

## What is therapy?

Therapy is a way of helping people improve on their emotional well-being and lead a productive lifestyle. It is an environment where you can express your concerns with a professional who is neutral and non-judgemental. Most therapists provide support through evidence-based practice – treatments that have been proven to be effective from solid research evidence. While therapy often focuses on individuals, it can also be practiced in other settings like family, couples, or groups.

### **Do I have to be diagnosed with a mental disorder to seek therapy?**

No, most people who seek therapy do not have a formal diagnosis. Most people are feeling overwhelmed with personal struggles or going through major transitions: this may include relationship, grief, addiction, schooling, medical or employment issues.

### **Is therapy confidential?**

All communications and all records relating to the provision of services are kept confidential and are not disclosed without your written consent.

There are a few exceptions that are usually not common occurrences. These include 1) imminent harm to yourself or others, 2) abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult 3) court subpoena, 4) when there is reason to believe you are operating a motor vehicle in an unsafe fashion, as per the Motor Vehicle Act, 5) or if your medical professional is violating the Health Professions Act.

Otherwise, only you and anyone you consent to be involved in your sessions (such as a doctor or family member) are solely aware of your treatment.

### **Is all therapy the same?**

One of the most important parts of therapy is the collaborative relationship between the therapist and client. Working with a professional allows you to identify patterns of thoughts and behaviours that stop you from thriving, while developing coping strategies that you can use in the future.

Therapy differs in terms of the individual's personal situation and the therapists' approaches. Therapists can use several types of therapy approaches, such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT), Interpersonal Psychotherapy, Psychodynamic Therapy, and Art Therapy, to name a few. All regulated therapists are required to consider best practice and evidence-based approaches. Evidence-based means that they are practical applications of the best available, current research.

## **What does it mean to be a “regulated” or “registered” therapist?**

Anyone can say they practice “therapy” but not everyone is regulated by a separate professional body. Regulation means members are required to meet certain standards to join and are required to continue to meet review standards to maintain their membership. These standards can include ongoing training and adhering to a specific code of conduct and code of ethics. For instance, a “Registered” Psychologist will identify themselves, often with a 4-digit registration number i.e. R. Psych 1234. They are regulated by an independent College and are part of the Health Professions Act. Some Counsellors are also regulated (designated as a Registered Clinical Counsellor, *RCC*) and are part of a self-regulating body. Their association, while not an independent body, also has requirements regarding training, ethics, and code of conduct.

## **How will I know that I need therapy?**

The American Psychological Association mentioned a few important points about the benefits of therapy:

1. Your circumstance had left you feeling powerless, overwhelmed or sad
2. You don't see any improvement with your situation despite your own efforts to better the problem, or support from family and friends.
3. Completing everyday activities or work is growing to be troublesome
4. You are constantly on edge, worrying or expect the worst possible outcome
5. Your actions, like addiction or aggression are affecting those around you as well as yourself
6. You notice that you are becoming more physically unwell as a result of feeling helpless or overwhelmed, or vice versa

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<https://www.apa.org/topics/psychotherapy-myths>

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