

# Frequently Asked Questions

Please note: BetterHelp is not appropriate for clients in crisis.  
If you need immediate support, dial 988

## What is BetterHelp?

BetterHelp is the largest therapy platform in the world and it's 100% online. We change the way people approach their mental health and help them tackle life's challenges by providing accessible and affordable care. With BetterHelp, you can message a professional therapist anytime, anywhere.

## Who are the therapists?

We require every Therapist providing Therapist Services on the Platform to be trained and experienced licensed U.S. Psychologist (PhD / PsyD), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) or similar applicable recognized professional license based on their state and/or jurisdiction. Therapists must have a relevant academic degree in their field, at least 3 years of experience, at least 1,000 hours of hands-on experience, and have to be qualified and licensed by their respective state board after successfully completing the necessary education, exams, training and practice requirements as applicable. Learn more about the therapists.

## How will I communicate with my therapist?

You can get therapy in four ways:

- Exchanging messages with your therapist
- Chatting live with your therapist
- Speaking over the phone with your therapist
- Video conferencing with your therapist

You can use different ways at different times as you wish, based on your needs, availability, and convenience.

## Please note, sessions consumption is defined as:

**Live Sessions:** Having live, scheduled communication with your therapist (through chat, video or phone)

**Messaging:** Exchanging messages with your therapist that exceed 500 words within a 7-day period. This only counts if a live session is not held that week. (This includes any worksheets your therapist may send to you and any journal entries you may share with your therapist)

## Is BetterHelp right for me?

BetterHelp may be right for you if you're looking to improve the quality of your life. Whenever there is anything that interferes with your happiness or prevents you from achieving your goals, we may be able to help. We also have therapists who specialize in specific issues such as stress, anxiety, relationships, parenting, depression, addictions, eating, sleeping, trauma, anger, family conflicts, LGBT matters, grief, religion, self esteem, and more.

BetterHelp is not the right solution for you if any of the following is true:

- You are a minor or you are under the care of a legal guardian
- You are in an urgent crisis or an emergency situation
- You were required to undergo therapy either by a court order or by any other authority
- You do not have a device that can connect to the Internet or you do not have a reliable Internet connection

## Can I stay anonymous?

If you use our private pay membership offering, when you sign up we do not ask you for your full name or contact information but rather a "nickname" created by you that will be used to identify you in the system. When you decide to start the therapy process, we will ask you for your contact information for emergency situations, such as if your therapist believes that you or someone else might be in danger. Your therapist may also request additional information about you when it is required by their licensing board guidelines. All of this data is protected by the confidentiality requirements of the therapist's board and licensure, similar to in-office therapy.

For those using insurance coverage, your legal name must be shared with both your therapist and your insurance provider.

## How can I get started?

Click 'Get Started' in your email from BetterHelp titled 'Here's your new benefit from Revolutionary Telehealth – Professional therapy via BetterHelp.'

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## Is BetterHelp accessible for disabled users?

- We strive to deliver a web experience that is aligned with the most recent Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) at the AA level, published by World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).
- If you are on a desktop browser, you can enable and launch the accessibility preferences by visiting the Accessibility page.
- For mobile users, we recommend using your device's native accessibility features. Instructions for iPhone can be found [here](#), and for Android can be found [here](#).

## I signed up. How long until I'm matched with a therapist?

This process can take a few hours or a few days, depending on therapist availability.

## How can I be sure this is an effective form of therapy?

There are many studies that confirm the effectiveness of the online medium for making life changes. For example, a study published by JMIR Publications and conducted by researchers from University of Berkeley, UCSF, and the SF General Hospital, concluded that "users of BetterHelp experienced significantly reduced depression symptom severity after engaging with the platform." You can read the full study [here](#).

Our confidence in the platform comes primarily from the feedback and testimonials we receive from users. Every day we are excited to hear from more people about the way this service helped them make a tremendous change in their lives.

## Can BetterHelp substitute for traditional face-to-face therapy?

The professionals who work through BetterHelp are licensed and credentialed therapists who were certified by their state's board to provide therapy. However, while the service may have similar benefits, it's not capable of substituting for traditional face-to-face therapy in every case. Please note that your provider may not be able to make any official diagnosis, will not be able to fulfill a court order and will not prescribe medication.

## Get Help Now:

Emergency: 911

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988

Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" TO 741-741

Essential Local And Community Services: 211

Lifeline Crisis Chat (Online Live Messaging): 988, [chat.988lifeline.org](https://chat.988lifeline.org)

Veterans Crisis Line: 988 then press 1, or text 838255

LGBT Hotline: 1-888-843-4564

## Will my therapist treat what I say as confidential?

All therapists are licensed with their applicable licensing board after successfully completing the necessary education, exams, training, and practice. This means that when you talk to a licensed therapist online, they are subject to the mandated reporting and confidentiality requirements of their governing board and respective state laws, similar to in-office therapy.

Generally, the therapist will keep what you tell them confidential, but there are limited exceptions. For example, if you threaten grave harm to yourself or to an identifiable victim the therapist is required to report this information to relevant authorities. Before starting therapy, please discuss with your therapist their legal obligations to confidentiality if you have any concerns or questions.

## How is my privacy and security protected?

To learn more about how therapists treat your confidential information, please see [Will my therapist treat what I say as confidential?](#)

The information that you share is also protected by data privacy laws, for more information see our [Privacy Policy](#). Here are some things that might be helpful to know:

We have built state-of-the-art technology, operations, and infrastructure with the goal of protecting your privacy and safeguarding the information you provide

All the messages between you and your therapist are secured and encrypted by banking-grade 256-bit encryption.

Our servers are distributed across multiple Tier 4- AWS Data Centers for optimal security and protection.

Our Platform is HITRUST Risk-based, 2-year (r2) Certified.

Our browsing encryption system (SSL) follows modern best practices.

Our databases are encrypted and scrambled so they essentially become useless in the unlikely event that they are stolen or compromised.

If you wish for any of your information or records to be released to a third party, please let your therapist know so that they can facilitate the release.

National Council On Alcoholism & Drug Dependency Hope Line: 1-800-622-2255

National Crisis Line - Anorexia And Bulimia: 1-800-233-4357

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA): 866-662-1235

Self-Harm Hotline: 1-800-366-8288

TransLifeline: 877-565-8860

TREVOR Crisis Hotline: 1-866-221-7044