

The Self Centre

A PARENT'S GUIDE

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD WHEN
THEY NEED TO SEE A PSYCHOLOGIST



THE SELF CENTRE
PSYCHOLOGY, HEALTH
AND WELLBEING

How do I know when/if my child needs to see a psychologist?

▽ You know your child best – if something is different or has changed in their behaviour such as their sleep or eating habits, if they are more withdrawn, or isolated. If you notice mood changes, and/or irritability, if they avoid doing things they once did previously.

▽ If you believe that something maybe going on for them, then it is up to you as parents/caregivers to start that conversation. Talk about mental health openly with your child, be honest about what you've noticed, and ask them more about it. LISTEN to your child and empathise with what they are going through. They need to feel understood, and not have their concerns or their emotions dismissed or minimised.

How Do I find the right psychologist for my child?

▽ Call The Self Centre to talk through what you are looking for support with, and what you think may be helpful for your child. Our intake team will do their best to make recommendations for a 'good fit'. Having someone support your process of finding a 'good fit' can take a lot of stress out of a difficult and scary time.

▽ Read through the profile of the prospective psychologist on our website <https://selfcentre.com.au/wp/psychologists/> to get a feel for what the Psychologist might be like.

What is the process of getting my child into seeing a psychologist at The Self Centre?

▽ When you call or email to make a booking you will be offered a time with Intake Officer and Director Lyndsay Babcock, where you will have a chance to talk through what your concerns are and what support you need.

▽ You will be referred to a psychologist at The Self Centre if it is believed they would be a good fit. (Sometimes we will recommend alternative services to you in effort to help ensure that you have the very best support for your needs. If this is the case you will be offered alternative names and contact details of agencies so you can actively get support quickly.)

▽ You will be offered a time for your child to meet their psychologist and have an assessment session. Sometimes it can take a few sessions with children and teenagers to determine a good fit. Often times, the first few sessions are aimed to help make the child/teen comfortable with their psychologist. The psychologist will always be collecting information and over time will work to develop a clear understanding of what the area of concern is, and formulate a treatment plan.

▽ Your child's psychologist should make you feel included in your child's therapy. How this occurs varies depending on who your child sees.

▽ Sometimes parents are invited into the first session to give background information, but most often our team prefers to see the child/teen 1:1 to develop rapport and trust. Parents are welcome to wait in reception so if the child or psychologist needs them at any time, they are available.

▽ Parents will be kept abreast of issues when permission to release information has been consented to by the client (16+ teen), if there is a risk to safety, or if the child is under 16 and it would be helpful for treatment.

▽ Sessions are paid in full at the end of each session, and if an active mental health care plan is in place, then rebate will be processed.

▽ We aim to book 3-6 sessions in advance for consistency and continuity sake. Good mental health outcomes are more likely when therapy is consistent and regularly attended until goals are reached and well maintained

▽ Remember that if you or your child are not comfortable or happy with the psychologist, or the way they are doing therapy, you can stop sessions or change therapists at any time. It is useful for your child to attend 2-3 sessions however, to see if the therapist is a good fit for them, and to decide if you're happy with the way they work together. Remember, especially with young people that developing a good and strong rapport takes time.

▽ It may be recommended by your Psychologist or GP for your child to have Psychometric Assessment to help understand them better. These assessments offer insight into learning difficulty or giftedness, ADHD, dyslexia, etc. and are aim to help professionals know what interventions to offer to be most effective.

How can I support my child to get the most out of their work with their psychologist?

▽ These can include having a space where they can talk confidentially about anything they want (within the limits of safety, of course!), and where they can learn and practice new skills, such as problem-solving strategies and managing their mental health.

▽ Show interest: ask questions and being open to hearing about their experience.

▽ Show respect: try not to be too pushy about what they 'talked about', or diminishing the value of their psychology sessions.

▽ Be available: help them access therapy – online or in person

▽ Be curious: ask why they found helpful and if they need/want you to do anything to support their work?

▽ Check in with yourself: if you need support also, ask for parent sessions – they can be very effective and complement the work your child is doing.

For more resources check out Headspace Resource Centre.

<https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/supporting-a-young-person/mental-ill-health/>

