

# ILLUMINATION PSYCHOTHERAPY



SHINING A LIGHT WITHIN

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## MIRROR REFLECTION

Have you ever noticed how much easier it is to help someone than it is to do it for yourself. Resumes come to mind for me. I could help my friends and co-workers write up a dazzling resume extolling all the great skills they have and what makes them an incredible employee. Then, I sit down to do my resume and just stare at a blank page – what is it that I am good at again? It is easier to see things clearly when you are looking through the window of someone else’s life than it is when you are looking around at your life. Somehow, when we sit in our own lives, we see what we know and expect. We do not have the distance to look in a window into our lives, like we can with friends’ lives. This is also true when it comes to our mental health. One great result of therapy is that a therapist can help you see the full picture with clear eyes.

When we look through a window into our friend’s life, we do not have the history, expectations, patterns, and experience of the friend. We have fresh eyes that can take in the picture without the view being obscured by these things. In our own life, we each have a veil of history, expectations, patterns and lived experience that can cloud how we see our lives, including how we see any mental health concerns we may have.

Our lived experience is what we know. Our childhood, our parents, our relationships, our trauma form the basis of what is life. How we treat ourselves, how we treat others, what we expect from life. We establish patterns in reaction to or because of this overall experience. It becomes second nature, the fabric of our world and the veil we look through.

That veil can obscure how we approach our mental health challenges. One example could be you are feeling depressed because you keep finding the wrong person to date. You are concerned that there are there only bad people out there. You go to therapy to process the impacts of these bad relationships on you, including the feeling of depression. In examining your unique life story, the fabric of your world, a therapist help create that window view into your world by holding up a metaphorical mirror for you to see the whole picture. Looking in the mirror, you may begin to see that these relationships keep happening because the people you are choosing fit a pattern of your experience about a partner (maybe seeing it in your parents or reflecting how you were treated by people you loved in the past).

The mirror reflects the whole picture back to you, much like when you look through the window into your friend’s life. The reflection helps to lift the veil of your experience clouding your vision. Working collaboratively with a therapist, you can clearly see what is impacting your life. With the insight you gain from a clear view, you can start to employ skills, tools and strategies that target the whole issue and help you live the life you want for yourself.