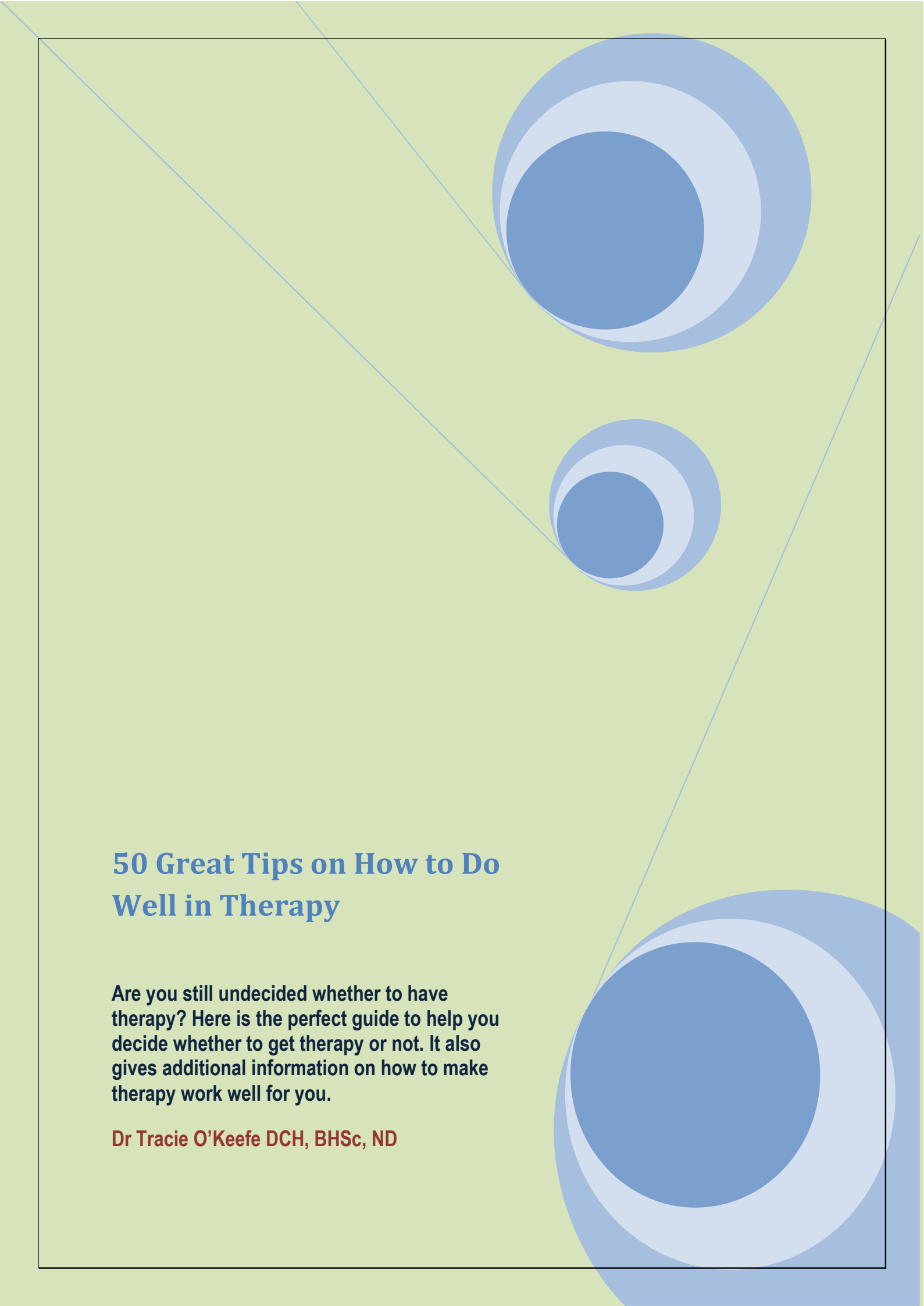




50 Great Tips on How to Do Well in Therapy

Are you still undecided whether to have therapy? Here is the perfect guide to help you decide whether to get therapy or not. It also gives additional information on how to make therapy work well for you.

Dr Tracie O'Keefe DCH, BHSc, ND

This book does not constitute medical or therapeutic advice. It is simply a book that explores the possibilities of the mind. Should you suffer from mental illness, consult your healthcare practitioner before engaging in any of the exercises.

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50 Great Tips on How to Do Well in Therapy

Dr Tracie O'Keefe DCH, BHSc, ND

Welcome to this guide to help you get the most out of being in therapy. That is, making therapy work well for you.

So you are thinking of having therapy? Well, that can be good for you. So many people delay doing what they need to sort out in their lives. They umm and ah and procrastinate, which means they are still suffering from the problems they keep dragging around with them on a trolley behind them.

What are the benefits of therapy?

1. You get someone else's point of view. This can be really useful because it allows us to see ourselves as others might be seeing us.
2. You get feedback. Ever tried to look at the back of your own neck? If you have, you will know what I am talking about. The honest and confidential feedback that a therapist can give you can really help shift your mindset. They are not invested in your story so they can have a clearer, detached view of what you are doing.
3. You get to share what is happening with you. Keeping everything inside you and trying to work everything out yourself can be very stressful because you might not be sure you are getting things right. The act of sharing in itself can bring great relief when you might be struggling with personal issues.
4. You get professional help from someone who is highly trained in mind and behavioural techniques, changing your emotions and how you may be able to resolve any mental distress.
5. You get privacy. This is really important. There are things you can disclose or say to a therapist that perhaps you could not to

your partner, family, friend or work colleagues. Therapists abide by codes of ethics that require confidentiality so they will not repeat those things to other people.

6. You get kindness. Therapists realise you are in distress so they try to be empathic about what you might be experiencing. The only investment they have in you is for you to be able to go on to lead a better life. You might not agree with everything they say but you know they say it from a place of detached kindness.
7. You get non-judgementalism. This is really important because we all stuff up at times. We all get things wrong and make mistakes. While those around you may judge you for that, a therapist is only interested in helping you move forward in a positive way.

What kind of therapy will you choose?

This is a big question as there are so many different kinds of therapy. Each talking or acting out therapy attempts to achieve different things. They may all have commonalities like helping you to have a better life but they may try to attempt this in different ways.

1. Research the kind of therapy you are proposing to experience before you book the appointment. Does it look, sound or feel right for you?
2. Consider whether you need to deal with deep seated problems or lighter changes of behaviour.
3. Does that therapy have a reputation or proven track record for helping people in the area of your problems?
4. Write down any questions you may have and ask the therapist when you telephone for an appointment. They may not be able to answer all of them before your consultation but they may be able to answer some.

5. Therapists actually love questions. On your first appointment, ask any question you might have because the therapist should be happy to answer them to put you at your ease.
6. Is it a recognised therapy? Do not listen to gossip or folk tales but do your own research. Look on the net, go to the library. Ask health professionals and then make up your own mind.

Choosing a therapist?

This can be very confusing for people thinking of coming into therapy. There are so many different therapists out there and you may wonder who to choose. That can also be stressful.

1. Spend time finding out about the therapist you are proposing to visit. Read their website and see what they have to say about themselves and what they do.
2. Do not choose a practice where you know nothing about the therapist. A website that just says 'We have therapists' is to be avoided. You will not know anything about their training or qualifications or even whether they work with people who have your kind of problems or issues.
3. Really look into the therapist's qualifications and the professional associations to which they belong. All well qualified and regulated therapists pride themselves in belonging to peer group therapist professional associations.
4. Are they a professional therapist or someone who just gives advice part time?
5. Do they have professional indemnity insurance? All medical and therapeutic professionals carry professional indemnity insurance as standard. Their professional associations require them to be fully insured.

6. Do they work in an environment where you will feel safe and which affords you privacy?
7. Do they abide by any local government regulations or health guidelines?
8. What time frame do they work with? Do they see you for an hour, two hours or half an hour? You need to know in advance so you can plan your day and not be stressed about having to get somewhere after the appointment. Do they run their appointments on time?
9. How many visits do they anticipate you will need to make to their practice in order to help you? Be aware that people with mental health problems may need ongoing support.
10. How much will the appointment cost? Fees vary depending on the therapist's qualifications. More experienced therapists tend to charge more because they have the experience to work through your problems faster with you. Less experienced therapists will charge less because they have not built up their experience or qualifications yet. In private practice therapists charge what they need to be able to run their practice. If you have no money, you may need to find a charity or government department that offers the services of therapists.
11. Do they require payment in advance and what are the cancellation policies? Professional therapists do charge for missed or late cancellation appointments.
12. Do you get any kind of rebates from a government agency or from private health insurance companies?
13. Does the therapist have qualifications as a mental health professional? In other words, should you have any mental illness would they be sufficiently trained to recognise that situation and

refer you to the appropriate help if that were necessary? Are they qualified to treat mental health problems?

14. Do you know anyone who has had a good experience with a therapist? Can they recommend their therapist?

15. Talk to the therapist or their assistant to make sure they can help you before you finalise the appointment.

What are your obligations as a client?

Therapy is a two-way process. Mutual respect, appreciation and trust needs to be established. It is like a game of table tennis – both players need to be engaged to keep the game going. The therapist is not there to do everything for you but to help you help yourself to make the changes you want, need and desire in your life. It is a conversation of experience: sometimes you are the talker and sometimes the listener.

1. Be polite as the therapist is there to help you.
2. Turn up 10 minutes before your appointment is due to start.
3. Give all your contact details so if the therapist is ill one day and cannot make the appointment, they are able to contact you to reschedule. Therapists do not generally contact you unless it is an emergency.
4. Therapists may ask you probing questions at times and are doing so because they want to understand the mechanisms of what is happening with you. They are simply trained to analyse your situation so they can help you find solutions.
5. Be honest with your answers to their questions and what you tell them. They can only work with what you give them. Do not lie or make things up because it will be a waste of your money and time. You're visiting a professional who needs to work with the facts.

6. Disclose all medications or drugs you may be using. They change the way your body and mind work so it is important for the therapist to know what kind of influences may be affecting your thinking, emotions and mood.
7. Declare any other practitioners you might be seeing. This is important because other medical treatments or therapists will have an effect on the way your therapy goes with this therapist.
8. Be sure you have the funds to pay before you turn up and use the services. Therapists also have families to feed. Pay your bills on time.
9. Take on board any comments the therapist may make to you. Some of what they say may be challenging to you in order to get you to shift your mindset, so understand they are trying to help you.
10. Embrace therapy. It is a time specially devoted to you and helping you. Do not keep looking at your watch or constantly or checking your telephone for messages. To get the most out of therapy, be fully present in the moment.
11. Commit yourself to the therapeutic process. Do not hold back. The therapist sits there to help you, so embrace that you really are getting their full attention.
12. Turn up to every appointment and do the work required. Do not make excuses that you are too busy because the therapist may not see you again when you start missing appointments. They are looking for you being committed to the therapeutic process.
13. Many therapists give precise homework. This is not only done to help therapy go faster but also to help you manage between sessions. Do your homework in full.

14. Turn up at therapy with a positive attitude and be willing to work with the therapist to do the work to help you resolve your problems and deal with your issues.
15. Be open to different and new experiences. You may be stuck in your problems so therapy is meant to take you outside your comfort zone in order to help you fix that problem.
16. Sometimes therapy is meant to be a lot of fun. Join in and be willing to have a good time and experience.
17. There may be some things that you have reservations about or that you are unsure of. Write those things down and raise them in your next session with your therapist at the beginning of the session.
18. You may want to keep the fact that you are in therapy private or you may want to share it with your family or friends. Discuss that with your therapist to decide what is the best policy is for you.
19. Do not let other people force you into telling them what happened in therapy. It is private. You may want to disclose some things but some things you cannot and it is your right to choose what you can comfortably disclose.
20. Therapy can change people's lives drastically and help them to live more enjoyably, so celebrate each time you have breakthroughs or successes.
21. If the therapist has a newsletter, sign up for it as you may learn some new things that may help you in the future.
22. Be appreciative when the therapist has helped you. It sets up good feelings between you and then you are comfortable going back to therapy if you need to in the future.

About Dr Tracie O'Keefe DCH, BHSc, ND

Tracie is an internationally well-known qualified and registered clinical hypnotherapist, psychotherapist, counsellor, mental health professional and trainer, working from a naturopathic perspective in Sydney, Australia. She trained at a post-graduate level with the National School of Hypnosis and Advanced Psychotherapy in London, UK (UKCP-recognised school). Her degree and doctorate were earned at the American Institute of Hypnotherapy in the USA and issued in coordination with the Bureau for Private Post-Secondary and Vocational Education in California (School no. 3004761). She has been a family and couples therapist, a sex therapist and addictions therapist for many years.

She is a qualified naturopath and medical herbalist, who trained in nutritional medicine with the Australian Institute of Applied Sciences (DET Federally recognised), and holds a Bachelor of Health Sciences Degree in Complementary Medicine from Charles Sturt University.

She has attended many other colleges and universities over the years and constantly spend a lot of her time developing and evolving her skills as a therapist, as well as being an internationally published researcher, author and editor. Between 2001 to 2009, she was the editorial director for Hypnosis Australia Online Journal for professional hypnotherapists.

Before coming to Australia, Tracie practised for many years at the London Medical Centre, Harley Street in the UK. For more than 30 years, she has been helping people empower themselves and achieve their goals. Her services include hypnotherapy, psychotherapy, counselling, sex therapy, past life therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, marriage and relationship counselling, family therapy, drug and alcohol counselling, life coaching and brief business coaching. She is the director of the Australian Health & Education Centre in Surry Hills.

As well as working at the Australian Health and Education Centre, Sydney, Tracie produces a whole range of health products including self-help courses at www.doctorok.com.

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