

Considering Therapy

There are many reasons people seek therapy or counselling. Those who make the decision to access a therapeutic counselling service may have questioned themselves many times along the way about therapy's potential value.

Families are interactive, relationship-based units, dynamic and subject to change. Whether it is positive or negative, internal or external to the family, change can create stress and this can lead to changes in family interactions and relationships.

Family life can be complex, particularly when permanent care or adoption are part of the mix. Loss of previous relationships, differing styles of communication, the pre-placement experiences of your child, or cultural difference may disrupt a family's ability to successfully connect. When this occurs it can be experienced as a loss of enjoyment or disconnection to and with each other.

Frustration, anger, anxiety, grief and sadness are common and normal experiences within all families, however sometimes these feelings can become overwhelming. When children find their feelings overwhelming, this may present as difficult behaviour. Our ability to respond appropriately to that behaviour then becomes crucial.

A therapist can provide an independent third party to: listen and assist in exploring new ways of seeing and responding to issues, and help to strengthen your existing skills to best suit your family and your life. Therapy may provide helpful tools to refocus and become better connected as family. Therapists do not solve problems; they assist people to resolve their own.

A good therapist will be happy to discuss any concerns you may have prior to making a commitment to engage in therapy. For more information on this process, see our Engaging a Therapist fact sheet.

When you think about accessing therapy do any of these thoughts stop you?

- I will be embarrassed.
- I will feel uncomfortable.
- I will be judged.
- It's too overwhelming.
- I'll handle it on my own.
- I should be able to cope.
- I can't afford it.
- Don't know where to go.
- Won't help anyway.
- Tried it, didn't like it.
- It's just a stage.
- All children go through this.
- What if something is really wrong?

If these thoughts have crossed your mind when considering therapy, you are not alone.

Related Permanent Care and Adoptive Families fact sheets:

Fact sheet: [Better Access to Mental Health Care Initiative](#)

Fact sheet: [Engaging a Therapist](#)

Fact sheet: [Post Placement Support Service Specialist Database](#)

Fact sheet: [Seeing Your GP](#)

All fact sheets are available at: <http://www.pcafamilies.org.au/resources/pcafamilies-fact-sheets>

Other links and further information

Kids Matter, *Resources for your journey*, links to information and resources around child mental health: www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/resources-your-journey

For more general information on mental health as it relates to children and families in permanent care and adoption, visit: www.pcafamilies.org.au/resources/external-information/mental-health

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