

## **Pelvic Floor Dysfunction and Emotion**

By

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If you are reading this there is a good chance that your health care professional (physician, nurse, physical therapist) has recommended that you consider counseling to improve your pelvic floor functioning. Counseling can be a valuable part of your health care solution to alleviate your pelvic floor symptoms, improve pelvic floor functioning, and decrease the associated stress.

You might be thinking that your health care team is saying that your pelvic floor problem is “all in your head.” The truth is that your mind (“head”) is connected to your body or in other words your mind is not separate from your body. Your brain is literally connected to your body by your nervous system. What happens in your brain, including thoughts and emotions, can be felt or experienced in your body and what happens in your body is experienced in your brain. Sometimes the best way to treat a physical problem is to work with both your physical symptoms and functioning, and your mind. This mind body connection is well known in health care and is experienced by all people. Studies have shown that the majority of people’s physical complaints presented to family practice physicians involve mental stress and are best treated with a combination of medical care and psychological counseling. So you are not alone. Counseling along with physical therapy, biofeedback, and other medical care may help speed up your recovery, improve your pelvic floor functioning, and improve your life.

### **How Does Counseling Work?**

Stress contributes to physical and mental dysfunction. Counseling, often called the “talking cure”, can help the mind and the body work together leading to improved health. When you start working with a counselor, he or she will help you understand the different stressors you are experiencing. Then, you will be taught several specific techniques to better handle each stressor. These methods include different ways of thinking about things that may bother you, learning how to express your feelings accurately, changing behaviors that may make stress worse, learning new behaviors to decrease stress and improve body functioning, and improving your relationships with people important in your life.

Counseling, also referred to as therapy or psychotherapy, involves some investment of your time. Typically you will meet with your counselor more frequently than you do with your physician. The frequent meetings are necessary for you to learn new ways of thinking and to change behavior. Humans learn through repetition and through this repetition your brain develops new neural pathways that result in lasting change. Counseling literally facilitates changes in your brain that directly affect how you feel, think, and act. Others will notice too!

## Who Does the Counseling?

At River City Clinic your counselors are highly educated and trained professionals from the fields of psychology, clinical social work, marriage and family therapy, and counseling. The following are definitions of each profession.

**Psychologist:** A psychologist holds a doctorate degree in psychology. Their training is focused on theory and research methods and clinical therapy and counseling. They perform psychological testing, and diagnose and treat the full range of mental and emotional disorders with a variety of therapeutic techniques. Psychologists are required to complete several years of supervised practice before becoming licensed.

**Clinical Social Work/Therapist:** Clinical social workers hold master's degrees and have completed two years of supervised practice before becoming licensed. They diagnose and treat the full range mental and emotional issues. Clinical Social Workers may use a variety of therapeutic techniques.

**Marriage & Family Therapist:** Marriage and family therapist hold a minimum of a master's degree specializing in family and interpersonal dynamics. They treat individuals in the context of family relationships, addressing issues from anger and resentment to intimacy and communication skills.

**Counselor/Therapist:** Counselors hold a master's degree in counseling or another related field and complete two years of supervised practice. They use a variety of therapeutic techniques to treat emotional and mental health problems.

At River City Clinic we have several professional staff members who have been working closely with your urology clinic. Please feel welcome to review the biography's provided for you or visit our website at [www.rivercityclinic.com](http://www.rivercityclinic.com). Additionally, please feel welcome to contact our staff if you have any questions. We look forward to being part of your continued care and helping you improve the quality of your life.

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Mark P. Hansen, Ph.D is a licensed psychologist and CEO and Clinical Director at River City Clinic. Dr. Hansen also maintains a full time practice specializing in treating adults (18 and up) with individual, couples, and group psychotherapy and counseling.