

Frequently Asked Questions Guide

Before starting therapy with us, you may have questions about how therapy works. Please find below the answers to some of the questions we frequently receive.

If you do not find the answer to your question here, call our Appointments Team on 0207 380 1960 for further help.

Do I have to prepare anything before I come for my initial consultation appointment?

Before coming in for your appointment, you will be asked to complete a set of intake forms using the link provided. Please do complete these at least 24 hours before your appointment. Your answers will be looked at by your therapist and they may ask questions about your answers during your consultation appointment.

Although you don't need to prepare for the appointment itself, you might find it useful to think about your situation and how you want counselling or psychotherapy to help. What has led you to seek help? What are the things you wish to change? Are there issues in your relationship currently or from the past that you want to understand, or repeating patterns in your relationships that are causing you problems? These sorts of questions will be explored with you at your first appointment.

What happens after our Initial Appointment?

At your initial consultation, we seek to understand the issues that concern you and couple psychotherapy may be the outcome of the consultation process. If we are able to offer you the help you need at this point in any of our services, we will look to allocate you a regular weekly slot for therapy with a therapist matched with your needs. There may be a wait until a suitable vacancy can be offered, particularly if your times are limited.

Once an appointment is offered it will be for the same time each week with the same therapist. It is rarely possible to move the time or day of the session once you start and any sessions you have to cancel or miss need to be paid for at your agreed fee.

In some circumstances, the therapist may find that the services provided by Tavistock Relationships for ongoing work are not clinically appropriate for client(s) at that time. Any unpaid fees due for the consultation will remain payable in the event we are not able to assist you beyond the initial consultation.

Do Tavistock Relationships therapists have special training?

Tavistock Relationships is a centre of excellence for accredited training and research in couple relationships. Our counsellors and psychotherapists bring a wealth of clinical experience from a variety of related settings including social work and clinical psychology, and many have experience in working with individuals as well as couples. Our clinicians undertake a very rigorous training, with substantial further supervised practice. This represents the highest standards of professional training in counselling and psychotherapy with couples, in the UK and beyond. As part of our commitment to professional development you may be seen by a trainee psychotherapist or counsellor working under specialist supervision.

How do I pay for my sessions?

Invoices for ongoing clinical appointments are paid online via electronic invoicing. We offer the following options:

- (a) Weekly Invoicing - each week an invoice will be sent to you on the day of your appointment. Payment is due immediately upon receipt and can be made online by card or via a direct debit agreement.
- (b) Monthly invoicing - you will be invoiced at the start of each calendar month for all appointments scheduled that month. Payment is due by the 15th of each month and can be made by credit card, direct debit agreement or direct credit to our account.

For international clients we require direct debit agreements to be in place authorising us to make a charge against your nominated account for the invoiced amounts.

Please be aware that it is important that you keep up to date with your payments and we may need to stop sessions if arrears are built up. If you are finding the fees difficult to manage, please do speak to your therapist as soon as possible to review them.

I usually attend sessions at your London centre, can I change my sessions to online if I can't attend in person?

For therapy taking place in person at our London centres, it is expected that therapy will take place in person, unless there is a change in the government guidance, necessitating the work be moved online. Please see our missed session policy for further information on what happens if you are unable to attend your session.

Why do I need to pay for missed ongoing appointments?

Paying for a session that you are not able to use, is needed so we can maintain our weekly therapy offer. The therapeutic process requires a regular commitment that you can rely upon over time. In order to provide such a reliable framework, we offer all your appointments on a weekly basis at the same time on the same day each week. This means that we reserve a weekly slot with a dedicated therapist and consulting room just for you. When you cancel a session, this slot cannot be offered to anyone else. In this sense, it is a bit like renting a room, in so far as it is your time with your therapist and cannot be made available for any other client.

If your therapist is not able to be there either due to absence, or for online sessions due to technical issues, then we will not charge you for those sessions.

Please speak to your therapist or contact us at appointments@tavistockrelationships.org if you need to cancel your appointment.

I don't have any childcare; can I bring my child to the appointment?

We see couples and individuals and although you may discuss your children and parenting issues in the sessions, we do not see you with your children in the therapy. We understand that it may be difficult for parents to arrange childcare, but we want to create a space where you and your partner can speak to each other freely, and so bringing your child into your appointment with you is not possible.

Tavistock Relationships does not have crèche facilities, and it is not possible to leave children in our waiting area, even if accompanied by an adult, whilst you have your appointment.

Why am I asked to provide details of a medical contact?

We ask all clients when registering with our service, to provide details of a local medical professional. This is to enable us to arrange support in the event of an emergency, or to arrange access to local statutory services if they would be helpful. If we need to liaise with other professionals, this would usually be discussed with you.

Will my online sessions be confidential?

Online therapy services are provided using the Zoom platform which is a secure, confidential, and reliable video software platform. To provide the highest practical levels of client confidentiality the Zoom session uses end-to-end encryption and sessions are not recorded unless with the express permission of both the client and the therapist.

We regret we are unable to guarantee complete confidentiality under all circumstances. Monitoring or intrusion by state agencies or by computer service providers operating under state direction may in certain jurisdictions pose a threat to client confidentiality.

Clients attending online sessions, should ensure they have devices which meet the required technical standards including a reliable internet connection, video camera and microphone. It is the responsibility of the client to ensure the device used to connect to the therapy session has appropriate security software for privacy purposes.

Computer systems are typically designed to share information with others and often ask you to trade convenience for confidentiality. If you are concerned about your privacy, we would suggest that you only use private secure networks when possible and avoid shared connections. Turn off or disable any unnecessary applications, particularly those that may frequently connect to the internet and ensure that your computer is regularly checked for computer viruses and spyware.

Further information about online security can be found on the Information Commissioners Office website <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/online/>

Clients attending sessions online should also ensure they are in a private setting to make sure conversations are not overheard. In the event the therapist deems the setting to not be sufficiently private, the session will be terminated, and fees may still be due.

How can I contact my therapist?

Therapy sessions are offered every week at the same time. While the online framework provides a sense of ad-hoc connection, it is not appropriate to engage with your therapist through social networks in between sessions. Communication with the therapist in between sessions should be made through our appointments team.

Why am I asked to complete feedback forms and clinical measures?

We seek to gather feedback about the effectiveness of our services and will ask you may be asked to complete some questionnaires at certain intervals during your therapy. This will be done by sending you a link via an email, and we would be grateful if you could complete all questionnaires prior to the next session. The therapist will have access to your answers, and your answers will also be collated anonymously so we can look at how helpful our sessions are overall. If you have any questions about these forms, please speak to your therapist.

Who do I contact in an emergency?

Tavistock Relationships therapy services are aimed at helping clients with their relationship. It is not possible for our therapists to provide support in the event of clinical emergency. In any case of emergency, severe distress, and other more urgent mental health difficulties, clients must contact their GP, the local medical emergency services and/or any other local services as appropriate to their difficulties. You will be required to provide with details of your local medical practitioner.

How do I access my personal information?

Tavistock Relationships is registered with the Information Commissioner and all personal data is processed and maintained in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

To make a Subject Access Request please put your request in writing to privacy@tavistockrelationships.org.

Who do I contact if I want to give feedback or make a complaint?

If you are unhappy with the therapy you are receiving, or with any other aspect of your contact with Tavistock Relationships, it may be helpful to discuss this with your therapist in the first instance. If you would like to discuss your concerns with someone else, please let us know at appointments@tavistockrelationships.org. We appreciate any and all feedback about any aspects of our service.

How can I contribute to the development of Tavistock Relationships?

We value representation from couples and individuals who have finished their therapy on our Service Users' Group. This group provides invaluable help to us in developing our services and policies. If you are interested in contributing in this way, please either complete the relevant box in the questionnaire which we will send you when you finish your therapy or let us know by contacting the Appointments Team.

You can also volunteer to share your experience of our therapy service in communications about the service on website or media, to raise awareness of the service and encourage others to seek help. Nothing would be published without your express consent.