

next while not always realizing that we need to change the thinking patterns that nourish negative behaviors. In this regard, family therapy or counseling is necessary. Knowledge of issues at several generational levels help counselors locate the point in the family life cycle at which a particular family system may be wedged. Counseling focuses on altering those negative behavior patterns that fuel the present problems.

Participation in counseling services should occur only on a voluntary basis. This allows the individuals seeking services to be in control and responsible for the decisions they make thus producing positive change in the area of their lives where it is needed. However, there are cases when individuals do not willingly participate in counseling services. In these cases, they may be required by schools, courts, police, and even their families to participate. The purpose of participating in counseling services should always be discussed as well as the expectations of the counselor and the consumer. A negotiated contract on counseling duration and goals should be obtained and reviewed regularly to assess an individual's progress.

There are many issues for which a person may seek counseling including, but not limited to, depression, anxiety, drug and/or alcohol addiction, teen pregnancy, divorce, unemployment and resulting financial difficulties, physical illness, mental trauma as a result of a natural

disaster, and death of a loved one. No matter what the issue is, counseling services can help individuals find solutions to their problems or help them find ways to cope with their concerns until change occurs.

Jesus Christ himself sought the counsel of the Father when He was agonizing about his upcoming crucifixion in the Garden of Gethsemane. He simply stated, "I would that this cup be removed from me. But not my will, but Thy will be done." Jesus knew what He had to do, but in His human state He sought the counsel or guidance of God the Father. If Jesus sought counseling, why don't we? Job 12:13 states, "With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding." We should follow these examples and seek counsel thus changing for the better. May God bless you and keep you always.

Kenya Lashane Crawford
Bachelor of Science in Psychology
(Mississippi State University-December 1998)
Masters of Science in Counselor Education
(Mississippi State University -December 2001)
National Certified Counselor
Licensed Counselor for the Intellectually and
Developmentally Disabled
Psychologist (Mississippi Department of Mental Health
-Ellisville State School-Lowndes County Division)

