About RIO!

Many of us think in terms of problems (i.e., what we don’t like about ourselves, what’s wrong with our lives, etc.) and forget to focus on what we actually want in our lives. It is almost as if we believe that erasing the unwanted parts of our lives would leave us with no problems. **Simply reducing pain does not guarantee pleasure.** This is why it is important to create a clear vision of what we want in our lives.

RIO is specifically designed to help you get a better idea of what you want to change and how to get there.

The main goals of RIO are to give you tools to recognize your concerns and to develop a clearer idea of what you want to change in your life.

Everyone in the world has issues that they struggle with. RIO is appropriate for **anyone** wishing to gain a deeper knowledge of their own thought patterns and blocks, whether they are participating in counseling or not.

RIO presents a set of strategies and exercises to help you look at issues in a new way, and to help identify more helpful ways of dealing with issues.

Examples of issues RIO can help with: stress, perfectionism, self-esteem, anxiety, depression, comparing self with others, getting along with roommates/family/friends, relationship issues...

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**What is RIO?**
RIO is a 3 week workshop that focuses on Recognition, Insight and Openness. It was specifically designed to help people with their emotional concerns. Each topic gets its own week to give you time to fully understand how each concept applies to you and practice with the exercises.
Why does RIO use a 3-session model?
Teaching RIO over the course of three sessions allows you sufficient time to understand the concepts with time to practice in between sessions. Keeping it to 3 weeks allows you to find time in your busy schedule to learn RIO.

What if I need more than 3 weeks to learn the model?
You are not alone. The skills taught in RIO are difficult and take time to build. Feel free to complete RIO more than once. There are no limits to how often you can join a RIO workshop (though you can only join one at a time and must commit to finishing it).

What if I don’t feel comfortable in groups?
Many people feel a little anxious about the idea of participating in a group. RIO is structured and curriculum-driven, like a classroom. You may find that you feel comfortable enough to share some of your reactions to the tools and topics in the seminars, and this allows all the participants to learn and support one another. However, you are not required to speak to the entire group if you do not feel comfortable doing so. You can still benefit from the information presented. The RIO facilitators respect each participant’s right to share only what they are comfortable sharing and never require you to share sensitive or potentially embarrassing information about yourself.

What if I have a problem that’s hard to define?
This is one of the ways RIO can be particularly helpful. Because it is designed to get you better in touch with your own experiences and goals, RIO may help you define what it is you are looking for. Most problems have several ways to understand them and even more solutions. It’s hard to know how to solve a problem until you really know what is going on (and that is one of the goals of RIO).

What if I have a mood disorder that is probably the result of a biochemical irregularity?
Even with an identified mood disorder, such as Major Depression or Bipolar Disorder, change-oriented approaches
can be very helpful. Improving our ability to recognize our experiences will enhance our ability to identify mood episodes. The earlier someone with a mood disorder is able to accurately determine when a mood episode is happening, the more efficient that person can be at managing that mood episode. Plus, research suggests that various psychotherapies change the brain in positive ways, even when there is a biochemical irregularity (e.g., Beauregard, 2007; Kumari, 2006; Linden, 2006).

What if I am survivor of a traumatic event?
While no one can change events that have already happened, we can learn to become more aware of how these experience impact us today. We can learn to listen to the stories we tell ourselves about what happened, the evaluations that we might apply to ourselves or others, the feelings and bodily sensations associated with what happened, and how our behaviors and actions have been affected. By staying true to our experiences instead of trying to control our thoughts, feelings, and sensations, we can often achieve a more fulfilling life, even in the face of traumatic events.

What if I have an urgent need to see a counselor during RIO?
Simply let the RIO facilitator or The Counseling Center front desk staff know and they will facilitate you getting the help you need.

What if I want to get to the origin or “root” of my problem?
Many people believe that if we only knew the root cause of our problems then we would have the solution to the problem. Although it is true that our behaviors (including thoughts and feelings) are directly related to our personal experiences, it is not necessarily true that just identifying the root cause guarantees our current behaviors will change. There are many factors that maintain behaviors in the present situation or environment. RIO is designed to help you get in touch with some of these present factors. (If you feel that getting to the origins of your concerns is essential for your change process, we can recommend a variety of alternative options, including referrals to mental health providers that specialize in this type of therapy.)