

## What to Expect

Going to therapy for the first time or even returning or recommencing therapy can often be overwhelming. Lots of us have images from movies or books about what it might be like or perhaps you have seen a mental health clinician in the past and come along with expectations from that experience. At AWI Consulting we believe that we do things a bit differently. We have put together this information for you so that you feel more prepared for your first session.

There is no easy way to say this... therapy can be tough. It's not always going to be smooth sailing and sometimes people have reported that things can actually get a bit worse before they start to get better. It's a bit like picking the scab off an old wound that we have had, in some cases for many years. By doing that we begin to open up and unravel years of difficult and hard stuff, which is part of the journey to healing.

One of the most common questions we get asked is, how long will it take? Unfortunately, we can't answer that, as it is very individual and the speed of which people make progress, is an individual journey. There is no magic number of sessions that it takes until you notice change or until you no longer feel as though you require therapy to assist you on your life journey. Depending on what you're coming for help with, it can take a few sessions, several weeks, months or even years. Therapy is not a quick fix, but rather an investment to gain lifelong solutions and skills.

At AWI Consulting, we really value a client centered approach. What that means, is that YOU make the decisions about your therapy. We like to say that you are driving the car. You are in control of the brake, the accelerator, the blinkers. You get to speed up or slow down, turn left or turn right. As the clinician we are right beside you in your journey and we often help to decipher the road map, fill the car up with fuel and navigate, but ultimately this is your journey and you are in control.

Therapy is an investment and we really want you to achieve as much as possible during your time with AWI Consulting. A few things to consider before therapy begins may be;

- *Have I got the time and resources to invest in therapy?*
- *Am I at a stage in my life where I have the headspace and energy to undertake therapy and am I ready?*
- *If I have children – do I have someone to care for the children while I attend sessions?*
- *If the sessions are for my child, do I have the time to attend these sessions with my child and be present for them before, during and after each session?*

When you call AWI Consulting to book a session, our incredible admin team will guide you through the intake process. They will ask a few questions and gather some info so that you can be placed with the clinician that is going to be best suited to your needs. AWI Consulting have a highly skilled team of clinicians, that can provide effective treatment for clients with mental health conditions or disabilities that respond well to focused psychological strategies. We do not use a 'one size fits all' model, but rather we tailor our therapy to each client's needs and their story. At AWI we use a number of different approaches from a vast array of evidence- based therapies.

We really care about each and every one of you, and we want this journey to be the best it can be, with the best outcomes. So, with that said, if you meet your clinician for the first time and something doesn't feel right... we won't be offended, please let us know so that we can find you someone that will be best placed for you. Feeling comfortable and connected with your clinician is vital to successful treatment.

When you arrive for your first session (which will last for 50 minutes) your clinician will meet you in the waiting room and take you through to a consult room. There are lots of awesome things in these rooms, including comfy lounges with cushions, bean bags, sensory items, therapy toys and most importantly an amazing clinician who is going to roll their sleeves up and give you 100% and be an important part of your journey with you.

During this first session, your clinician will have some initial paper work to complete with you. They will begin by asking you questions about what has been happening for you recently, and may take a dive back in time to find out when these difficulties began. Your clinician will explore a little bit about you, your background, family history and any other relevant factors. This ensures that we can put together an accurate picture and provide you with the best kind of treatment.

One of the most important things that your clinician will do with you during the first or second session is explore your 'goals of therapy'. What we mean by this is how will you know that coming to therapy is working? What will be different in your life? We want to give you the most bang for your buck and work together to provide you with the best possible outcomes. Throughout the series of sessions, your clinician will regularly check in on your goals and the progress made towards achieving these goals.

Your clinician might assign "homework", as we can only get so much done in our allotted 50-minute session. Getting to know your triggers, reactions, routines and coping mechanisms will help your clinician to best tailor strategies for you to practice between sessions. A number of studies have been undertaken looking at frequency of sessions support recovery. For example, we know that regular weekly sessions support speed of recovery more than fortnightly sessions. Our clinicians use evidence-based outcome measures to assess your recovery and align these to your individual therapy goals. Clarifying what you want from therapy can help you figure out if you have met your goals and when you are ready to stop therapy.

If you have any questions or concerns or you unsure about anything, we would love to hear from you. You can contact our admin team on 0457 084 956 or, of course chat to your clinician. Please have a squiz through our website for more information on what we do, how we do it and to check out the amazing clinicians we have on our team. We really look forward to getting to know you, working hard with you and walking alongside you on your journey.

The AWI Consulting team.