

The logo for TeensHealth, featuring the words "TeensHealth" in a bold, sans-serif font. The text is white and set against a dark, textured rectangular background that has a slight wave or curve at the top and bottom.

Going to a Therapist

Eric went to therapy 2 years ago when his parents were getting divorced. Although he no longer goes, he feels the 2 months he spent in therapy really helped him get through the tough times as his parents worked out their differences. Melody began seeing her therapist a year ago when she was being bullied at school. She still goes every 2 weeks because she feels her therapy is really helping to build her self-esteem. And Britt just joined a therapy group for eating disorders led by her school's psychologist.

When our parents were in school, very few kids went to therapy. Now it's much more accepted and lots of teens wonder if therapy could help them, too.

What Are Some Reasons That Teens Go to Therapists?

Sometimes people who are trying as hard as they can to get through a rough time, such as family troubles or problems in school, find that they just can't cope by themselves. They may be feeling sad, angry, or overwhelmed by what's been happening - and need help sorting out their feelings, finding solutions to their problems, or just feeling better. That's when therapy can help.

Here are just a few examples of situations in which therapy can help people work through their problems:

- Working with a therapist can help someone overcome depression, anxiety, painful shyness, or an eating disorder.
- Working with a therapist can help a person who cuts or self-injures.
- Psychotherapy can help someone manage an attention problem or a learning problem.
- People in therapy can learn to deal with the emotional side of a weight problem or a chronic illness.
- Psychotherapy can help someone whose parents are going through a separation or divorce to sort through the many feelings these changes bring.
- Therapy can help someone who has experienced a trauma, a difficult loss, or the death of someone close.
- Working with a therapist can help a family that is troubled by too much fighting or anger or a family struggling with alcoholism or other addiction problem.
- Therapy can help teens sort out common problems such as peer pressure, and it can help people build self-confidence and develop friendship skills.
- Therapy can offer a person support to get through a difficult time. Some people go to therapy to get help with managing their anger or to learn to get along better with others.

Making the decision to seek help for a problem can be hard at first. It may be your idea to go to therapy because of a problem you're having that you want to get help with. Other times, parents or teachers might bring up the idea first because they have noticed that someone they care about is dealing with a difficult situation, is losing weight, or seems unusually sad, worried, angry, or upset. Some people in this situation might welcome the idea or even feel relieved. Others might feel criticized or might not be sure about getting help at first.