over 90’s” support group.

“Thank you seems like too small a phrase for all the help you were to my mother and me during her last years. We could never have made it without your help. I was still working and was not able to be with her during the day. My mother always looked forward to talking with you. Plus, your help in getting her the right medication advice was invaluable to us.”

“Rita” had lived in an abusive marital relationship for many years. When her husband became ill and died, she felt guilty over the relief she felt, and also felt guilty for now doing things her husband had forbidden. Through the help of her peer counselor, Rita was able to work through her feelings and realize she was a worthy person. She has now been able to establish new and rewarding relationships.

“Steve” at age 90 felt depressed and helpless. His son was developmentally challenged, needed care and he discovered his daughter was addicted to drugs. Through assistance from a peer counselor he was able to better face his situation, take steps to deal with the challenging problems he had and move past his depression.