
A Parent's Guide to Therapy for Children



Kids and teens often go through good days and tough days — it's just a normal part of growing up. However, feelings like sadness, anxiety, or anger can at times be intense or stick around long enough that they make life harder at home or school, which may get in the way of your child's well-being and success. While not all children need therapy, talking to a therapist can help your child feel better and provide you with tools to help manage challenging behaviors.

At Modern Health, our therapists specialize in supporting children, teens, and families. This means they are experts in understanding how young people think and feel, challenges they might experience at different ages, and the best ways to help them and their parents work through tough times together. Therapists have either a master's (M.A. or M.S.) or doctoral degree (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) in clinical psychology or a related field and are licensed or registered according to regional regulations. You can [easily find a Modern Health therapist who works with kids or teens](#), and most families start care in less than one day. It's completely normal to have questions, especially if therapy is new for your family.

To help you get started, here are some answers to common questions about therapy for children.



1. What is therapy?

Therapy involves you and/or your child working with a trained mental health professional to address emotional and behavioral challenges and learn practical tools for daily life at home, in school, or with friends. Think of your child's therapist as a skilled guide who helps understand your child's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, identifies what may be getting in the way, and works with you to develop a plan for positive change.

At times, therapy may involve parent-only sessions to provide you with strategies and support for helping your child. Extensive research demonstrates that therapy is effective and leads to better outcomes at home, in school, and in social settings. Therapy helps kids and teens develop effective and healthy coping skills to manage their emotions and behaviors long-term.

2. What are issues that therapy can help address?

Modern Health therapists support children and teens with a wide variety of concerns, both big and small. Common areas we help with include:

- Anxiety
- Low mood or depression
- Confidence or self-esteem
- Behavioral challenges
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- Family concerns
- Social skills
- Divorce or separation
- Learning or school difficulties
- Sleep
- Grief
- Trauma

Some of our therapists also have expertise in more specific areas like Autism spectrum disorder or other neuro-divergent conditions, obsessive-compulsive disorder, disordered eating, and substance use concerns. Our therapists are also experienced in helping youth who are exploring questions about gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, or identity. Whatever your child or teen is facing, our therapists are here to provide support that fits their unique needs.

3. How do I know when my child needs therapy?

Most kids and teens go through ups and downs, but therapy can be helpful when emotional or behavioral struggles are **intense, last for several weeks, or start to get in the way of daily life**.

Signs that your child may benefit from therapy include:

- Significant changes in mood or behavior
- Withdrawing from friends or family
- Problems at school
- Acting out
- Trouble sleeping
- Excessive sadness, worrying, or anger
- Engaging in or talking about self-harm or suicide
- Big life changes (e.g., divorce, loss of a loved one)

If you notice your child repeating behaviors that concern you, expressing thoughts of self-harm, or if you're feeling stuck trying to help on your own, it's a good idea to seek support. Research shows that getting help early can lead to better outcomes for your child's emotional health and daily functioning. If you're unsure whether your child needs therapy, scheduling a single evaluation with a therapist is a helpful way to get a professional opinion and guidance. There's no need to commit to ongoing sessions right away. Sometimes just that first conversation can give you peace of mind or help you decide if more support might be helpful.



4. What happens in a typical child or teen therapy session?

In a typical child or teen therapy session, whether in person or virtually, Modern Health therapists create a welcoming space to get to know your child and build trust together. Sessions often include activities like talking, guided reflection, drawing, playing therapeutic games, and learning new coping skills to help your child share feelings and learn emotion regulation skills — such as calming down when upset, putting emotions into words, or positively reframing negative thoughts. These approaches are backed by research, and studies show that virtual therapy can be just as helpful as in-person care when activities are adapted for video sessions.

Sessions usually last between 45 and 60 minutes and can occur weekly or as needed. The first sessions focus on learning about your child's strengths, challenges, and background, with some initial sessions often only with parents, so you can share information and ask questions more freely. Your therapist will work with you and your child to set goals for therapy and may give progress updates or invite you to join sessions as helpful. How long therapy lasts is different for every child — some may only need a few sessions, while others need more time and support. It's normal and important to regularly check in with your child's therapist. You may talk about how things are going, what skills are effective or not, and whether new strategies or a change in the therapy plan might be helpful as your child grows and their needs change.

5. How can therapy help my child?

Therapy helps children and teens by teaching real-life skills, like managing big emotions, handling disappointment or stress, solving problems, and building strong relationships at home, in school, and with friends. Research shows that with this support, kids are better able to cope with life's ups and downs. As a parent, you can also gain actionable strategies in therapy for supporting your child's growth, responding effectively to their needs, and navigating challenges together. These tools strengthen your family's communication, resilience, and mental health now and for the future.

Therapy can support your family by helping your child:

- Put feelings into words instead of acting out
- Use strategies to handle stress, anger, sadness, or worry
- Gain confidence and practice coping skills for daily challenges
- Improve behavior at home and school
- Build stronger friendships and family relationships



6. Is what my child says in therapy private?

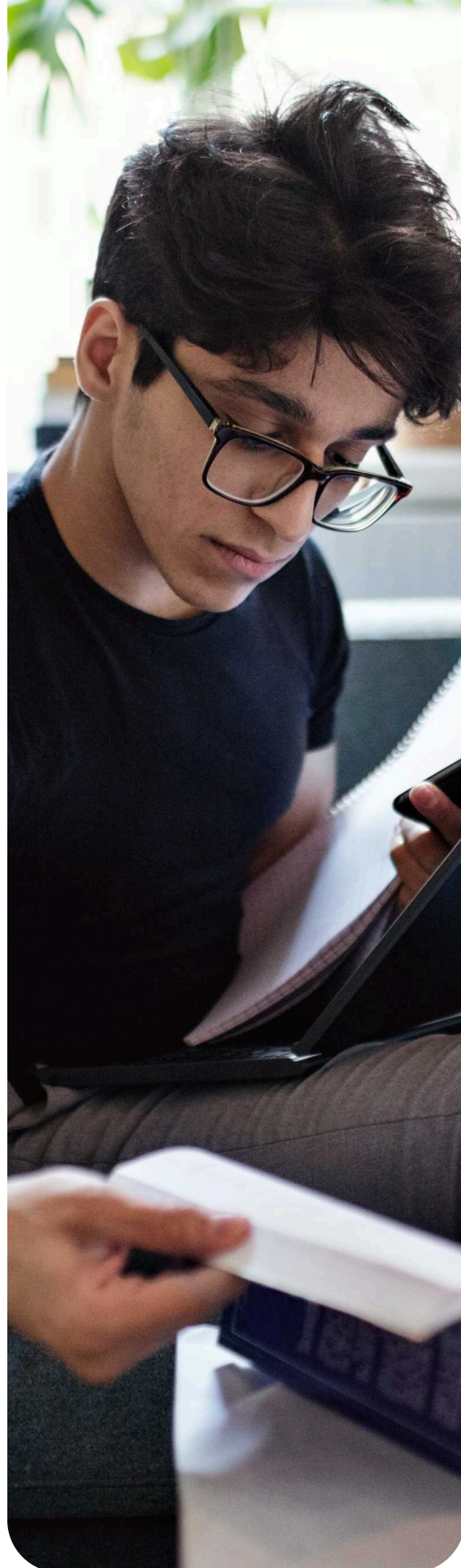
Yes, what your child says in therapy is kept private, with a few important exceptions. Therapists follow strict professional rules about privacy and confidentiality. They will share general updates or ideas for support with you, but won't necessarily disclose everything your child states unless there's a safety concern (for example, if your child is at risk of harm or harming someone else). Your therapist will review these exceptions to confidentiality and answer any questions you may have about your child's privacy at any time during therapy. Asking this question during the first session is a good place to start.

7. What if my child doesn't want to go to therapy?

When a child or teen is unsure or resistant about going to therapy, it's completely normal, and there are supportive ways to help. Here are some tips to discuss therapy with your child:

- Try to talk about therapy during a calm moment, not right after a conflict or problem.
- Listen carefully to your child's worries and let them know it's okay to feel nervous or have questions.
- Remind them that therapy isn't a punishment or a sign something is "wrong" — it's a place to learn new skills and feel better, sometimes through activities like talking, drawing, or games.

You can help reduce fear and stigma by explaining that therapy is simply extra support, much like having a coach or guide. Sharing examples like, "It's okay to feel unsure — therapy is a chance to talk about anything you want, and someone will help you figure things out," can make it feel less intimidating. Letting your child have some say in the process or meeting the therapist together for the first time can help them feel more comfortable and in control. Remember, many children feel hesitant at first, but therapists are trained to help them settle in at their own pace.



8. How do I sign my child up for Modern Health therapy?

[Register for Modern Health](#) and get started with therapy for your child. Therapy is available for children 0+ years old in the U.S. and 6+ years old internationally.

How to access therapy for minor dependents

- On your Home screen, select “Get care for your family”
- Select “Add family member”
- Enter your minor dependent’s information and answer a few questions about their needs and preferences
- Modern Health will provide a list of options for therapists who are a good fit

How adult dependents (18+) can access therapy

To access therapy, your adult dependents can:

- Visit my.modernhealth.com and select “Sign up”
- Select “For family members (ages 18+)”
- Under “Company name or code,” enter your employer’s name or code, select “Continue,” and enter additional details
- From the Home screen under “Your 1:1 Care,” select “Explore your care options”
- Select “Work with a therapist”

Modern Health Therapy Resources

Educational Guides

- [Your Guide to Therapy](#)
- [Navigating Children and Adolescents Through Stressful Events](#)
- [Modern Health for Your Children and Adolescents](#)

Self-Guided Digital Resources

- [How to Know If Your Kid Needs Therapy](#)
- [Therapy for All](#)
- [Support Your Child’s Mental Health](#)

On-Demand Circle

- [Supporting Your Child’s Mental Health](#)

