



# JOURNEY ON

to finding the right  
therapist

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AN EASY GUIDE TO FINDING  
A THERAPIST WHO MEETS  
YOUR NEEDS

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# a simple yet detailed guide to finding a therapist who meets your needs.

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Finding the right therapist can seem like a huge task, particularly if it is the first time you are looking for one.

There are many terms, modalities, qualifications and governing bodies to make sense of, and this can feel confusing.

This eBook is a simple yet detailed guide. The aim is to assist you on your journey to finding the right therapist, whilst preparing you to make the most of your therapeutic experience.

## about the author.

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**Danielle Bottone**

Founder and Integrative Counsellor

Danielle is a qualified Integrative Counsellor and founder of JourneyOn Counselling and Therapeutic Services. Danielle has a particular interest in intercultural practice and trauma - acknowledging that therapeutic services are not widely accessed by all cultures within the UK.

Danielle started JourneyOn not only to provide her therapeutic services to clients, but to encourage and inform individuals who may not have considered therapeutic support.



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# terminology.

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**Counsellor/Therapist** – Often these terms are used interchangeably, however, they can have slight differences. In some instances, counsellors work on a shorter term basis depending on how they are trained. Counsellors and therapists focus on the thoughts and feelings of a client, helping them to process what is happening in the present. Some will support clients to think about how their past impacts and interacts with what they are currently experiencing. It is always best to check how the practitioner works beforehand to ensure their style is suited to your needs. Counsellors and therapists are trained to at least diploma level before they begin to see clients.

**Psychologist** – Psychologists have a more scientific approach to therapy. They are often described as ‘science-practitioners’ and consider the way the brain functions and the impact of this on human behaviour. Many psychologists are trained to doctoral level and will have completed research as a part of their training.

**Psychotherapist** – Psychotherapists focus largely on the unconscious mind and past experiences of the client. They provide space for clients to delve into their childhood to explore memories which may be contributing to current challenges in the present.

## Not to be confused with...

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**Life Coach\*** – A life coach often motivates, challenges, provides emotional support and aims to boost confidence in their clients. Life coaches focus on reaching potential and achieving goals, whereas counsellors and therapists work on exploring emotional difficulties, looking into the past and using this to support clients to navigate their own world.

**Mentor\*** – Mentors provide advice, guidance and teach their mentees. Often, mentors use their wisdom and knowledge in an area of specialism the mentee is interested in, to encourage and support mentees to grow and learn in the field. Mentoring is often longer term than life coaching.

\*Life coaches and mentors are not typically seen as forms of therapy. However, they have been included as there is a common misconception that therapists will advise, guide and tell clients how to find solutions to their difficulties. If advice and solution focused discussions in a particular area is ideal for you, consider a life coach or mentor.

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# types of therapy.

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**Counselling** – There are a number of different types of counselling methods depending on the way the practitioner is trained. Counselling often takes place once a week and can be short term (e.g. 6–12 sessions) or longer term. Counsellors focus on the current experiences of the client, and facilitate a space for exploration of their world. In addition to focusing on present experiences, counsellors support clients to consider aspects from their past that may have contributed to the difficulties occurring now.

**Psychotherapy** – Psychotherapy can take place more frequently (more than once a week) and can last up to a number of years, it all depends on what the client needs. Psychotherapists support clients to explore their childhood and past adult experiences to unlock deeper rooted areas. Once these memories and experiences have been brought to the surface, they can then be consciously processed in the sessions.

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)** – CBT is known as an ‘evidence based’ therapy and is largely advocated by the NHS. It focuses on the interaction between the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of a client. CBT provides a structured way of working towards acquiring coping strategies. Homework is often given throughout the therapy, and practise outside of sessions is important for CBT to remain effective.

**Couples/Marriage/Relationship Counselling** – The relationship is at the heart of couples counselling and is seen as ‘the client’. The dynamic created by the parties involved in the relationship, how this plays out and how this is experienced will be largely explored. Couples counselling is often used to attempt to reconcile conflict in a relationship, but can also be used to mediate when a decision has been made to end the relationship.

**Family Therapy** – Family therapy involves exploring the dynamics of relationships within a family. A therapist will meet with the family to open up safe conversations about the challenges experienced in order to strengthen communication and work towards resolving conflict.

**Group Therapy** – A small group of clients meet together with one or more therapist and explore current areas of difficulty. The agenda is mainly kept in the present, and this is not always the most appropriate place to explore historic difficulties or deeply traumatic experiences. Therapeutic groups can be supportive and encouraging as clients are able to see they are not alone with their experiences.

**Self-Help Resources** – There are a growing number of self-help books available for general emotional well-being and more specific areas of difficulty. Therapeutic workbooks, apps, mindfulness resources and online resources are readily available to be used by all. These can be used in isolation as well as alongside therapy.

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# is therapy right for me?

Having an understanding of the reason you want to start therapy is helpful in the first instance. Therapy is useful for a number of different reasons, but understanding your primary reason for attending is important, and can help you decide what your therapeutic goals are.

## potential reasons to consider therapy.

you want to improve your relationships.  
you want to learn more about yourself.  
you are using substances to cope.  
you feel emotionally overwhelmed.  
you are concerned about your thoughts, feelings or behaviour.

you feel disconnected.  
people in your life have said they are concerned about you.  
you have experienced trauma.  
you experience intense anger or sadness.  
you are finding it difficult to cope.



## WHY HAVE I DECIDED TO LOOK FOR A THERAPIST?

Have you had a recent realisation, or has something happened and changed your circumstances or perspective?

## WHAT AM I CURRENTLY FINDING DIFFICULT?

Are there elements in your life which have become more difficult? What has this been like for you? Do you want to get better at something?

## WHAT DO I WANT TO GAIN FROM THERAPY?

What do you want to achieve by going to therapy? What would you like to change? What would you like to be different when you have finished?

## AM I READY?

Are you ready to speak about difficult topics, be challenged and remain open and honest?



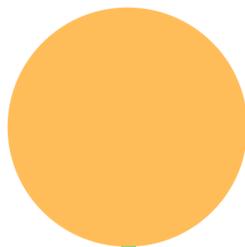
## helpful questions to ask yourself.

# things to consider before your search.

## fees.

Find out how much a private therapist charges before you book.

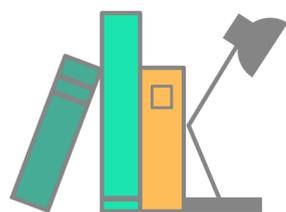
Consider what feels manageable if you are to attend weekly sessions and maintain consistency.



## method.

How do you want to see your therapist?

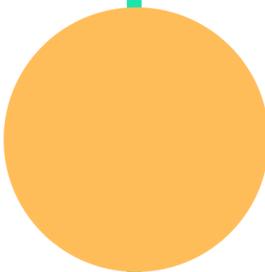
Face to face is the most common and recommended, but some therapists offer online and telephone sessions.



## specialism.

Are you looking for a specific type of therapist?

Some therapists specialise in quite specific domains. e.g. addiction, anxiety, trauma, bereavement, couples, music therapy, art therapy to name a few.



## location.

Where are you willing to travel to?

Ensure you check where a therapist is based before booking. Some therapists see clients at home, whilst others have therapy rooms in clinics, corporate buildings or centres.

## availability.

When do you want to see your therapist?

Most therapists expect clients to commit to a weekly slot at the same time and place.



## diversity.

Who do you think you will feel comfortable speaking to?

There is a growing community of diverse therapists, and you are free to choose whoever you want. It is important you feel safe and at ease in therapy. Take time to consider the kind of therapist you want.

# where can i find a therapist?

Counselling directories are a great place to start when looking for a private therapist. They usually require therapists to be registered to a governing body before being listed, which helps to safeguard the client. You can usually search for therapists by area, specialism, availability, difficulty you are experiencing and more. This makes looking for therapists who offer what you are looking for very easy!

**1 COUNSELLING DIRECTORY**  
[www.counselling-directory.org.uk](http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk)  
a popular directory consisting of over 15,000 registered counsellors and psychotherapists across the UK.

**2 PSYCHOLOGY TODAY**  
[www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)  
the online directory lists mental health professionals and shares content created by psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, and more.

**3 BAATN**  
[www.baatn.org.uk](http://www.baatn.org.uk)  
'UK's largest independent organisation to specialise in working psychologically, informed by an understanding of intersectionality, with people who identify as **Black, African, South Asian** and **Caribbean.**' BAATN have a dedicated registered therapist search in addition to a variety of resources and hosted events.

**4 PINK THERAPY**  
[www.pinktherapy.com](http://www.pinktherapy.com)  
Pink Therapy is a directory of therapists and health professionals in the UK who identify as, or are understanding of gender and sexual minorities (GSMs). Pink Therapy are the largest independent therapy organisation in the UK working with gender and sexual diversity clients.

**5 UK COUNCIL FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY**  
[www.psychotherapy.org.uk](http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk)  
provide a registered psychotherapist and psychotherapeutic counsellor search. They have over 8000 practitioners listed covering the UK.

**6 WELLDONING.ORG**  
[www.welldoing.org](http://www.welldoing.org)  
welldoing.org is a UK therapist matching service for in-person and online therapy. They currently have over 850 registered therapists and mental health professionals to match clients with.

**7 BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY**  
[www.baep.co.uk](http://www.baep.co.uk)  
a large organisation that many counsellors around the UK are registered with. BACP are a charity and an accrediting body that set certain standards and codes of ethics for counsellors and psychotherapists to adhere to. In addition to a therapist search function, they also have useful information for clients about therapy, how it works, confidential guidance and queries related to practitioner conduct.



# the cost of therapy.

There is a common misconception that therapy is expensive and out of reach for potential clients who have varying financial circumstances. This is not the case. Below are some suggestions to consider if you are wondering how you might afford therapy. Please remember that therapy is arguably one of the biggest and most important investments you can make in yourself, with potentially lifelong benefits.



## SPEAK TO YOUR GP

Therapy can be accessed for free through your GP. The NHS offer short term CBT to adults which can be arranged through your GP or a self referral through your local IAPT service. The NHS provide an online search to find your local service.



## CHARITIES & VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Search 'low cost counselling' in a search engine, and most organisations and charities listed will offer subsidised, free and low cost therapy to local residents. In some cases these sessions may be with trainees or qualified volunteer therapists.



## EMPLOYEE SCHEMES

Many employers offer emotional well-being support for their employees which are pre-paid or bought in. You don't have to notify your boss, you can ask HR if you are not sure and- they should be able to inform you about how to access it.



## PRIVATE HEALTHCARE OR INSURANCE

Private healthcare and insurance can sometimes be used to cover the cost of therapy. If you have been involved in an accident which has resulted in a psychological impact, this is usually covered. Read your policy and contact your provider if it is unclear.



## CONCESSIONS

Often, private therapists offer concessions for students and clients who are unemployed or on low incomes. Sliding scales and subsidised fees are common but not always advertised. Ensure you ask a therapist if this is something you would like to make use of.



## BLOCK BOOKING

Some private therapists offer discounts when clients book and pay for sessions in blocks. Again, this might not be something which is advertised, so it is best to ask and see if it is possible.

# what happens during therapy?

What happens during therapy depends on a number of factors; the modality your therapist is trained in, their therapeutic style, how you respond, what your therapeutic goals are and much more.

Although the actual sessions may vary dramatically depending on the above, you should expect to experience some of the below whilst in therapy.

## PROCESSING

Processing forms an important part of most therapeutic sessions, whether this is through talking directly or a more creative form of therapy.

Processing requires you to be open and willing to unpick the information you share. Therapists may ask questions, reflect what they hear back to you and summarise interpretations from the session to help you explore and process information even further.



## REFLECTION

Reflecting and processing go hand in hand.

Reflection is about increasing your self-awareness and honing in on what is happening from a less emotional perspective.

Reflecting inside and outside of the session is important - try to use the time in between sessions to focus on what was discussed. If you struggle to reflect, write things down, try thinking about your own feelings, thoughts and behaviour.



## CHALLENGE

Expect to be challenged, both directly and indirectly.

Therapy is not easy, you will most likely be confronted with topics which are associated with difficult feelings and areas which do not surface very often. This can potentially lead to defensive feelings.

When feeling defensive in therapy, take notice and try to acknowledge what is going on in that moment for you. These areas are usually rich places for further focus.



## REVIEW

Therapeutic work should be reviewed often. This can take place formally in the form of designated sessions earmarked for reviews, or informally in sessions along the way.

Reviews provide an opportunity to reflect on the therapeutic relationship between you and your therapist, as well as your therapeutic journey. What therapy has been like, what has gone well and what has been difficult are areas which may be discussed.



# how can i get the most out of therapy?

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## SET GOALS.

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Before starting therapy, have an idea of the reason you are going. What therapeutic goals do you want to set yourself? Share these with your therapist and speak about them when you review your work.



## OPEN UP.

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Try not to filter yourself in sessions - share what naturally comes to you in the moment, your thoughts and feelings. Having a therapist you have a good relationship with will support you to do this. Being open in therapy will support your self-awareness and bring attention to the areas that are most important. Therapy is about self discovery, and in order for this to happen, you must open up!

## DO THE WORK.

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Do not leave the work for the session only. Therapy takes place once a week for 50 minutes, this is a small percentage of your time. Not reflecting on the issues discussed at any other point in your week will slow your process down. Use your week to think about topics discussed, take notice of what happens outside of sessions, journal, read, continue doing the work. Dedicate yourself to the process.

## REMAIN CONSISTENT.

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Attend your sessions! Cancellations, lateness and inconsistency will not help the process. Most therapy takes place at the same time each week. A week provides a good containing space for you to continue the work, have enough time to process and ensures you are not left for too long before bringing yourself back to refocus and process new themes and information.

## THINK ABOUT WHEN YOU SEE YOUR THERAPIST.

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Therapy is not easy, you will not leave every session feeling lighter. You may leave feeling frustrated, or something in the session may trigger difficult emotions later in the day. Think about when you see your therapist and what you do after your session. Some find it helpful to incorporate self care activities after their sessions to give themselves time to debrief, others speak to loved ones, and some find a few moments to regroup in their car before they drive home can be helpful. Try not to overlook this point. Being mindful of your plans after therapy is important, particularly as sessions can be unpredictable in nature.

## TRUST THE PROCESS.

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Therapy takes time, and the process is different for everybody. Try not to compare your journey - your process is unique and individual. Trust the process and give it the time it needs and deserves to serve you in the way you want it to. Sometimes there are lessons to be learned in areas we would not have predicted. Allow the process to unravel without blocking or controlling it.

# things to remember!



## THINK ABOUT THE TYPE OF THERAPIST YOU WANT.

Before choosing a therapist, do your research - ask questions prior to meeting if you have some. A large part of the success of therapy is down to the relationship you have with your therapist. So take time choosing.

## CHANGE TAKES TIME.

Try not to rush the process of therapy. It is highly unlikely that you will see obvious changes after a few sessions. Keep at it and use the reviews/sessions to discuss your progress.

## REMAIN OPEN AND HONEST.

Use the space to be as free as you can. This is your time to explore your world. Try not to block or filter yourself in sessions. If you feel yourself hesitating, share this with your therapist if you can.

## TRUST THE PROCESS.

Ride the wave of therapy. Sometimes you leave feeling lighter, and sometimes you leave feeling a little heavier. Therapy is hard, and the journey will most likely have bumps in the road. Try to stick at it, and when you are feeling frustrated with the process, bring it to therapy!

## DO THE WORK.

Firstly, acknowledge the reason you are going to therapy - this will help you understand the kind of work you should focus on. Remain consistent and reflect on your sessions during the week. You can support your own growth by working on yourself outside of your sessions too.

## THERAPY IS AN INVESTMENT.

This has the potential to be the best investment you ever make. The more you learn about yourself, the more control you gain and resilience you build - better preparing you to take on the ups and downs of life. Therapy is a unique investment with the potential for infinite return.

## YOUR THERAPIST DOES NOT HAVE ALL OF THE ANSWERS.

Your therapist is not there to tell you what to do or how to solve your problems. They may suggest areas to focus on or consider, but they will not guide you to an answer. Therapy is about navigating your world and coming to your own realisations.

## YOU MAY LIKE YOUR THERAPIST, BUT THEY ARE NOT YOUR FRIEND.

A therapeutic relationship is very different to a friendship. It is a professional relationship in which the therapist will maintain boundaries to ensure you can explore your world safely. This relationship does not go outside of the therapy room. Remember you are paying your therapist for a service, not to be your friend. Like any relationship, therapeutic relationships can be ruptured and repaired. You may find yourself feeling frustrated or angry with your therapist - if this happens, tell them - important lessons are usually learned here. Not having a personal relationship with your therapist is especially important for these moments. They are trained and supported to manage therapeutic conflict.

## PLAN YOUR ENDING.

Use your sessions to talk about your progress and how you are feeling about the therapy itself. Notice when you feel you no longer want to attend, or as though you have met your therapeutic goals. Where possible, try to plan your ending with your therapist so you can work towards this as opposed to not turning up or ending abruptly.

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