



Annabelle Sikes

Baldwin Park resident Colette Fehr opened her couples counseling business in the area in 2020.

RELATIONSHIP RESTORATION

Baldwin Park resident Colette Fehr helps couples through tough times through her local counseling business.

ANNABELLE SIKES
NEWS EDITOR

Baldwin Park resident Colette Fehr is using a negative experience in her life to help improve others.

Before her divorce in 2005, Fehr and her first husband began marriage counseling, a decision she says may have ended the relationship once and for all.

“When I had kids and our mar-

riage hit some really difficult places, we sought out marriage counseling, and it was actually more harmful than helpful,” she says. “We had such a bad experience in counseling, and in retrospect, I actually think had we had good help, and I’m not blaming the demise of the marriage on the therapist, but had we had better help, I think the marriage could have been saved.”

Instead of dwelling on the past, Fehr has chosen to move forward with her own counseling private practice where she works exclusively with couples from her office in Baldwin Park.

PRIVATE PRACTICE

Fehr opened her counseling practice in 2013 in Winter Park before moving it to Maitland. During the start of the pandemic, she moved to Baldwin Park in 2019.

“I loved it so much, really, truly, from the moment we moved here,” she says of Baldwin Park. “I love the combination of being so well located in relation to Winter Park but also downtown. It’s such a suburban neighborhood feel, and I really have gotten to know my neighbors and their families. ... Very quickly, I knew I wanted to move my office to Baldwin but it was all about waiting to see if an office would become available in the area.”

In 2020, Fehr opened her office in Baldwin Park.

Fehr is ICEEFT-certified in Emotionally Focused Therapy, which is the gold standard in evidenced-based treatment for couples, as well as EM-DRIA-Certified in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, which is used to treat trauma and relational loss.

Fehr offers an integrative approach to couples therapy that draws from attachment theory, neurobiology and developmental psychology. Her work is based on specialized training in multiple methodologies that include: EFT, the Gottman Method, the Developmental Model, Encounter Centered Couples Therapy and Internal Family Systems.

The private practice offers couples counseling, premarital counseling, discernment counseling and closure counseling.

“I always knew that I wanted to try and help people preserve their relationships,” she says. “I’m not trying to get people to save their marriage if they don’t want to. There’s a million reasons relationships end, and sometimes, that’s really OK. As a society, we need to get away from thinking a relationship ending is a failure.”

Although a majority of her clients are older than 35, Fehr also sees younger couples and even has seen people in their 70s.

EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Even though it’s sad anytime a family or a marriage doesn’t work out, it really was the impetus for her career, Fehr says.

She has now been happily married to her husband, Steve, for seven years.

When she compares her negative therapy experience to what she has learned through the years, Fehr does not believe the person she saw was adequately trained in working with couples.

"I really, truly feel honored that people trust me with their relationship because you're joining people," she says. "It is something I take very, very seriously and hold with the greatest respect. Your primary romantic relationship as an adult is the most important relationship in your life, and we know that human beings are wired for attachment, and we need to be closely connected to other people to feel safe and secure in the world."

Fehr knows maintaining the balance between work and life is important. Although she says it has gotten easier over the years, she utilizes resources such as groups with other therapists, where they talk, share and process, as well as works with another therapist with whom she consults regularly to talk about her cases.

Self-care is also essential to the

balance. Outside of work, Fehr enjoys writing, exploring acting as a hobby, trying new restaurants, traveling and spending time with her family.

COUNSELOR CREATION

Fehr, 49, was born in New York City and grew up in Rye, a small suburb outside Manhattan.

She attended an all-girls Catholic school before pursuing a college degree in English and History at Tulane University, where she met her first husband. They married shortly after graduating college and moved to Orlando. They have two children: Charlotte Jones, now 21, and Curran Jones, now 19.

After the divorce, Fehr decided to go back to graduate school and pursue a master's degree in counseling at Rollins College.

Before her bad experience with therapy, Fehr had never considered it as a career choice. However, looking back, she remembers playing the role of family counselor during her own parent's divorce.

"I know I've always been drawn to people, connecting with people, understanding what makes people tick," she says. "I just had never re-

ally thought about it. I think if it had been on my radar, I probably would have pursued it earlier."

Having an entrepreneurial spirit for the majority of her life, Fehr says she likes the flexibility of having her own practice and doing her own thing. She makes her own appointments, answers inquiries, has developed and learned business skills, and holds a high standard of customer service inside and outside of the practice to maintain the quality of the work.

Although Fehr would like to complete goals such as developing as a writer and possibly writing a book, as well as expanding on her acting capabilities, she also says she sees herself doing her counseling work forever.

"There aren't many pathways where women as they age are valued more, but with counseling, I can continue to do the job as long as I live, as long as I still have the mental capabilities, to keep my mind sharp and help as many people as I can," she says. "I love it. It's never boring. It's heartwarming, and there's way more good to it than bad. That's something you don't see enough of in the world, and I feel lucky to be doing it."

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