

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR THERAPIST



RASASC
rape and sexual abuse
support centre
RAPE CRISIS
SOUTH LONDON

What is therapy?

Therapy is time set aside by you and the therapist to look at what has brought you to therapy. This might include talking about life events, (past and present), feelings, emotions, relationships, ways of thinking and patterns of behaviour. The therapist will do their best to help you to look at your issues, and to identify the right course of action for you, either to help you resolve your difficulties or help you find ways of coping. Talking about these things may take time, and will not necessarily all be included in one session. The number of sessions offered may be limited, and so it is best to ask about this in advance

Therapist qualities:

Therapists should aim to be impartial, and be able to express warmth and empathy to assist you to talk openly about your feelings and emotions. They should also be non-judgmental (this means not judging what a person discloses about themselves, their attitudes or behaviours); fair; open and trustworthy to enable a respectful working relationship to develop between them and the individual. Therapy is a very personal experience, for you and the therapist, and to a certain extent, feelings about the relationship will help determine whether you both can work effectively together. The therapist should also provide a good standard of care for you, which includes being aware of their own training, experience and limitations and referring you on when appropriate if the therapist feels unable to assist you.

The therapist should be professionally trained and qualified, and have knowledge about the issues that you want to discuss. They should be aware of their own issues and support needs and also be receiving regular supervision. Supervision is a formal arrangement for therapists to discuss their work regularly with someone external in order to maintain adequate standards of therapy. (Ideally the supervisor should not know the identity of the client). The therapist and their supervisor should be members of a recognised professional body such as the BACP, and preferably accredited by them. In the BACP Ethical Framework therapists are encouraged to develop their personal qualities in terms of their empathy, sincerity, integrity, resilience, respect, humility, competence, fairness, wisdom, and courage.

What can I ask my therapist?

It can be useful to think about the questions you would like to ask the therapist at the first meeting before you arrive and perhaps write them down. Key questions to consider are about qualifications, availability, methods of working, cost etc. You have every right to ask the counsellor about their qualifications, supervision arrangements and who they are accredited by, before you undertake therapy with them.