

like to work on and setting goals. Some of the goals people in therapy may set include things like:

- improving self-esteem and gaining confidence
- feeling less depressed or less anxious
- doing better with friends or schoolwork
- learning to relate without arguing and managing anger
- making healthier choices (for example, about relationships or eating) and ending self-defeating behaviors

During the first visit, your therapist will probably ask you to talk a bit about yourself. This helps the therapist understand you better. The therapist will ask about the problems, concerns, and symptoms that you're having.

After one or two sessions, the therapist will probably explain his or her understanding of your situation, how therapy could help, and what the process will involve. Together, you and your therapist will decide on the goals for therapy and how frequently to meet. This may be once a week, every other week, or once a month.

Once the therapist has a full understanding of your situation, he or she might teach you new skills or help you to think about a situation in a new way. For example, therapists can help people develop better relationship skills or coping skills, including ways to build confidence, express feelings, or manage anger.

Sticking to the schedule you agree on with your therapist and going to your appointments will ensure you have enough time with your therapist to work out your concerns. If your therapist suggests a schedule that you don't think you'll be able to keep, be up front about it so you can work out an alternative.

How Private Is It?

Therapists respect the privacy of their clients, and they keep things they're told confidential. A therapist won't tell anyone else - including parents - about what a person discusses in his or her sessions unless that person gives permission. The only exception is if therapists believe their clients may harm themselves or others. If the issue of privacy and confidentiality worries you, be sure to ask your therapist about it during your first meeting. It's important to feel comfortable with your therapist so you can talk openly about your situation.

Does It Mean I'm Crazy(or a Freak)?

No. In fact, many people in your class have probably seen a therapist at some point - just like students often see tutors or coaches for extra help with schoolwork or sports. Getting help with an emotional problem is the same as getting help with a medical problem like asthma or diabetes.

There's nothing wrong with asking for help when you're faced with problems you can't solve alone. In fact, it's just the opposite. It takes a lot of courage and maturity to look for solutions to problems instead of ignoring or hiding them and allowing them to become worse. If you think that therapy could help you with a problem, ask an adult you trust - like a parent, school counselor, or doctor - to assist you in finding a therapist.

A few adults still resist the idea of therapy because they don't fully understand it, or they have outdated ideas about it. A couple of generations ago, people didn't know as much about the mind or the mind-body connection as they do today, and people were left to struggle with their problems on their own. It used to be that therapy was only available to people with the most