

What to Expect During Therapy

Beginning therapy can bring up a mix of feelings, concerns, and uncertainty. These are common Q&A's about what to expect in your first session. Remember, you won't feel better right away; healing takes time and often requires multiple sessions. Use an initial meeting to ask questions, set goals, and share your expectations with your therapist.

What happens in the first therapy session?



In your first therapy session, your therapist will get to know you by asking about your background, current challenges, and goals. You should leave with a clear understanding of how therapy works, including confidentiality, session structure, and what to expect moving forward.



The first session is about building rapport and understanding your needs, so don't be disappointed if you can't cover everything right away—that's normal! You'll have plenty of time to explore and work through things in future sessions.

How do I know if a therapist is the right fit for me?



Finding the right therapist is about feeling comfortable and understood. You should feel safe, respected, and listened to during sessions. Pay attention to whether their approach and communication style resonate with you.



While it's normal for progress to take time, you should begin to feel some sense of improvement or connection as you move forward. If after a few sessions you don't feel a good fit, it's okay to try someone else. The right therapist will help you feel supported in your journey.

How many pro bono therapy sessions will I receive?



There is no fixed limit on the number of pro-bono sessions you can receive. The duration of therapy is determined in collaboration with your therapist, based on your goals and individual circumstances. Sessions can continue until you and your therapist mutually decide it's time to conclude therapy.

What types of therapy might I experience?



We offer a variety of therapy techniques to suit different needs and preferences. Our therapists are trained in approaches like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and others, including mindfulness-based therapy, trauma-focused therapy, and more. Your therapist will work with you to determine the best approach for your goals and needs.

Will therapy "fix" me?



Therapy isn't about "fixing" you, but rather supporting you in understanding yourself better, managing challenges, and building healthier coping strategies. It's a process that helps you gain insight, develop skills, and make meaningful changes at your own pace.



While therapy can lead to significant improvements, it's a journey, and progress may look different for everyone. The goal is to empower you to live a more fulfilling and balanced life.

What if I don't know what to talk about?



It's completely normal to feel unsure about what to talk about, especially in the beginning. Sometimes just talking about how you're feeling in the moment can be a good starting point. Your therapist is there to guide the conversation and help you explore whatever is on your mind, whether it's a specific issue or something you're struggling to put into words.

Is therapy confidential?



Your therapist will explain the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of your sessions to ensure you understand how your privacy is protected. The goal is to create a safe, trusting space where you can be open and honest.

What if I don't like my therapist?



Sometimes it takes time to build a connection, but if you still don't feel like it's the right fit, that's okay and completely normal. We encourage you to reach out to the Give an Hour staff, and we can help match you with another therapist. It's all part of finding the right provider to support you, and we're here to help you keep trying until you find the best fit.

Can therapy help with specific issues like anxiety or trauma?



Yes, therapy can help with specific issues like anxiety, trauma, and more. We have therapists who specialize in working with a variety of concerns, and we also provide ongoing training to ensure our providers have the tools and techniques needed to support the people we serve.

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How much does therapy cost, and is it covered by insurance?



If clients use their insurance, the insurance will cover the majority of the cost, but the client is responsible for paying the copay or coinsurance amount set by their insurance provider. It is up to the therapist to decide whether to require the full copay/coinsurance amount or to offer a discounted rate. In some cases, providers may waive the copay entirely, allowing clients to avoid out-of-pocket costs.

What if I want to quit therapy?



It's normal to question whether therapy is right for you at any point in the process. If you're thinking about quitting, we encourage you to talk to your therapist about how you're feeling—they can help you explore why you're considering stopping and discuss any concerns you have.



Sometimes taking a break or adjusting the approach can make a big difference. If you still feel like therapy isn't helping, we can support you in finding other resources or options.

Do I have to do homework or exercises?



Some therapists may assign homework or exercises between sessions if they think it will be helpful for your progress. If you think this would be useful for you, feel free to let your therapist know. However, if you don't feel that homework or exercises would be helpful, it's important to share that as well. Therapy is a collaborative process, and your therapist will work with you to find what works best for your needs.

How do I prepare for my first therapy session?



To prepare for your first therapy session, think about what you hope to achieve and any specific challenges you'd like to work on. It's helpful to be open and honest about your thoughts and feelings, and don't hesitate to jot down any questions or concerns beforehand.



You might also be asked to discuss your background, so reflecting on that can be useful. Most importantly, come with an open mind, as it may take time to build rapport and feel comfortable with the process.

What's the difference between therapy and talking to a friend?



While talking to a friend can be supportive, therapy offers a professional, structured environment focused on your well-being. Therapists are trained to listen without judgment, provide evidence-based techniques, and help you work through challenges in a deeper, more constructive way.



Unlike friends, therapists maintain confidentiality, offer objective guidance, and create a safe space for personal growth. Therapy is a dedicated process aimed at helping you understand yourself better and make lasting changes.

What if I miss a session?



If you know you'll miss a session, we strongly encourage you to reach out to your provider as soon as possible. Missing an appointment without notice may result in a small fee or, in some cases, losing the opportunity to continue seeing that provider. Communication is key to maintaining your therapeutic relationship.

What if my provider has different beliefs than me?



Therapists are trained to respect and honor your beliefs, regardless of their own. If your provider's religious beliefs differ from yours, they will focus on understanding and supporting your perspective without judgment. If you ever feel uncomfortable, it's important to discuss it with your therapist or let Give an Hour staff know so we can help match you with a provider who better fits your needs.

What if I struggle to open up?



It's completely normal to feel nervous or embarrassed about sharing personal things in therapy. Remember, your therapist is there to provide a safe, nonjudgmental space to support you. You can start by sharing what you're comfortable with and take your time—there's no pressure to open up all at once. Therapy is a process, and your comfort is a priority.

Can I talk about anything in therapy?



Therapists are required by law to break confidentiality if you disclose plans to harm yourself or others, report abuse of a child, elderly person, or vulnerable adult, or if mandated by a court order. Otherwise, your sessions are a private and safe space for you to discuss anything openly. If you're unsure about what's confidential, your therapist can clarify at the start of your work together.