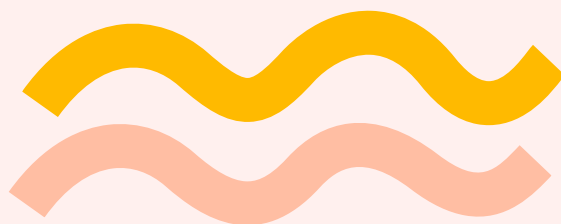


# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD TO SEE A PSYCHOLOGIST

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Seeing a psychologist can be a positive and helpful experience for children and teenagers, but it's important to prepare them so they feel comfortable and informed. Here's a guide to help you talk with your child about their appointment and understand what to expect.

## TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT SEEING A PSYCHOLOGIST

- Let your child know that you are making/have made an appointment
  - don't spring it on them at the time of the appointment.
- *Be open and positive* – Frame the psychologist as a helpful person who supports people when they need guidance or strategies.
- *Use age-appropriate language* – Younger children might understand that a psychologist is like a 'feelings doctor,' while older children and teens might relate to them as someone who helps with thoughts, emotions, and challenges.
- *Explain the purpose* – Emphasise that the appointment is about supporting them, not because there is something 'wrong' with them.
- *Acknowledge their feelings* – Let them know it's okay to feel nervous or unsure and that they can ask questions.
- *Involve them in the process* – Encourage them to think about what they might want to talk about or any questions they have.

## HELPING YOUR CHILD FEEL PREPARED

- Let them know when their appointment is happening so they aren't surprised.
- Reassure them that they don't have to talk about anything they're not ready for.
- If they have questions, help them write them down to ask the psychologist.
- Encourage them to think of any worries or challenges they'd like help with.

## WHAT HAPPENS IN AN APPOINTMENT?

- The first session is about getting to know your child, their strengths, and what support they might need.
- The main focus for your psychologist will be helping your child feel comfortable and have a positive first experience. Sometimes that means certain information is discussed at a later appointment
- At times, you might be in the room with your child and at others, the child might meet on their own. You can talk to your child about them sharing anything they've learned afterwards if they want to

## THE INITIAL SESSION: SHOULD YOUR CHILD BE PRESENT?

- Parents may have concerns or background information to share with the psychologist. You can choose to have part of the first session alone with the psychologist to discuss these matters.
- If your child is present for the whole session, be mindful that the focus will be on helping them feel comfortable and building trust.
- Avoid sharing distressing or sensitive information in front of your child. If you have concerns to discuss privately, let the psychologist know beforehand so they can plan accordingly.

**Accessing support can be tough.**

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and easy as possible.**

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