



What Is a Therapist?

WHAT IS A THERAPIST AND WHY WOULD I WANT TO SEE ONE?

- Therapists are mental health professionals who help you find your strength and courage to confront and make sense of potentially difficult emotions and experiences so you can learn and thrive.
- Therapists are objective sounding boards where you can share what is truly going on for you and expect that you will be heard and not judged and be given honest answers.
- Therapists are people who can help shift perspectives and maybe even be game changers.
- Therapists are skilled in helping you feel supported, showing you positive regard, demonstrating compassion, and providing guidance when asked.
- No matter what word or phrase you use to describe a therapist, at the end of the day, a therapist is someone who helps you remember that you matter and are worthy!

AS GREAT AS THERAPISTS ARE, THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT THEY ARE NOT:

- Therapists are not like your best friend. They are a paid professional who, while you will build a relationship with, have different boundaries and skills.
- Therapists are not someone who is meant to stay in your life forever. Their goal is to help you become self-sufficient so that you do not need them anymore.
- Therapists are not perfect. They may make mistakes. If that happens, they will work with you to repair the mistake.
- Therapists do not tell you what to do. They can provide guidance, give suggestions, and teach you different skills, but ultimately it is up to you to make decisions.
- Therapists are not magic. They do not have a wand or pill that will make everything better overnight. It takes work on your part to make the changes in your life from the lessons and skills you learn in therapy.

ONE LAST PIECE...TERMINOLOGY CLARIFICATIONS

You may hear “counselor/mental health counselor” and “counseling” as well as “therapist” and “therapy.” They are similar ways of saying the same thing.

And, occasionally, you may also hear psychotherapist to help differentiate from other types of therapists such as: physical, occupational, massage or other types of therapists who are not in the mental health field.