

# Beginning therapy

## What do I need to know when looking for a therapist?

- Finding a therapist can be difficult. Resources such as the counselling directory and the British Psychological Society (BPS) list registered practitioners. Finding a therapist that is registered and accredited can be important as it means they have met standards set by governing bodies such as the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) or the BPS.
- If you are unable to afford private therapy, a google search of community counselling services could provide you with the names of free services within your local area.
- It is helpful to know the type of therapy you are looking for (For a more in-depth guide to different forms of therapy, check out my guide here). This can be difficult if it is your first time attending, there are several different types of therapy available. Cognitive behavioural therapy is a time limited, goal oriented and focused form of therapy. Person centred therapy is a client led form of therapy, allowing the client to explore their feelings in a safe and neutral environment. Psychodynamic therapy is a form of therapy focused on exploring unconscious content in a client's mind to reduce distress. Integrative therapies are trained in a number of different approaches and tailor the therapy to combine elements of different modalities that best suit each client.



## How do I go about making a first appointment?

- Many therapists have their contact details listed on directories mentioned above. You can contact many therapists by sending an email or making a phone call. It is helpful to provide a brief outline of the reason you are seeking therapy, the frequency of therapy you would like (weekly, fortnightly etc) and your availability.



### What should I know before attending my first appointment?

- Attending a first appointment can bring on some anxiety. Once you have the address of your therapist, it can be helpful to visit the address before the appointment, so you know where you are going.
- The first appointment can be emotionally draining, it can be helpful to have the rest of your day free to rest.



### What will happen in my first appointment?

- In the first appointment it is common for the therapist and client to create a contract, agreeing how long you will work together, the limits of confidentiality and any other important issues.
- The first session is an opportunity to get to know the therapist and make sure they are the right fit for you. Just as we relate to different people in our everyday life, we relate differently to therapists. If you find that during your first visit you are not comfortable with your therapist, you can try someone else.
- In the first session you begin to discuss why you are attending therapy, sharing the information you feel is important with the therapist. If your therapy is goal orientated, you may agree on the number of sessions and the goals you would like to work towards in these sessions.
- The therapist may ask questions on your background, your previous mental health and information that brought you to the session.
- If the therapist is an integrative therapist, you may agree on the type of therapy you would like to try going forward.
- At the end of the appointment you may agree to make another appointment, or the therapist may suggest you take some time to decide on making another appointment.

***Every therapist will work in a different way, the information presented above is intended as a guide. if you wish to clarify any aspects of therapy you should speak directly to the individual therapist you are wishing to see.***

