

Therapy Tips



Firstly, **It's ok if you don't know where to start.** This is quite common, and we do not think you are a mess if you cannot describe your thoughts or feelings. We are here to support you and will be patient in spending as much time as necessary to help you find the right words to make sense of things.



Allow plenty of time to get to the session. This means you won't feel rushed or flustered when you arrive, and gives us lots of time to discuss everything. Where possible, it is a good idea to schedule your session for a time that you do not have to rush back to school or work, so you can fully process what has happened.



You're allowed to take notes. We can talk about a lot of things in a one-hour session and not even people with the best memories can remember everything. Some people find it helpful to keep a "therapy journal" or notebook, where they jot down ideas or strategies during session to think about and practice later.



Be Honest. Like really, really honest. We can't help with something that we don't know about. Therapists are very familiar with the uniqueness of the human mind and we understand that no one is their best self all of the time. Everyone can seem a little "crazy" given the right situation. There is a big chance (trust us) you are not the first person to feel or think this way. Remember, we regularly hear the stuff that no one tweets about or shares on status updates.



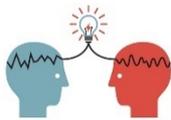
Don't leave it too long between sessions. Therapy works best when it is regular and frequent. It is important to attend therapy regularly so you have time to practice strategies, review their effectiveness, and gain momentum. tweak them if necessary. Learning new habits and skills requires repetition and attention. We understand weekly sessions may not always be feasible (financially or otherwise) for everyone, so we will work with you to cater to your needs the best way we can. For some people this might mean weekly sessions to start, before we space to fortnightly or monthly.



Give us feedback. A good therapist wants to understand you, the way your experiences have shaped you, and how you want your life to be. While we are pretty good at understanding the workings of the human mind, we are not psychic. You are unique and no two life stories are the same. It is perfectly ok (in fact we strongly recommend it) to tell your therapist if they're not quite getting you, or if something doesn't sit well with you. They will not be offended; therapists want to help you and will warmly welcome any feedback (If they don't; consider getting another therapist).

How to give feedback in therapy. Sometimes it's hard to find the right words. You are welcome to borrow some of these:

- “There was something you said last time that was confusing (confronting/difficult/upsetting etc) for me”
- “Yeah, that is not actually what I meant”
- “I don’t understand what you mean by that?”
- “I’m not sure I understand when/how/why I should be using this strategy?”
- “Sometimes I feel we are not always on the same page”
- “I don’t understand why we are using this approach?”
- “I think there are other things/topics that we haven’t talked about yet – I would like to focus on this because it is really important to me”
- “I am not sure therapy is working for me”



Consider our feedback. Therapists are trained and highly experienced in noticing and understanding details of human behaviour more than the average person. Part of our job is to give feedback or talk about issues that other people may not notice or may not want to tell you. Everyone has blind spots, and we can’t change something we don’t know about. Your therapist will be (compassionately) honest to support and help you achieve your goals. We really, truly, want the very best for you.



Step out of your comfort zone. We have a big box of tissues in our office for a reason. If you are confronting difficult issues for the first time it is normal (and healthy) to be emotional. We do not think you are silly or weak. We admire your willingness to share your experiences with us, and are grateful you trust us. It takes courage and strength to be vulnerable, and therapy is much more effective when we focus on the important stuff.

Sometimes being emotional or trying to change can feel awkward and uncomfortable at first. If it was easy, you probably would have done it already. Your therapist is not enjoying your discomfort, and if there was an easier/quicker way to do it, we would tell you. Your therapist will be with you every step of the way, but do tell us when it is hard.



Practice. Practice. Practice. Unfortunately, we don’t have a magic wand. Change can occur just by talking with your therapist or thinking about an issue differently. However, sometimes talking isn’t enough and change requires work. Your therapist will give you tasks to complete (like a journal) - these tasks are designed to benefit you and help you achieve your goals. If your doctor prescribed you antibiotics for a chest infection, you wouldn’t expect to get better without taking the medicine. Therapy is the same in that it works best if you practice strategies outside of session in your daily life.



Tell us if you are thinking about dropping out. You can end therapy at any time you wish, and you do not have to give us a reason. However, it may be helpful to have a chat about your decision. As mention in the giving feedback session, if it is not working out or feeling right, the therapist may be able to change something to make therapy better for you. Or, maybe you feel nervous about what change might mean, and are scared to see things through. This is an opportunity to do it differently, and we are here

to help and take things at your pace.