

Time to get talking?

Discovering the right kind of therapy for you could be the key to freeing your mind

Struggling emotionally and don't know where to turn? Talking therapies can help, but only 14%* of Brits choose to see a medical professional and, instead, turn to friends and family in times of stress. Yet this could mean missing out on vital support and advice from someone with expert knowledge. Not sure if you would benefit from therapy? Here's everything that you should know...

Don't keep delaying

Not sure when to seek help? Don't delay for too long. 'The "right" time is very subjective,' says psychotherapist and hypnotherapist Nick Davies. 'But, if your emotional issues are affecting your daily life and relationships, then it's probably the right time – and it's easier and quicker to treat the earlier a therapist sees you.'

Meet our expert...



Nick Davies is a psychotherapist and hypnotherapist (ndhypnotherapy.com) and creator of the BLAST Technique (blast-technique.com).

Speak to your GP

Talking therapies are available on the NHS, but you may have to join a waiting list. Want to pay to be seen privately? Your GP or local surgery should have information on what's available. 'Some GPs refer to private practices now,' says Nick. 'Do your research and feel free to get a second opinion.'



Virtual therapy
Don't want to speak to someone in person or can't travel? Try online therapy. Glyde offers sessions with registered professionals via video call. From £45 per session at glyde.co.



Eye Movement Desensitisation Therapy (EMDR)

EMDR involves techniques such as moving your eyes from side to side while recalling a painful memory. This might sound strange, but there's preliminary evidence to say it can reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. It's thought to work by changing how your brain processes information.
Duration of treatment: 'Once a week for six to 30 or more sessions,' says Nick.

Psychotherapy

Low self-esteem? It could stem from something that happened years ago. You'll talk about the past, your beliefs, upbringing and how it all affects your life – and think about how to break ingrained patterns. 'You could look back at events from 10 years ago,' says Nick. It can be a painful process. 'Sessions can also include art, music or drama,' says Nick. 'In some cases, families are offered sessions together.'
Duration of treatment: 'You'll usually meet your therapist once a week, for months or years,' says Nick.



Who should you choose?

Take into account the age and gender of who you see. 'If you're working with an issue that concerns your father, a male therapist of that age could be best as he may be able to represent a more positive role model,' says Nick. 'But rapport is most important, especially

when it comes to mental health. Picking someone who offers a free taster session can help you find this.' And if you're not happy? 'Trust your gut and change – working with the wrong therapist can mean that you either don't change or it takes far too long.'

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Unlike other talking treatments, CBT deals with your current problems, rather than focusing on your past. It's great for those with anxiety or depression. 'It looks for practical ways to improve your state of mind on a daily basis,' says Nick. You'll learn about different strategies, including mindfulness, which involves bringing yourself back to what you're doing in the present moment instead of getting overwhelmed by obsessive thoughts.

Duration of treatment: 'Expect to see your therapist for an hour each week, for between five and 20 sessions,' says Nick.

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP)

Created in the 1970s, NLP is based on the theory that by tweaking your physical actions, you can change what happens in your brain. One technique is anchoring – you visualise yourself at your most confident, then link this feeling to an action, such as pinching your thumb and forefinger together. Next time you need to feel confident, do the same pinch to get to that state. 'It suits those who have phobias, limiting beliefs and addictions,' says Nick.

Duration of treatment: 'On average, you'll need four sessions,' says Nick.



Strengthen your relationship
Relate offers neutral counselling for couples, and you don't need to be referred by your GP. Prices vary according to location. Find out more at relate.org.uk.

Hypnotherapy

Want to break negative patterns? By helping you relax, think positively and picture your goals, hypnosis can help you change how you think, feel and behave. And it can be beneficial for everything from bad habits to stress. But forget what you've seen on TV, 'You're in control,' says Nick.
Duration of treatment: 'Expect to go once a week for up to 12 sessions,' says Nick.



*CIGNA. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP. COMPILED BY: FAYE M SMITH, PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY