

READING

FIRST THERE WAS **SPEED DATING**
THEN **SPEED FLATMATING** ... AND NOW ...

SPEED SHRINKING:

A THREE-MINUTE CURE?



- 1 New Yorkers are famous for spending more time with their therapists, or 'shrinks', than with their friends. Whether that's true is open to debate, but with the arrival of speed shrinking, they'll find they have more time left for their personal life and more cash left in their pockets as well.
- 2 'You only have three minutes to say your problem and get advice,' said Andu Novac, the first person I spoke to when I arrived at my first speed-shrinking event. 'That's so you don't waste time going into detail.'
- 3 In the newest variant of a format that seems to be inspired by speed dating, participants have the opportunity to seek the advice of eight different therapists, each providing a three-minute session. Speed shrinking is the brainchild of Susan Shapiro, a professor of journalism who has also written a book on the subject. Shapiro stumbled across the idea a few years ago when she herself was looking for a new therapist and found a way to try out several of them at minimal cost.
- 4 This evening's event, held in a university lecture hall, is free and has attracted a long queue of people hoping to find a quick cure for their emotional quandaries. Many of those attending are unwilling to talk about their worries to anyone but the therapists, but problems seem to run the gamut from broken relationships, to anxiety about work and money, to general depression, as well as a variety of phobias. Advice tends to be succinct and practical, as suits the format.
- 5 'I'm really unhappy in my job,' Novac tells therapist Adrian Jones. 'I wish I'd become a painter, but now I feel stuck in this position I have at a bank.' 'Follow your dreams,' Jones tells him. 'You may end up poorer, but you won't have the regret of not doing what you really want to do.' Jones's advice hardly seems original, but Novac says he is satisfied. 'I liked his style – he seemed to understand and care,' explains Novac. 'I'm actually looking for a new therapist and this is a great way to try out eight of them in a short time.'
- 6 That's actually why many therapists take part in the event, Jones tells us. 'This is a great source of new clients. And it's a good way for me to advertise my new book – I just have it on the table in front of me and refer to it during my sessions.'
- 7 Some of those seeking advice aren't entirely happy with the format. 'People near me can hear what I'm telling the therapist,' remarks Donna Bersch. 'I feel self-conscious.' But with the loud buzz in the room that sometimes reaches the level of shouting, it's hard to imagine that anyone could actually eavesdrop on another session. Sometimes, they're lucky to be able to hear the person sitting opposite them!

1 A Read the heading and tick the best summary, a), b) or c). Then read the article and check.

- a) It's about a service where overweight people can lose weight quickly.
- b) It's about a service where people can get advice from a therapist in a short time.
- c) It's about a service where people get help making their lives simpler.

B Match the people 1–4 with the roles a)–c).

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--------------|
| 1 Novac | b | a) therapist |
| 2 Shapiro | | b) client |
| 3 Jones | | c) founder |
| 4 Bersch | | |

C Are the statements true (T) or false (F)? Underline the words/phrases in the article that helped you.

- 1 New Yorkers prefer to spend more time with their therapists than with their friends. F
- 2 Shapiro works at a university.
- 3 In speed shrinking, the therapist gets paid cash.
- 4 A lot of people don't want to tell the reporter what their problems are.
- 5 Novac thinks that Jones's advice is disappointingly unoriginal.
- 6 Many of the therapists participate in order to get more business.
- 7 Bersch doesn't like how noisy it gets sometimes.
- 8 People sometimes can't hear each other because they talk too softly.

D Find words in the article to match definitions 1–8.

- 1 the way that something is organised or designed (paragraph 3)
format
- 2 idea or plan that one person has thought of (paragraph 3)
brainchild
- 3 found by chance (paragraph 3)
stumbled across
- 4 difficult situations where you cannot decide what to do (paragraph 4)
emotional quandaries
- 5 strong unreasonable fears of particular things (paragraph 4)
phobias
- 6 clearly expressed in a few words (paragraph 4)
succinct and practical
- 7 a job in a particular organisation (paragraph 5)
university lecture hall
- 8 secretly listen to another person's conversation (paragraph 7)
eavesdrop

VOCABULARY

PERSONALITY

2 A Correct the mistake in each phrase.

- 1 I don't know why you say he's down-~~on~~-^{to} earth, ~~c~~
- 2 I never plan what I say, I'm very spontaneously
- 3 Fabio tends to keep himself in himself. I don't see much of him because
- 4 My colleague Bill is a real person person,
a) and other people seem to think I'm quick and wit because of that.
b) you can tell he enjoys company because he's such a good laughter.
c) I think he's a real computer gawk and he's not very practical.
d) he arrives at work early and leaves early - he's a morn person and I'm not.

B Match the sentence halves.

GRAMMAR

DIRECT AND INDIRECT QUESTIONS

3 Make the therapist's questions with the prompts.

- 1 Why / you / come / see / me / today?
A: Why have you come to see me today?
B: I keep getting headaches.
- 2 What / these headaches / like?
A: _____
B: Absolutely terrible.
- 3 What / cause / the headaches, / think?
A: _____
B: Mainly thinking about money.
- 4 What / think / about / moment?
A: _____
B: That clock.
- 5 that clock / remind / you / anything?
A: _____
B: Yes, money.
- 6 Why / that?
A: _____
B: Because I'm paying by the minute! Let's stop now.
- 7 OK. / How / like / pay - / cash / credit card?
A: _____

4 A Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first. Use between two and five words, including the word given.

- 1 Could you introduce us to the director? **WONDER**
I wonder if you could introduce us to the director.
- 2 How much did your camera cost? **CAMERA**
Do you mind me _____ cost?
- 3 What do you do exactly? **TELLING**
Would you mind _____ do exactly?
- 4 Is it really worth upgrading to the new smartphone? **WHETHER**
I'd like to know _____ worth upgrading to the new smartphone.
- 5 Which platform does the Eurostar train leave from? **TRAIN**
Can you tell me which platform _____ from?
- 6 What will he do when he discovers the mistake? **DO**
What do you _____ when he discovers the mistake?

B 1.1 Listen and check. Then listen and repeat, paying attention to the polite intonation.

WRITING

AN ADVICE FORUM MESSAGE; LEARN TO EDIT FOR ACCURACY

5 A Read the forum question and reply below. Use the correction code to mark the mistakes and then correct them.

Correction code:	sp = spelling
v = verb form	p = punctuation
gr = grammar	wo = word order
ww = wrong word	st = style



JUSTINE

Can anyone helping ¹ _____? I've just got my essay to write about personality but the articles I've found are too difficult for me to read. Then I realised the real problem is my poor vocabulary. When I reed ² _____ quickly I can't understand the real meaning of the article and the only way I can understand it is by using my dictionary all the time. I'm reading so slowly it's going to take me about three weeks to finish the writing ³ _____.

What can I do about my English vocabulary? I'm worried so ⁴ _____.



MARTA

Justine, keep calm? ⁵ _____ I know what you mean. The first time I wrote an essay in a foreign language, reading was the most difficult thing and the most difficult part of reading was vocabulary. The first thing to do is discuss the problem with your tutor. The next thing is to obtain ⁶ _____ a good English-English dictionary. I joined a language-learning community. I joined the group ⁷ _____ with a similar problem and we all helped each other with our vocabulary. Try it!

B Write a reply from Justine to Marta (120–150 words). Thank her for her suggestions, say which you think are most useful, which you will try and what other ways of learning vocabulary you are going to try.