



WHAT IS THERAPY?

Information for Children and Young People



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Therapy is a special kind of help for children and young people who may be going through tough times or feeling sad, angry, or scared. Just like when you have a physical injury, therapy is like getting help for the inside of your heart and mind.

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE GO TO THERAPY?

Young people go to therapy because they might be feeling really sad or upset about something that happened, or maybe they're struggling with their emotions and don't know how to handle them. Sometimes, young people might feel overwhelmed by their anger or find themselves crying a lot. They might be feeling numb or really confused. Or maybe they are facing some big changes in their life and relationships. Kids and teens can express their feelings using things like music, art, or play, which can sometimes be easier than talking about their feelings.

WHAT DOES A THERAPIST DO?

A therapist who works with young people will talk to both you, and the grown-ups who know you well, like your foster parents or supporting social workers, to understand how you're feeling and figure out the best way to help you. Then, you'll get to meet with your therapist. If you feel ok about them and trying therapy, you can get started soon after that first meeting. Your therapy sessions will usually last about 50 minutes and will happen at the same time and place each week.

WILL THE THERAPIST TELL OTHER PEOPLE WHAT WE TALK ABOUT OR DO?

When you first meet your therapist, they will explain what things are private and just between the two of you unless you're really unsafe. If that happens, they might need to talk to other grown-ups to make sure you're getting the help you need, but they will only share what's needed to keep you safe. Your therapist will usually talk to you about what they might need to share and why it's important.

Your therapist will meet with your foster parents once a month to let them know if they think therapy is helping you, and to talk about ways they can take better care of you. Your therapist will also ask if there's anything about your therapy that you'd like your foster parents to know about.



DO I HAVE TO KEEP THERAPY PRIVATE?

Therapy isn't a secret, so you can talk about it if you want to, but you don't have to. It's totally up to you. If you feel comfortable sharing with others, that's okay. If you prefer to keep it to yourself, that's okay too.

HOW WILL THERAPY HELP ME?

Therapy can help you in several ways:

- 1) A therapist can help you understand why you feel the way you do. When young people understand their emotions, it can make their problems feel easier to handle.
- 2) If you're facing challenges or problems, a therapist can help you find better ways to cope with them.
- 3) You can learn how to express your feelings and thoughts in a way that improves your relationships with friends and family.
- 4) Therapy can teach you techniques to manage stress and anxiety, making it easier to handle difficult situations.
- 5) It can boost your self-esteem and confidence by helping you discover your strengths and abilities.
- 6) If you've been through something tough, like a traumatic experience, therapy can help you heal from it.
- 7) Instead of turning to unhealthy habits when you're upset, therapy can help you develop healthier ways to cope.

It might take some time, but eventually, both you and your therapist will feel ready to say goodbye. Your therapist will help you with the ending part and make sure you feel strong and confident to manage on your own.



WILL THERAPY MAKE THINGS BETTER RIGHT AWAY?

Therapy is a process, and it may take some time before you start seeing a difference. Your therapist will work with you to understand your feelings and help you find ways to cope with them. Just like a physical injury takes time to heal, emotional healing also requires patience, effort and help from other people.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T LIKE MY THERAPIST?

It's important to feel comfortable and safe with your therapist. If you don't feel a good connection or don't feel understood, it's okay to let your foster parents know. They can help you find another therapist who may be a better fit for you.





WILL I HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THINGS I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT?

You might want to talk about things that happened this week, or in the past. You might explore how what happened recently and what happened in the past are connected. But, therapy is all about making a safe place for you to explore your feelings and thoughts and experiences. You can decide what you're comfortable sharing. Your therapist will always aim to listen and care about how you're feeling. They aim to offer you a space where you can feel safe and okay and go at your own pace.

CAN I BRING SOMETHING SPECIAL TO THERAPY?

Absolutely! You can bring a toy, a drawing, or anything that makes you feel comfortable or helps you express yourself. These items can be helpful in showing your therapist how you're feeling or what you're going through.

WHAT IF MY FRIENDS FIND OUT I'M GOING TO THERAPY?

Your foster parents, teachers, or social workers won't tell your friends that you are in therapy. This is your private matter. It's entirely up to you whether you want to share with your friends that you're going to therapy. If you decide to tell them, it might help them understand what you're going through. However, it's essential to remember that therapy is a personal choice, and you have the right to keep it private if you prefer.





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