

A Guide to Making a Referral

This guide is intended to assist Being You Therapy when making referrals. Its primary objective is to familiarise you with the referral process and thereby increase the likelihood of a successful referral. In writing the guide, we have attempted to provide answers to the questions commonly asked of us by those seeking to make a referral.

Indications for therapy

The reasons individuals seek help from therapists are as varied as people themselves. An individual's motives for seeking therapy might range from wishing to solve a particular problem to desiring to enhance personal development. The following indications can help make a decision about referring an individual. To prevent possible overreaction to a single or isolated behaviour, it is advisable to look for clusters of signs that appear simultaneously.

Stated Need for Help. The need for help with a problem may be stated directly or indirectly. For this reason, it is essential to attend to both the content of what an individual is saying and the possible feelings and intentions accompanying their message. Listening involves hearing how things are being told, noticing the tone used, and observing the expressions and gestures employed. Special notice is to be taken of incongruities of expression or muted or extreme emotions.

Students may communicate personal problems to you via email rather than face-to-face. Others may get your attention in a written class assignment by references to emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, depression and thoughts of suicide or death.

Changes in Mood or Behaviour. Actions that are inconsistent with an individual's typical behaviour may indicate that he or she is experiencing psychological distress. An individual who withdraws from usual social interaction demonstrates an unwillingness to communicate, commits antisocial acts, has spells of unexplained crying or outbursts of anger, or demonstrates unusual irritability may be manifesting symptoms associated with a psychological problem.

Anxiety and Depression. Anxiety and depression are two of the more common psychological disturbances that can present significant problems for individuals. When these common emotional states become prolonged or severe, they can impair an individual's normal functioning. If this occurs, some kind of psychological assistance may be beneficial.

References to Suicide. While some references to suicidal thoughts or plans are more severe than others, all should be taken seriously. Of particular concern are situations when an individual alludes to a specific detail of where, when or how he or she may attempt suicide. In such cases, professional help must be sought immediately. Never assume that references

to suicidal ideas or plans are attempts at gaining attention. It is always best to err on the side of caution.

Physical Complaints. Physical distress or complaints, which seem to have no apparent cause, may indicate emotional problems. Such symptoms may include a loss of appetite or excessive eating, insomnia or excessive sleeping, gastrointestinal distress, headache or general malaise.

Traumatic Changes in Personal Relationships. Personal problems often result when an individual experiences traumatic changes in personal relationships. The death of a family member or close friend, difficulties in marriage or family relationships, divorce, changes in family responsibilities, and problems in other significant relationships can all result in increased stress and psychological challenges.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse. Excessive drinking, drug abuse, or drug dependence are almost always indicative of underlying psychological problems. At the same time, they, in turn, cause problems of their own. Both the substance abuse and the emotional issues may warrant referral for professional attention.

How to refer

When it's determined that an individual might benefit from professional therapy, we suggest the following guidelines:

1. Use a direct approach with the individual and express concern for his or her welfare. Do not attempt to deceive or manipulate the individual into seeking therapy. Make it clear that this recommendation represents your best judgment based on your assessment of his or her particular problem(s). Be specific regarding the behaviours that have raised your concerns, and avoid making generalisations about their meanings for the individual.
2. Anticipate the individual's concerns and fears about seeking therapy. Be prepared to discuss them. Some typical concerns are presented in the next section.
3. Get in touch with one of our partner therapists and make preparations to hand the individual over to them. In the meantime, if there are any available self-help resources, signpost the individual to these for support until the therapist sees them.

Leave the option open, except in emergencies, for the individual to accept or refuse therapy. If the individual is sceptical or reluctant for whatever reason, simply express your acceptance of those feelings so that your helping relationship with the individual is not jeopardised. Give the individual an opportunity to consider other alternatives by suggesting that they might need some time to think it over. If the individual emphatically says "no," then respect that decision and again leave the situation open for possible reconsideration at a later time.

Concerns about counselling

Individuals often have many concerns about seeking assistance for emotional problems that, if not directly discussed, can deter their acting upon a referral. It is helpful to anticipate

these issues and subsequently make factual, encouraging, and appropriate responses. Here are some examples:

Concern: Only crazy people go to counselling (and I'm not crazy).

Response: I don't think you are crazy. People go to counselling for all kinds of problems. In the UK, approximately 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem each year. It's more common than you would think, and it's not just for crazy people.

Concern: Going for counselling is a sign of weakness. It shows I can't handle my problems.

Response: You are capable of handling most of your problems. There are some, however, that are difficult to handle alone. Recognising when you need assistance and then getting it is a sign of good problem-solving ability.

Concern: Counselling won't work for me. It's not effective.

Response: There is indeed no guaranteed result. However, there is a high probability that counselling will be helpful to some extent. It helps many individuals every year, and it could work for you. Give it a try; you can always decide whether it is valuable or not.

Concern: The therapist will tell other people about my problem.

Response: What you share with a counsellor is considered confidential. Information is not released to anyone (parents, friends, instructors) without your permission.

Confidentiality

Professional bodies dictate that sessions conducted by therapists are confidential in nature. Information about those sessions or their content will be released only (a) upon an individual's written request, (b) in circumstances which would result in clear, imminent danger to the individual or others, or as may be required by law. Being You Therapy adheres strictly to this policy. Each therapist will have a detailed confidentiality policy that is available to clients upon request for more information.

The therapy process

Individuals who have not been to counselling may want to know what happens. We follow a uniform set of procedures that make up our "intake" process:

1. The individual completes a referral form. The form takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and includes basic demographic information (age, major, address, etc.) and questions to determine their issues.
2. The individual is introduced to a therapist. All counselling sessions are conducted in private.
3. The therapist begins with an Initial Consultation. Typically, it will be 30-45 minutes. Some of that time is devoted to establishing a good rapport and putting the individual at ease. They're encouraged to express their concerns. The purpose of the session is to make an initial assessment of the client's concerns, contributing factors, and coping strategies. The therapist will determine whether they can be of assistance and will either accept or decline the client. If, for whatever reason, the

therapist is unable to support the individual, Being You Therapy will seek other means to help the individual.

4. The therapist schedules subsequent sessions when appropriate. Generally, the counsellor who does the Initial Consultation will see the client for later sessions.

Available therapy services

Being You Therapy is in the process of identifying partner therapy individuals or organisations that can provide therapeutic support to clients.

Crisis intervention

We do not support individuals with crisis intervention. Other organisations are more equipped and experienced in this area, and should we interact with someone who requires it, we'll signpost them accordingly.

- Local GP
- A&E department
- Samaritans on their freephone number 116 123 or through their website (<https://www.samaritans.org>)

Helpful contact information

Anxiety UK - Advice and support for people living with anxiety

- 03444 775 774 (helpline)
- 07537 416 905 (text)
- anxietyuk.org.uk

Beat - Under 18s helpline, webchat and online support groups for people with eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia

- 0808 801 0711 (youthline)
- 0808 801 0811 (studentline)
- beateatingdisorders.co.uk

Childline - Support for children and young people in the UK, including a free helpline and 1-2-1 online chats with counsellors

- 0800 1111
- childline.org.uk

FRANK - Confidential advice and information about drugs, their effects and the law

- 0300 123 6600
- talktofrank.com

NSPCC - Support and information for children and anyone worried about a child

- 0800 800 5000 (for adults concerned about a child)
- 0800 1111 (18 or under – Childline helpline)
- nspcc.org.uk

No Panic - Charity offering support for sufferers of panic attacks and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

- 0330 606 1174
- nopanic.org.uk/no-panic-youth-hub

Refuge - Help and support for young people affected by domestic violence

- 0808 200 0247
- refuge.org.uk

Victim Support - Provides emotional and practical support for people affected by crime and traumatic events

- 0808 168 9111
- victimsupport.org.uk