

Making the Most of Your Therapy

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Psychotherapy can be a beneficial part of many people's lives.

Working with a therapist can promote growth and healing, as well as decrease symptoms such as anxiety and depression.

Therapy is also an investment. People spend money, time and energy hoping to make themselves and their relationships healthier and happier.

Each person comes in to therapy with different hopes and expectations, as well as different problems and concerns. Just as every person and therapist is unique, every therapy experience is one of a kind.

Although there is no way to guarantee the exact road that your therapy will take, there are some things that you can do to make the most of your therapy.

- **Keep communication with your therapist open.** If things seem to be going too fast or slow, tell them. If you feel overwhelmed, mention it. Your therapist will not know what is going on unless you speak up about it.
- **Work on your problems outside of the therapy hour.** This might mean completing homework if your therapist assigns it, or practicing new behaviors. You may be asked to pay attention to your thoughts, dreams and feelings. Therapy is only one small portion of your time; many changes happen in the other hours.
- **Reach out when things get worse.** Tell your therapist if you begin to feel more depressed, anxious, or suicidal. There are things that can be done to help you and keep you safe.
- **Be honest.** Your therapist is not there to judge or critique you. Don't give the answer you think is correct, or that you believe your therapist wants to hear. State the truth. There is nothing that can't be discussed in therapy.
- **Use words rather than actions in session.** If you feel like running out of the room, say it rather than getting up and doing it. If you're so angry that you want to scream at your therapist, using words instead of actions allows you and your therapist to better understand what is going on. When you act out, the therapy session becomes focused on the behavior, rather than on the emotions behind it.
- **If you decide you want to quit, tell your therapist.** A skilled therapist will not get mad and convince you to stay in therapy. They will help identify what is going on, and what the various options are. Simply cancelling an appointment and not returning phone calls or letters can be quite concerning for a therapist.

Therapy can be extremely beneficial. Do what you can and to make the most of it.