

Embarking on a brave journey through therapy?

Nervous? Uncertain? Anxious? Scared? Expect to feel all these emotions when you consider starting your journey of self-discovery through therapy. What else should I expect? Are there specific requirements? Does it actually work? Let us dive into these lingering questions we are sometimes too afraid to ask.

To start off, I am going to break down the most common stigmatised opinion of therapy: you are not crazy, weak, broken or incapable if you attend therapy. In fact, you do not even need to have a mental illness diagnosis to begin therapy. Therapy is meant to be a safe and comfortable platform for you to engage with a professional who will be able to help you understand, identify, recover, change, manage and cope with the many different aspects of your life. It is more than just a conversation with someone. In therapy you will be listened to, understood, validated and challenged. You will learn insights and skills, and ultimately be assisted in growing and changing, and living a more fulfilling life. In short, you will learn how to be compassionately accountable for your life.

Psychology is a broad field with many different theories and possible approaches. It is not meant to be a “one size fits all”. If you find the therapy ineffective or you are confused about which approach your therapist is taking, you should speak up! After all, it is your therapy and you do have a say on what happens.

Technically speaking, there are no “requirements” for attending therapy. The most crucial component to therapy is the therapeutic relationship and rapport you have with your therapist. This applies to any type of therapy to be effective, no matter the approach. Therefore, it is essential that both individuals in the therapeutic relationship are honest, truthful, open to change, committed and hard-working. You and your therapist are a team working towards the same outcome. Your therapist is not there to judge you or to be impressed

by you – they are there to be your companion and tour guide through this journey.

Does therapy really work? YES! However, there are some considerations that we need to remember to make therapy effective. Anyone attending therapy must want to be there and recognise the need for the platform. Being pressured / forced to attend therapy can often have the opposite effect. You should take insight and awareness with you after a session, but implementation is needed for it to be effective.

Following through on what is discussed in therapy with action outside the therapy sessions will guarantee a change in the direction you want to go. There is so much power and bravery in allowing yourself to be vulnerable with your therapist and doing the hard work to help yourself.

Remember: you are the expert on your own life, but sometimes we all can do with a little help. 🧠

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