

The Enneagram as an Optional Tool

A lens for personality patterns, never a requirement.

Optional means optional

The Enneagram can be a helpful map for understanding personality patterns, motivations, defenses, and paths of growth. Some people find it immediately useful. Others do not resonate with it at all.

That is completely okay. For some people, the Enneagram feels too abstract, too spiritual, too "woo woo," or simply not relevant to what they are looking for in therapy. It is never required. A person does not need to know their type, identify with a type, or use the Enneagram in order to do meaningful therapeutic work.

A lens, not a label

When it is useful, the Enneagram can help identify recurring patterns in how a person seeks safety, love, control, competence, approval, peace, freedom, or belonging. It can help a person see the habitual strategy they may use to manage life and protect themselves from pain.

Used well, it is not a way of putting people in boxes. It is a way of helping people notice the box they may already be living inside.

Questions it may help us explore

- What does this person habitually seek?
- What do they habitually avoid?
- What feels threatening to their sense of self?
- What strength has become overused?
- What deeper longing may be hidden beneath the personality strategy?

Held lightly

In depth-oriented work, the Enneagram can support movement from ego fixation toward ego flexibility. It can help a person recognize when a once-helpful strategy has become too small for the fullness of who they are becoming.

The person's lived experience matters more than any system. If the Enneagram helps, we may use it. If it does not, we leave it aside.