



Therapy FAQ

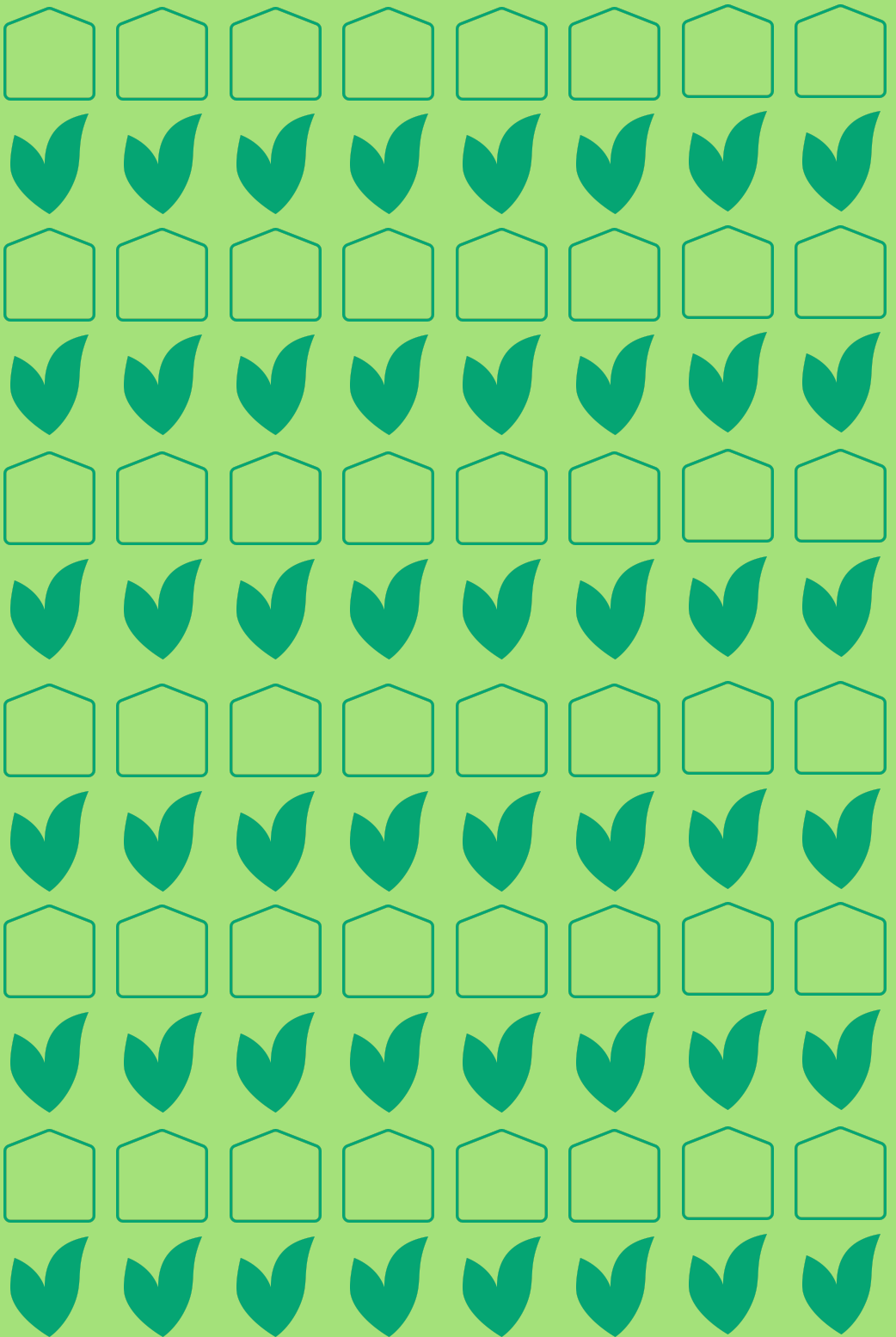
A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Are you a parent or carer supporting your child to come to therapy sessions at The Green House? Are you, like many other parents and carers, feeling a bit worried about the process or how to offer your child support with it?

Here are some things other parents, carers and young people have shared with us about their experiences – we hope it can be helpful to you...

**We use 'child' to refer to all children and young people throughout this booklet*







Guidance for parents from people who have used our service

Trauma can cause all sorts of challenges for children and families, but it is possible to address these one step at a time. Family relationships and support are a vital part of this journey and are a key part of the therapeutic process.

“For me it was the not knowing what sessions were about that was hard – you always think the worst.”

– A parent/carer

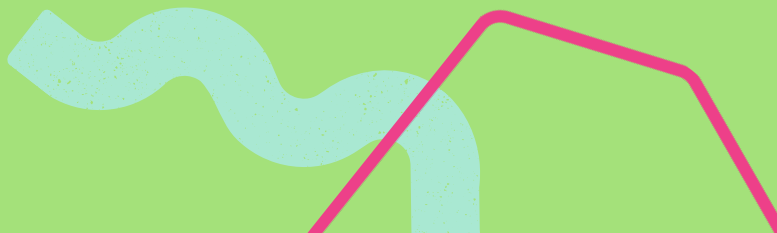
It's so understandable to feel this way, since therapy is confidential but...

“Be kind to yourself – lots of parents beat themselves up (but) ... helping get your child to therapy and giving them gentle support and space when they need it is lots. Remember the therapist is a third, neutral person. It's not a reflection on you as a parent if your child doesn't want to speak with you about therapy.”

– A young person

Top tips from young people to the adults supporting them:

- Avoid really direct questions like, what did you talk about today? Did you have 'fun'? Please don't tell me what I should talk about either.
- Being consistent, reliable and gently encouraging is the most important thing.
- Try to make going to therapy a positive experience – remember that it's a brave thing to do...having a nice routine like a hot chocolate afterwards.
- Set up a code word with your child so that they can use it as a signal for if they feel like talking or not – it can be something silly like 'strawberries.'



FAQs

How long are sessions?

Sessions are offered for 50 minutes but we'll work with your child/ young person to see what is manageable for them.

How do I prepare my child/ young person for therapy?

We encourage you to talk with your child about therapy before they start. For some young people, it can be helpful to look together at our website.

You can share with your child how you think therapy might help them, but your child's therapist will support them to develop their own goals, which may be different to yours. It is OK to encourage your child to give therapy a go but with the understanding that it is always optional - it is their choice.

What can I expect from therapy?

Having someone to talk things through with can make a positive difference quickly. Therapy also involves getting in contact with difficult emotions and finding new ways to express them. Your child may experience strong emotions, or changes in behaviour once therapy starts. They might: be more angry, tearful or quiet.

They might use self-injury to cope already and this might continue whilst they're working out different ways of coping. This can be worrying for a parent/ carer and we encourage you to think with your young person and therapist about this, when you need to. Your child's therapist will also work alongside your child and you to create a plan that helps to keep them as safe as possible.

If there is a particular issue you are concerned about, you can discuss this with your child and decide together if and how to share this with their therapist.

What should we do after a session?

A good rule of thumb is to follow your child's lead in this. It's helpful for parents to show their interest in how therapy is going, but we recommend not asking directly about what is happening in sessions. It is important children feel it is their private space to use as they wish. Here's what some young people shared:

It takes a while to process – sometimes even a few days. If we are quiet or grumpy or sensitive, that's probably why. It helps to be adaptable and open to plans changing."

"It's so different for everyone...everyone's journey and needs will be unique."

"Afterwards it's really good to have no pressure."

What if my child doesn't want to talk about the abuse?

Sometimes, parents tell us they worry that if their child is not using therapy to talk about the abuse, then it isn't helping them. However, because of the way traumatic memories are stored in our brains and nervous system, it can be very difficult and sometimes impossible to talk about them in words. That is why creative arts and play form a valuable part of our approach. Therapy can still be really helpful even if your child decides to focus on ways of coping with things now, rather than looking at the past.

Scan this QR code to watch a helpful video about how therapy can work



Can I know what happens in the sessions?

Therapy sessions are confidential between the child and therapist. This is not to exclude you from the process, but is to help people explore sensitive things in the knowledge that it won't get shared with anyone else. This might then help your child start to share things outside of sessions, but the choice is theirs. We ask that you always try to let your young person know if you'd like to speak to their therapist about any worries or questions you have so that we are working together in an open and clear way.

"I'm someone who is normally really open with my family, but after my therapy sessions I felt like I wanted to keep things private." -A young person

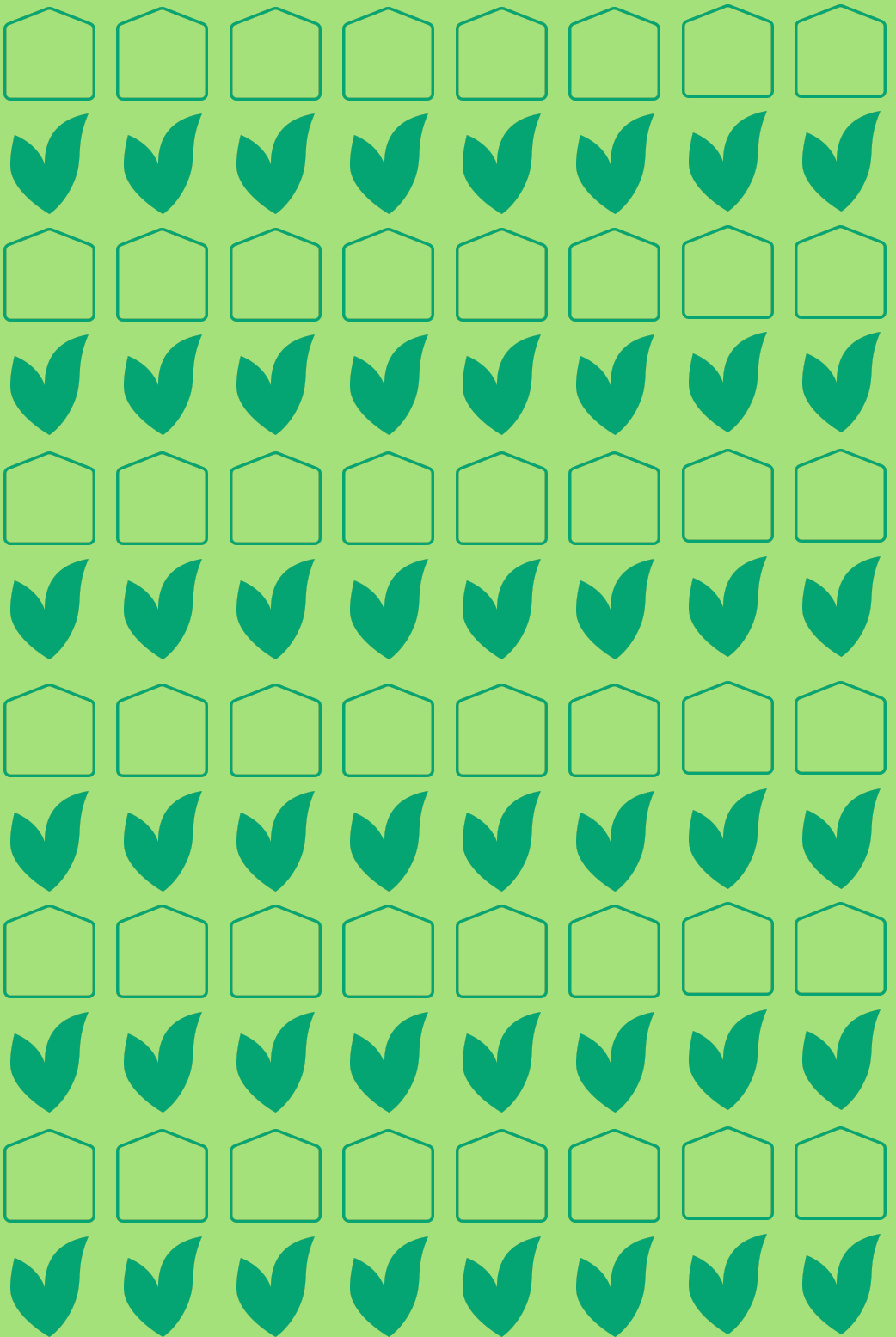


What happens when therapy ends?

The ending of a piece of therapy is important. It can also bring up memories and feelings connected to past experiences of goodbyes and of loss more generally. Because of this, a therapeutic ending is ideally planned carefully in advance and is something our therapists will be thinking about from the start of the work. It is not advisable to stop sessions suddenly, but where this is unavoidable, we can discuss how to support this process in the best possible way.

Top Tip! Breaks in therapy (e.g. for holidays) can often bring things up too.

This is an individual thing so consider discussing with your child how you might offer support around therapy sessions. If appropriate your therapist will let you know if a bit of extra support is needed following a session.



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info@the-green-
house.org.uk



www.the-green-
house.org.uk

