

***A Better Way Center for Wellness***  
Doreen Van Leeuwen, M.A., LMFT  
“Together, we make your life better.”  
**951-847-7742**

To all prospective clients:

Thank you for contacting me about counseling services. What often leads people to call is the feeling that something hurts, maybe hurts quite a lot, in their lives. This could stem from issues like poor communication with a family member, job stress, or problems adjusting to a recent trauma or loss. There are a wide variety of life stressors that can create pain, and obtaining the right kind of support is a crucial first step on the road back to your wellness.

Since this may be your first opportunity to seek counseling, I'd like to tell you a little about myself, and about how the counseling process works.

*Credential* I am a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), a certification that the State of California gives upon completing:

- \* at least a Master's degree level of education
- \* 3000 hours of supervised practice hours of counseling, and
- \* written and verbal board examinations

To maintain that license, LMFTs must take a minimum of 36 hours of professional training every two years. I typically *triple* that minimum to provide you with the most current methods of treatment available.

*My specialty* Although I have 26 years of experience with many issues, my passion is working with couples! In September 1999, I was certified as an Imago Relationship Therapist, and since then, have worked with couples in hundreds of sessions to repair and transform their connection. I feel more and more passionate about helping partners work through those difficulties that keep them from experiencing the closeness and joy that I think are **truly** possible in intimate partnership. A committed relationship is a sacred bond, and, together with you, I will work in every way possible to help you restore your relationship wholeness. (You can check out more at [www.imagorelationships.org](http://www.imagorelationships.org).)

*Counseling Experience* Since licensure in January of 1986, I've spent many years in private practice. In addition, I co-directed a chemical dependency recovery center for five years, and am knowledgeable with many aspects of the addiction process. I taught court-ordered anger management classes for five years, and received certification as a Domestic Violence Counselor. I have taken Level 1 and 2 training in EMDR, (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). This is a cutting edge therapy designed to heal the memories of disturbing events in peoples' lives, and has gained much success in treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I completed 21 hours of training in DNMS, (Developmental Needs Meeting Strategies), a newer approach to treating

attachment disorders. I am certified in CISM (Crisis Intervention Stress Debriefing), and have assisted numerous companies in handling on-site psychological trauma.

*About the counseling process* When you arrive at my office, you will fill out information about yourself, including a questionnaire that asks you to describe why you are currently seeking help. We will discuss fees, insurance, policies regarding confidentiality, and other pertinent matters. I will answer any of your questions about treatment as they come up.

The first session is a time for us to get acquainted with each other, and to determine if we are a “good match”. On occasion, we may discover that you would be better suited to a different provider, and I will do what I can to facilitate a referral. However, since I do screen clients before the initial contact, my usual experience is that we will agree to a course of treatment together. After the first one or two appointments, we will draft a treatment plan together, and evaluate it from time to time.

I frequently give in-between session assignments, because much of the value of therapy happens **between** appointments. These assignments are generally due at our next appointment. I tailor these assignments to the needs of my clients, because everyone travels at a different speed. But, the more faithful you are in attending sessions and completing assignments, the sooner you will experience positive results!

*About my being a Christian as well as a counselor* As a life-long Christian, my thinking, feelings and actions are governed by that set of values and beliefs. While I will never “push” my beliefs onto you, I may invite you to think about the spiritual dimension of your own concerns, because I do believe it matters. Also, if you would like to include prayer as part of the therapeutic hour, I am both comfortable and experienced with that. You will be included regularly in my own private meditation.

Finally, I applaud your decision to “reach out and call someone” to assist you in whatever life struggles you are facing. Whether we have already scheduled an appointment, or you are still searching for the right therapist, please call if you have more questions. May you find the peace and joy you are searching for!

Yours truly,

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