

# YOUR FIRST THERAPY SESSION:

**A FRIENDLY GUIDE TO WHAT'S AHEAD**



# Building Strength with Therapy



## What is Mental Health?

Mental health encompasses our emotional, psychological, and social well-being, influencing our thoughts, feelings, actions, and stress management.



## What is Therapy?

Therapy is a professional treatment for emotional, psychological, or behavioural issues. It involves discussions with a trained therapist to explore problems, understand feelings, develop coping strategies, and foster positive changes.

## WHO needs therapy?

**Anyone** can take therapy.

Therapy is for EVERYONE, whether you're a child, a young adult, a middle-aged adult, or an elderly person, your mental health journey matters!



# You are already half way here, When should you consider therapy?

**TO HEAL FROM  
PEOPLE IN YOUR  
LIFE WHO WON'T  
GO FOR THERAPY**

**TO  
PROCESS  
DIFFICULT  
EMOTIONS**

**IF YOU  
WANT TO  
CHANGE  
THE  
EXISTING  
PATTERN**



**TO BE  
HEARD IN A  
SAFE SPACE**

**TO KNOW  
YOURSELF  
BETTER**

**TO COPE WITH  
ANY MAJOR LIFE  
TRANSITION**

# THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START THERAPY



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PSYCHIATRIST , PSYCHOTHERAPIST, COUNSELORS AND LIFE COACHES?

### • Psychiatrist

A licensed doctor who diagnoses mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety, and provides medication to treat them. There are some psychiatrists who are trained in providing psychotherapy as well.

### • Psychotherapists

A trained mental health professional who provides therapy to individuals or groups to help them manage emotional, psychological, and behavioral issues by using various therapeutic techniques.

### • Counselors

Mental health counseling offers guidance on issues like addiction, bullying, and marriage, helping clients develop coping strategies for personal, social, or educational challenges. The terms counseling and psychotherapy are often used interchangeably and share similarities.

### • Life Coaches

Assist individuals in setting and achieving personal or professional goals, focusing on personal growth and motivation.

### How Long Does Therapy Typically Last?

Therapy duration varies widely. Some people may find relief in just a few sessions, while others may engage in therapy for several months or even years.

### Should One Go for Online vs. In-Person Therapy?

Online therapy offers convenience and flexibility, while in-person therapy allows for a stronger therapeutic relationship through face-to-face interaction.

### Can Therapy Be Beneficial Even If You Don't Take Medications?

Therapy can be highly effective on its own. Many people find that it helps them develop coping strategies, gain insights into their behaviours, and improve their mental health without the need for medication.

### Does Therapy Give You All the Answers?

No, therapy doesn't provide all the answers; it facilitates self-discovery and helps you explore your thoughts and feelings to find your own solutions.

### Can Therapy Be Accessed Only When in a Serious Problem?

Not at all! Therapy is beneficial for anyone, whether you're facing a crisis or simply seeking personal growth.

### Will Therapy Really Help?

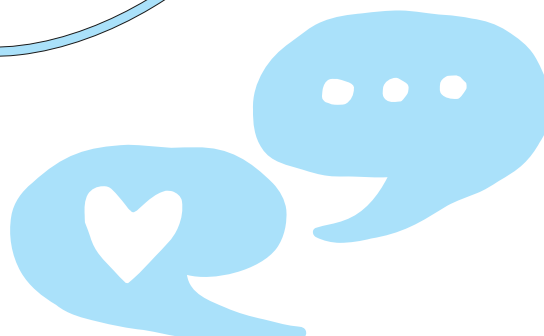
Yes, therapy can be highly effective on its own, helping individuals develop coping strategies and improve mental health.

### Do I Need to Tell Anyone When Seeking Therapy?

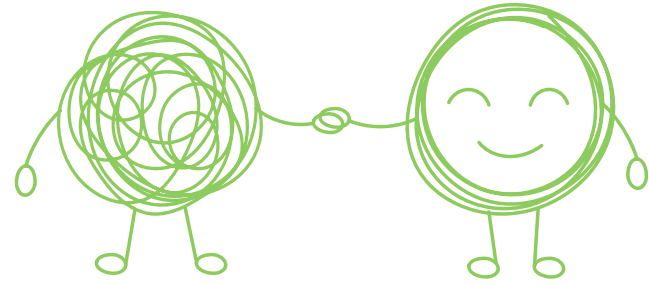
You are not required to inform anyone about your decision to seek therapy. It is a personal choice. However, sharing your journey with trusted friends or family can provide support.

### Will I Be Getting Assignments/Tasks/Homework?

Yes, many therapists assign tasks or homework to help reinforce what you learn in therapy.



# WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER WHILE CHOOSING A THERAPIST FOR ME?



## **Credentials and Specialization:**

Ensure the therapist is licensed with a Master's in Clinical/Counseling Psychology and relevant therapy courses. Look for specialization in your concern, like anxiety or trauma.

## **Approach and Therapy Style:**

Understand their approach (e.g., CBT, Psychodynamic) and see if it aligns with your preferences. Decide between a collaborative or directive style.

## **Availability and Accessibility:**

Check that their schedule matches yours and if they offer virtual sessions if needed.



## **Affordability:**

Consider therapy costs and if they fit your budget. Some offer sliding scale fees.

## **Reviews and Recommendations:**

Seek recommendations from trusted sources or read online reviews about their style and effectiveness.

## **Gut Feeling:**

Trust your instincts after the first meeting; if something feels off, continue searching for the right fit.

IN THERAPY IT'S NORMAL TO:



**Cry, Not know what to say, feel uncomfortable, feel nervous before session, feel tired and confused after session, disagree with your therapist.**

### Introduction and Rapport

The therapist introduces themselves, explains their role, and ensures your comfort.



### Setting Goals

Together, you'll set short- and long-term goals and manage expectations.



### Sharing Concerns

You discuss your reasons for therapy and relevant background.



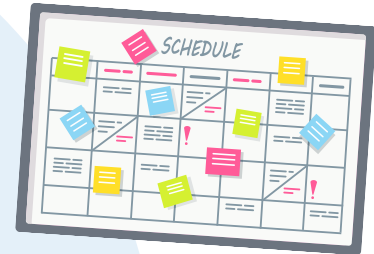
### Confidentiality

They explain privacy rules and exceptions, like safety or legal matters.



### Therapy Approach

The therapist explains their techniques and session structure.



# WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT IN MY FIRST THERAPY SESSION?

### Asking Questions

Feel free to ask about the process, frequency, or any concerns.



### No Quick Fixes

The focus is on understanding, not immediate solutions.



### Safe Space

Share as you feel comfortable in a judgment-free environment.



### Initial Assessment

The therapist assesses your current challenges.



- 😊
- 😐
- 😞

### Reflection

Reflect on the session to decide if you'd like to continue.



# HOW TO SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS WHILE IN THE PROCESS OF THERAPY?

**Therapy Takes Time:** Healing is gradual; be patient with the process.

**Set Achievable Goals:** Aim for realistic therapy outcomes rather than quick fixes.

**Stay Flexible:** Be open to discussing different issues and emotions that come up.

**Express Your Needs:** Share your expectations and concerns with your therapist.

**Unique Journey:** Therapy is personal; what works for others may not work for you.

**Expect Emotions:** Therapy can stir up emotions and vulnerability is a part of healing.

**Allow Time for Growth:** Progress may be slow, but it can lead to lasting change.

**Celebrate Small Wins:** Acknowledge each step forward as it contributes to your growth.

**LACK OF  
PROGRESS**

**POOR  
CONNECTION**

**BOUNDARY  
ISSUES**

**PERSONAL BIAS**

**UNRELIABLE**

**GUT FEELING**

# WHEN TO CHANGE YOUR THERAPIST?



# RESOURCES LIST

# EXPERT'S DIALOGUE!

Below is the list of counselor's repository

whom you can reach out to, when seeking therapy.

Dr. Avinash De souza - [avinashdes888@gmail.com](mailto:avinashdes888@gmail.com)

Dr. Cicilia Chettiar - [ciciliachettiar@yahoo.com](mailto:ciciliachettiar@yahoo.com)

Dr. Shweta Shah - [drshwetashah31@gmail.com](mailto:drshwetashah31@gmail.com)

Ms. Khyati Sampat - [khyati31@gmail.com](mailto:khyati31@gmail.com)

Dr. Anuja Deshpande - [dranujadeshpande18@gmail.com](mailto:dranujadeshpande18@gmail.com)

Ms. Shahana Siddiqui - [shahanasiddiqui@projectmumbai.org](mailto:shahanasiddiqui@projectmumbai.org)

Ms. Kajal Makhwana - [giraffesoacebykajal@hmail.com](mailto:giraffesoacebykajal@hmail.com)

Ms. Ipsita Chatterjee - [Ipsita.chaterjee@thehraav.in](mailto:Ipsita.chaterjee@thehraav.in)

Ms. Poonam Shah - [poonamshah365@yahoo.com](mailto:poonamshah365@yahoo.com)

Dr. Mona Gajre - [drmonagajre@gmail.com](mailto:drmonagajre@gmail.com)

Dr. Henal Shah - [drhenal@gmail.com](mailto:drhenal@gmail.com)

Dr. Kersi Chavdha - [kersichavda@yahoo.co.in](mailto:kersichavda@yahoo.co.in)

SCAN TO READ THEIR  
CONTRIBUTION IN THE  
NEWSLETTERS





# Know your Emotions!

Start by assessing your  
present emotions

## What emotions am I feeling right now?

(List any emotions, both positive and negative. Try to identify specific feelings, not just “good” or “bad.”)

## What physical sensations or thoughts accompany these emotions?

(For example, “I feel anxious, and my heart is racing” or “I’m content, and I feel relaxed.”)



## What are my challenges?

Each student made drawings for stories we read during our time at the library.

## On a scale of 1 to 10, how intense are these emotions?

(This helps you track emotional  
intensity over time.)



## What are my challenges?

Dig into any current stressors, conflicts, or personal challenges that might be contributing to your emotional state.

## What is currently troubling me?

(Describe any specific situations or conflicts you’re dealing with, whether personal, professional, or relational.)

## What thoughts keep coming to mind regarding these challenges?

(Try to capture any recurring or automatic thoughts.)

## What emotions or reactions do these challenges trigger in me?

(Are you feeling overwhelmed, sad, or something else?)

# Reflection of your thoughts and patterns

This section mirrors Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques by examining how your thoughts influence your emotions and actions.

## **Are there any negative or unhelpful thoughts I've been repeating to myself?**

(Identify any self-critical, fear-based, or irrational thoughts that may be affecting your mood.)

## **Is there evidence that challenges these thoughts?**

(For example, if your thought is, "I'm not good enough," consider situations where you succeeded or received praise.)

## **How could I reframe these thoughts to be more balanced or positive?**

(Instead of "I'll never succeed," try, "This is hard, but I've succeeded at other things before.")

## **The way forward**

This section focuses on actionable steps for emotional well-being and problem-solving.

## **What small steps can I take to improve my situation or emotional state?**

(These could be practical actions, like organizing your day, or emotional steps, like challenging negative thoughts.)

# Expert's Dialogue

Name: Dr. Anuja Deshpande

Designation: Assistant Professor (Department of Psychology),  
Maniben Nanavati Women's College (MNWC)



## When to seek therapy & What to expect from therapy?

Seeking therapy can be an important step when emotional, psychological, or behavioral challenges begin to affect your daily life, relationships, or sense of well-being. If you are feeling overwhelmed by stress, anxiety, or persistent sadness that doesn't seem to go away, it may be time to talk to a therapist. Therapy can also help if you're struggling with life transitions, such as moving, starting a new job, or dealing with the end of a relationship.

Therapy is also valuable for dealing with past trauma or unresolved emotional issues. If painful memories are resurfacing or negatively impacting your mental health, a therapist can help guide you through healing.

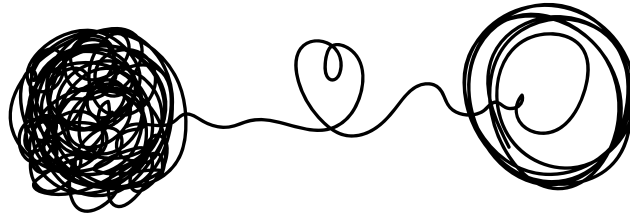
Therapy provides a safe, confidential space to talk about your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with a professional. During the first session, the therapist will ask questions about your background, current issues, and goals for therapy. This helps create a personalized treatment plan.

Therapy can vary depending on the type used. For example, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) focuses on changing negative thought patterns, while psychodynamic therapy explores unconscious influences on behavior. Your therapist will guide you through emotional exploration, offering coping strategies to manage stress, anxiety, or other concerns.

Therapy is a collaborative process, and you are an active participant. Progress takes time, so consistency and openness are key. Over time, therapy can lead to greater self-awareness, improved emotional well-being, and healthier ways of dealing with life's challenges.

Ultimately, therapy is a resource not just for crises but for personal growth, self-understanding, and well-being. Whether you're facing a specific challenge or seeking to understand yourself better, therapy can provide a supportive space to work through life's complexities. If you're unsure, seeking professional help to assess your needs can be a positive first step.

# Help is a call away



## PROJECT MUMBAI IS HERE FOR YOU!

If you or any adolescent you know is experiencing any mental or emotional distress, kindly call on Project Mumbai toll-free mental health helpline number:

### SAMVAAD A Helpline for Adolescents 1800-102-4040

*This helpline is active from 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week and is handled by counsellors with varied expertise.*

In case of any mental health related concerns, please feel free to reach us on [mentalhealth@projectmumbai.org](mailto:mentalhealth@projectmumbai.org)

- **ICALL HELPLINE (GENERAL COUNSELLING)- 02225521111 (MON-SAT, 8AM-10 PM)**
- **HUMSAFAR TRUST (LGBTQIA+)- 0226673800 (MON-FRI, 10 AM-8PM)**
- **ARPAN (CSA)- +91-9819086444 (MON-FRI, 9AM-6PM)**
- **AASRA (SUICIDE PREVENTION)- +91-9820466726 (7 DAYS A WEEK, 24 HOURS)**

Do you want to contribute to making Mumbai the Kindness capital?

Reach out to us on [info@projectmumbai.org](mailto:info@projectmumbai.org)

or

Visit us at [www.projectmumbai.org](http://www.projectmumbai.org)



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