

First things first...What is therapy?



What is therapy?

Therapy is a safe space for you to talk about how you're feeling without worrying about being judged. By talking about your experiences and thoughts with a therapist, it might help you understand your feelings better. With this understanding, you can become better able to deal with difficult situations either now, or in the future. For example, you might be able to learn to stay calmer when you're angry, or more confident when you're scared. It's also a good opportunity for you to learn more about yourself, for instance, through talking openly with your therapist, you might discover parts of yourself that were previously hidden to you.

How does it work?

Therapy takes place as a series of weekly sessions between you and your therapist. You sit down in a private space to talk about what is on your mind. There is no right or wrong when it comes to what you want to talk about in your therapy sessions, and it might change from one week to the next. You are not here to be judged by your therapist, nor are they marking you like a test. They are simply there to listen and help guide you through your thoughts and the space is yours to talk about whatever you want to. You don't have to talk about things you're feeling upset or challenged by too, you can talk about your hopes for the future, things that bring you joy, or whatever you like really.

There are also different kinds of therapy. Here at The Nest you can just talk, or you can express your feelings creatively. Make sure you let those at The Nest know if you have any preferences, for example, if you want to express yourself through art. We will do our best to fit you with the right therapist.

Did I do something wrong?

Therapy is not a punishment. Everyone and anyone could benefit from talking about problems they face at one, or various points in their life. It might be that something about your behaviour, such as being very angry or being very quiet, has meant someone has noticed that you need to talk.

That does not mean that you are broken or a bad person. It is only that you might benefit from new ways or taking care of your own feelings, like being given new tools to solve your problems.

Remember, it is your choice as to whether you start therapy or not. If you decide not to have therapy now, it doesn't mean that you can't come back to The Nest, or anywhere else that provides therapy when you feel ready.

About your therapist

What is a therapist?

Therapists are people who have studied how people think and feel. They use that knowledge to help guide you as you talk about your feelings or express them through creative activities.

You may have also heard of the word counsellors or psychotherapists. These are all types of therapist we have at The Nest. You can always ask the person who is working with you what type of therapist they are.

Our therapists have professional qualifications, or are in their final year of studying, which means they have learnt about psychology, mental health, and how to help support people.

Boundaries with your therapist

Boundaries with your therapist. Your therapist is someone you can talk openly with because they are a professional who is separate from other parts of your life such as school and family. This means that you might find it easier to talk to them about what's going on for you, as you will only see them for therapy. It also means that your therapist will treat the things you say to them confidentially, which means they won't tell anyone else about what you say, unless you or someone else is at risk of harm.

Your therapist will discuss boundaries with you in your first session with them, and they will agree with you what you would like to happen if you bump into each other outside The Nest. They will not interact with you on social media, give hugs or give you information about their own life. The therapeutic space is for you and your experiences, and hearing about your therapist's life might impact you and what you feel able to speak about it.

Your therapist will only interact with you within your therapy sessions, and will not communicate with you outside of sessions, unless to confirm or change appointment times. This is to make sure that the therapeutic space and your time together is given priority, so that you can feel safe to share within the allotted time you have together. If you could talk to your therapist all the time, you might be left feeling like you need your therapist to cope, or you might feel overwhelmed by strong emotions. By containing your interaction with your therapist to your session, it can enable you to feel better able to cope and manage challenging emotions outside of sessions.

Is what I say kept secret?

Everything you say in your sessions with your therapist is confidential unless they are worried you or someone else you might be talking about is at risk of harm. Therapists would never promise to keep something secret because we don't know what might be spoken about in sessions.

Firstly, there is what we call a "safeguarding concern". This is if there is a risk of harm to someone. An example of this would be if you mentioned that someone was threatening to hurt you, or if a friend was hurting themselves. In such cases, the therapist has a duty to act to protect whoever is at risk. This may involve speaking to a parent, school or someone else involved. Where possible, the therapist will discuss their response with you before they speak to someone else, and will always have your safety as a priority. This can be a complicated area and if you have any worries about this, it is best to discuss it with your therapist at the start of your therapy.

A second case is your therapist may talk with their supervisor for advice on some issues. All therapists have a supervisor with who they meet on a regular basis to discuss their clients, making sure that the therapist is doing their best to help them. Supervisors also keep all information confidential, unless there is a risk of significant harm to you or someone else.

Aside from this, what you say in your sessions stays strictly between you and the therapist so you can feel free to open up and discuss whatever you would like to. Therapists do not report to your parents, carers, teachers, lecturers or employers and let them know what has been discussed in therapy.

Before your session

Should I tell people I am in therapy?

Some important people might have been told, such as teachers, so you can have the time to attend. But the choice of who you tell is yours. You don't need to feel pressured to tell others, but neither is it something to be ashamed of (more than one in four of all people have had therapy at some point).

Where do I have to go?

We hold most of our sessions at The Nest in Peckham. It's a quiet place with rooms that have some cosy seats, toys to fidget with if you want to and some art materials. We also have a little reading corner in the waiting area. If you'd like to know more, we have a guide to the space (called a visual story) that you can find on our website. There are also other locations we sometimes hold sessions.

Therapy can also happen on your computer through a Microsoft Teams video call. This will depend on your situation, as for some people this can be harder to talk about some more difficult topics than if you are in person. For some people, they might prefer online sessions as it might be difficult to travel to Peckham, or you might feel more comfortable in your own space.

Do I need to prepare?

There is nothing you need to do before. Just come with an open mind. Some people do find it useful to write about how they're feeling in a journal beforehand. For art therapy, you might want to wear clothes you don't mind getting messy in.

After the session, you might want to have some time to yourself, for example to go for a walk in a park, to think about what you've talked about, or done in session. You could also journal, draw, paint or sculpt about how you feel after the session to reflect. This is down to what you find helpful.

After your appointment

When does it start working?

Therapy isn't about something "working" or immediate change. When improving your mental health, your journey isn't always in a straight line. Sometimes feelings can get worse before they get better, but when they do, you might feel that you are able to understand your feelings more and cope with situations better than before. Often simply turning up for each appointment is what helps you in the long term. The changes you feel might come after you've finished therapy as you apply what you've discovered about yourself or simply feel like your story has been heard.

We offer six to twelve sessions here and while that might not be enough time to explore everything in depth, it can offer a meaningful starting point to begin understanding and working through some of the important areas in your life.

What happens next?

The first time you come in, we have an introductory chat where a therapist will ask about what is happening in your life, in your own words rather than what a doctor or parent might have said for you. This might be how you feel about school, family, work, friendships & intimate or close relationships, or whatever is happening in your day. This will be so we can understand what your needs are and is called an assessment.

After this you'll begin weekly 50-minute sessions with a therapist for around six to twelve weeks. This will be with the same therapist each week, on the same day and time each week, who will get to know you and help you talk through what is on your mind.

By the end, you should have a better idea of how to deal with uncomfortable situations and your own thoughts. At the end, you and your therapist will help you come up with a plan for looking after yourself and, if necessary, your therapist can tell you about other places you can ask for support if you need it.