

Supporting a young person to attend therapy

Young people are more likely to engage when adults explain the purpose honestly and leave room for questions, privacy and choice.

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

Describe therapy accurately and without using it as a threat or punishment.

- Explain that therapy is a place to understand and work on a problem.
- Share what the young person can expect and what remains uncertain.
- Invite questions, including questions about confidentiality.

PRIVACY AND SAFETY

Avoid promising complete secrecy or expecting a detailed report after every session.

- The psychologist should explain privacy and its limits in age-appropriate language.
- Adults can share important context without asking the young person to carry every message.
- Safety concerns may require information to be shared.

SUPPORT ENGAGEMENT

A steady, curious stance is usually more helpful than pressure.

- Ask what made the session easier or harder without demanding content.
- Notice effort, honesty and small changes rather than only symptom reduction.
- Help with practical barriers such as transport, timing and reminders.

ADULT INVOLVEMENT

The amount of adult involvement depends on age, need, consent and the clinical task.

- Agree how parent or carer updates will work.
- Keep goals focused on the young person's wellbeing, not only adult convenience.
- Review the arrangement as trust and needs change.

Keep the resource in context

This handout provides general guidance. The treating psychologist should explain the specific confidentiality, consent and adult-involvement arrangements for the young person.