

Some frequent questions about therapy for children and adolescents

How do I explain what therapy is to my child?

In the first session, I will explain to you and your child what my role will be and what therapy is about. But, it is important that you are also clear with your child before we first meet about what therapy is and why we are meeting. It is unhelpful to tell your child that they are meeting a “new friend” or that they are going somewhere “just to play” – this can be confusing for them.

You can explain that therapy is a safe place for them to express their feelings, and to help them feel better. You can tell them that they won't be forced to talk about or do anything they don't want to. You could also say that therapy isn't just talking; that for children it often involves playing and art.

What if I want to discuss any issues or incidents regarding my child in private?

We are unable to leave young children unsupervised in another room to talk privately, due to health and safety reasons. So if there is something you would like to discuss without your child being present, please phone me in advance, or arrange a time to have a session on your own, so you can talk freely without your child listening.

Can I ask my child questions about how they are going in therapy?

Depending on why we are meeting, sessions may be held with you and your child, with them alone, or even just with you. If your child is attending individual sessions, it's understandable that you want to know how sessions went. You can ask general questions such as, “Did you have fun?”; however, it is not appropriate to ask your child what they said or did in their therapy session as it is a safe and private space. Your child will share with you what they want to. It is not helpful to push for information as this can affect their feelings of safety in the therapy process.

How much feedback do I get?

If I am meeting with your child for individual sessions, due to confidentiality and privacy reasons, I can only share with you themes or issues that emerged in sessions and progress in therapy. Unless I am concerned for your child's safety, I will not disclose specific information from sessions. My role is to create a safe space for your child to express themselves freely without the fear that their information will be shared with their family.

What if my child's behaviour worsens during therapy?

It is very normal if your child's behaviour seems to get worse when they start therapy, particularly if they have experienced trauma. Therapy can bring up lots of feelings for your child when they begin to work through their issues, and some of these feelings may be negative. When children are feeling angry, confused, upset, scared, or sad, they may act out and misbehave at school and/or at home. It is important to remember that this will pass over time, and to be patient, as it can be a very difficult time for your child. I can help you to use strategies to address these difficult behaviours if they arise.

What can I do?

Therapy is a process that requires routine and consistency. It is important that you try your best to bring your child to each arranged session so that your child has an opportunity to work through their issues in a structured and safe way. If you decide to stop therapy, it is not beneficial to finish therapy without a closing session. It is important that your child has the chance to have a positive goodbye and to reflect on all the hard work they have achieved during the process.

If you have any further questions, please call me at the number below