

Someone To Talk To

GETTING GOOD AT
FEELING BETTER

by Paola Conte, PhD, Cheryl Sterling, PhD,
and Larissa Labay, PsyD

illustrated by Claire Keay

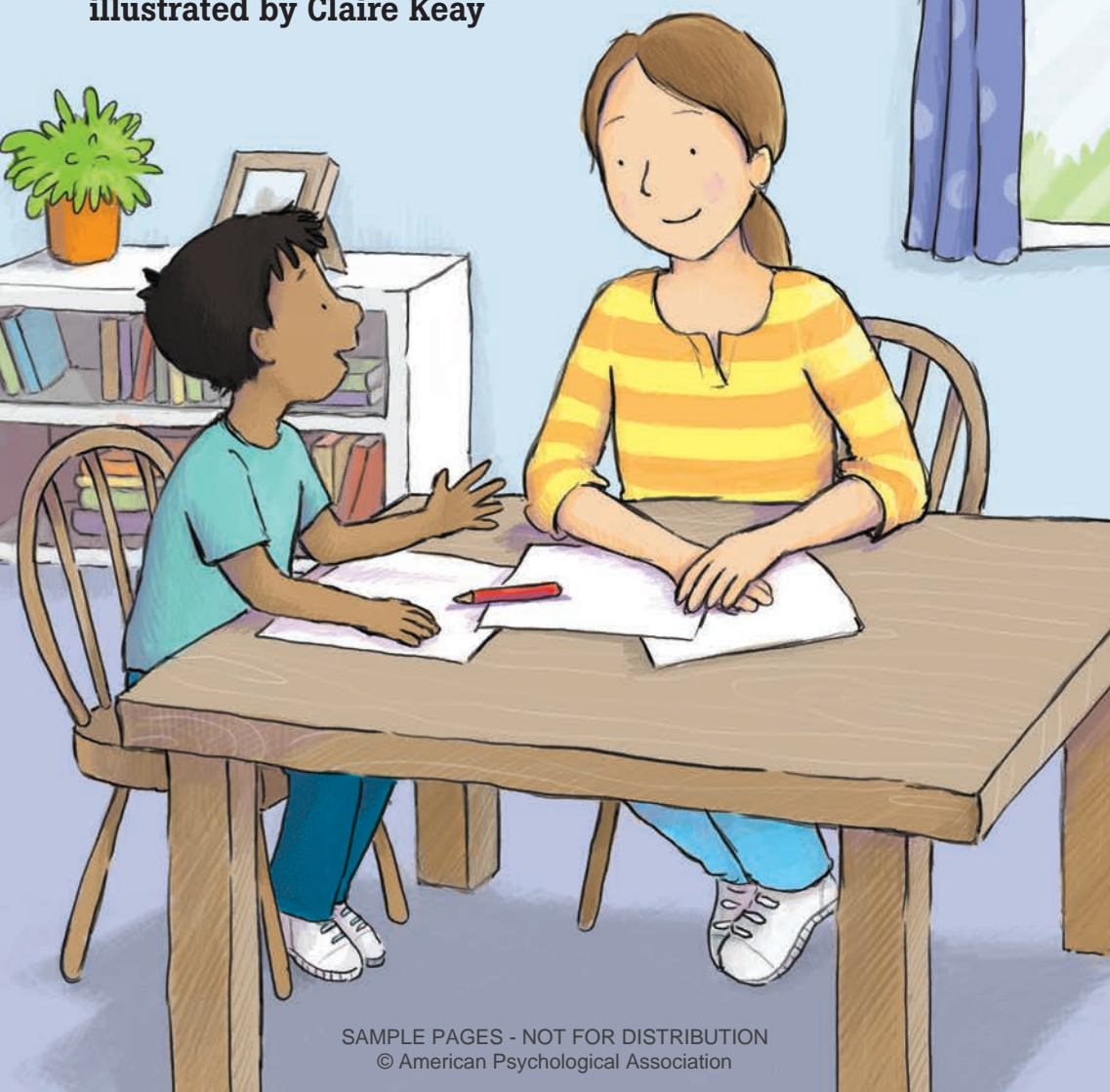


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CHECK-IN #1: BEFORE THERAPY

(You can fill this out on your own, or with your parent or therapist.)

This is my problem:

These are my thoughts:

This is the way my body feels:

This is how I've already tried to solve it:

Did my strategy work?

Chapter One

Starting Therapy

YOU AND YOUR FAMILY have decided that now is a good time for you to start to meet with a therapist. Starting therapy is a big change, and it makes sense for you to be unsure about what's going to happen. You probably have a lot of questions about what this will be like. This book will try to answer some of these questions. It is also okay to ask your therapist any questions you may have.

Like lots of kids, you may be thinking:



Why do I need to go to therapy in the first place?

And if I go, how many times will I go?

What if it doesn't work?

*Will my parents be too worried or mad
if I tell them what's bothering me?*

Why can't I just talk to my mom and dad?

Why won't my problem just go away?

Why can't I solve my own problems?

*Does this mean that my problem
will never go away?*



Here are some questions other kids have asked:

What will the office look like?

Each therapist's office will look different. Usually there is a room with chairs called a waiting room where people can sit while they are waiting to meet with their therapist. Some waiting rooms may have a small table and chairs for kids to sit at if they want to. They usually have plenty of books, magazines, and puzzles to keep you busy while you wait. The waiting room may also have water in case you get thirsty.

Who will be with me when I meet my therapist?

Someone who cares about you will come with you to therapy. You won't have to get started alone! A grown-up who loves you will be there at first so they can learn how to help you at home. Sometimes this grown-up might join you and your therapist in your meetings.

What will I do when I am meeting with my therapist?

The first thing most therapists do is try to help you feel safe and comfortable. You might play a game or draw a picture first. Usually your therapist will ask if you know why you have come to meet them that day. If you don't know or you can't remember, it's OK. Your therapist will explain it to you, or remind you if you have forgotten.

How often and how long will I need to go to see my therapist?

Most therapists meet with their patients once a week for about 45 minutes each time depending on what problems they are trying to solve. Then, your therapist, a grown-up who loves you, and you will decide when the problem you are trying to solve is feeling easier to manage. The goal of therapy is to help you feel more like yourself and better able to do all of the stuff a person your age feels comfortable doing. When you reach this goal, you may be ready to take a break from meeting with your therapist. One of the things you will discuss

when it is getting close to the time to stop meeting with your therapist is the reason you started to come in the first place. You, your parent or caring adult, and your therapist will all decide together if you are doing better and may be ready to stop.



Why can't I just talk to my mom and dad?

Many times kids are helped by talking to people who they don't see every day and who aren't in their regular lives. Parents can help with solving problems but sometimes it can be useful to talk to someone else. Most parents will understand if you tell them something is bothering you and you need help to figure out what to do about it. A lot of parents will think that talking to a therapist may really help.

Am I the only kid who is going to see a therapist?

You are definitely not the only one who talks to a therapist. Your therapist meets with a lot of other kids during the day. Not everyone has the same things to talk about but many other kids need help to solve problems too.

Will my therapist tell everyone what I say?

You have probably heard the word private. It has to do with something you keep all to yourself. Maybe it means a secret joke you tell one friend. But the stuff you say to your therapist is also private. Another word for private is confidential. You, your parent, and your therapist are the only ones who know about it. And even though you can tell other people about therapy if you and your parent think it's OK, your therapist will always keep it private. Your therapist won't tell your secrets to anyone.

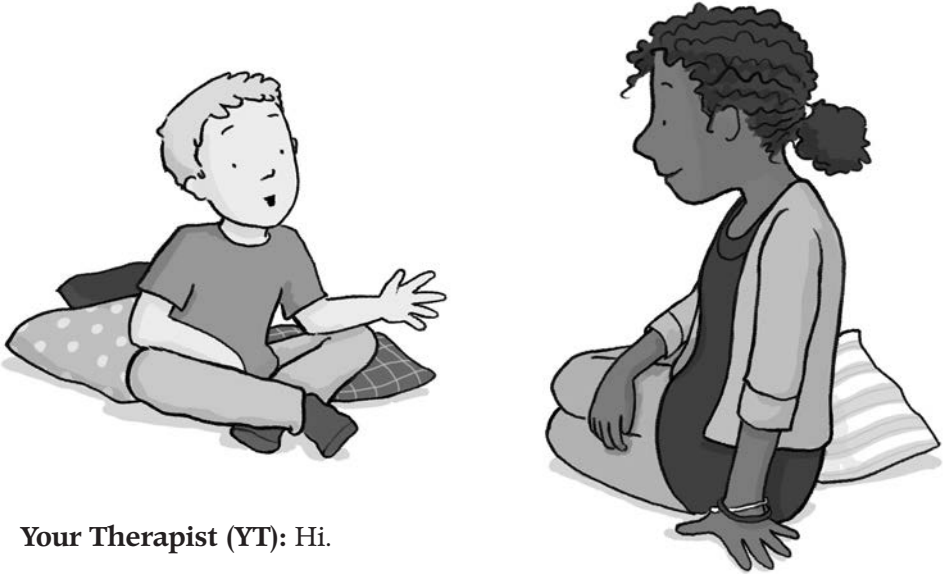
Should I tell people that I am seeing a therapist?

It is up to you what you say to others about talking to a therapist. Sometimes the grown-ups in your house may have ideas about this too, so you can ask them what they think. But you are in charge of telling or not telling someone.

Will my problem ever go away?

Talking to a therapist is sometimes the best way to work on figuring out new ways to solve problems. Many things that bother kids are too big to just go away on their own. Lots of times it can help to work on strategies to deal directly with a problem to make sure you can get rid of it as quickly and easily as possible. Most problems do go away and if yours feels like it won't, a therapist can help you feel like you are in control of lots of things even if your problem is still there in some way.

Your first meeting might go something like this:



Your Therapist (YT): Hi.

You: Hi.

YT: TJ is a cool name. What does it stand for?

You: Thomas James but I hate that.

YT: I'm so glad you told me that! I would never want to call you by a name you don't like! You can tell me anything that you want to. For example, if I suggest we play a game that you can't stand, please tell me. It's not like school where you have to do math no matter what. You get to help me pick what we talk about and what we do together. Your opinion matters and I want to know what you think.

You: Hmmmm...

YT: Do you know why you came here today? It's OK if you don't. Lots of people aren't sure or don't want to say at first. Why don't you ask me any questions about what you want to know about me to get started.

You: OK!

Remember, therapy is all about helping you! Your therapist will do their best to make the transition easy and comfortable.

Therapy can be intimidating for anyone, and even more so for children. *Someone To Talk To* is a straightforward and interactive guide to help children through the therapy process. It is an invaluable therapy accompaniment that covers what to expect, how to prepare, and tips for wrapping up. The pages are full of helpful activities to use before, after, and in conjunction with therapy, as well as useful everyday tools and coping strategies.

Also included are separate introductions for parents and caregivers and for children, with more information about therapy, and how and why to use this book and its activities.

Authors Paola Conte, PhD, Cheryl Sterling, PhD, and Larissa Labay, PsyD, are pediatric psychologists in private practice who specialize in providing cognitive-behavioral therapy to children, adolescents, and adults.



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