



What to Say to Your Child about Seeing a Therapist

If you have a broken arm or a bad cold, you go to the doctor for help and to feel better, right? Well, sometimes kids and adults have problems that can't be seen as easily as a broken bone or a runny nose. When people have troubles with their feelings or the way they act, sometimes they see someone called a therapist or counselor. These are people who have gone to school for special training in the way people think and feel and know how to help people feel better. The ones that see kids know a lot about kid stuff, like how kids think, how they grow up, and how they see the world. They are all experts who specialize in helping kids solve problems and deal with tough situations. They do their work mainly by talking or playing with kids to help them figure out what is causing the problems at school or at home. A therapist can help kids figure stuff out so they can feel better.

Why Would a Kid Get This Kind of Help?

There are many reasons to see a therapist or counselor, but the biggest reason is so that kids can start feeling better. Maybe a kid is having trouble getting along with her or his classmates, brothers or sisters, or their mom or dad. Or maybe they're having problems learning or paying attention in class, or doing their homework and their grades aren't as good as mom or dad think they could be.

Other reasons to go see a therapist could be that a kid is very shy and has trouble making friends or that they feel sad, afraid, or anxious a lot. If a kid's parents get divorced, or if someone who is close to them dies, seeing a therapist is a great way to talk about their feelings.

Sometimes kids can be the victims of abuse, and some kids your age can even have problems eating. These are all types of problems that can often get better by going to see a therapist.

What Happens There?

During an appointment, you won't be examined on a table like you are at a typical doctor visit. You'll play, draw, and sometimes talk. There are no needles or shots. You can tell the therapist as much or as little about anything as you like.

On your first visit, your mom or dad might come in with you. The three of you may play together or talk about your feelings or why you have come to see the therapist. After you feel comfortable, your mom or dad can wait for you outside. You may have regular appointments every week. You can choose to tell people that you are going to these appointments, or you can decide not to share this information. Who you tell, or if you tell, is your decision.

Getting Help Is No Big Deal

Some kids feel that getting this kind of help makes them weak or means they are "crazy." But that is not true. If you need help, seeing a therapist is the right thing to do. Everyone has problems sometimes, and it's smart to take charge and work them out.