



# Getting Started with Therapy

the  
**mental hug**<sup>®</sup>  
Brenton Guice, MA, PLPC



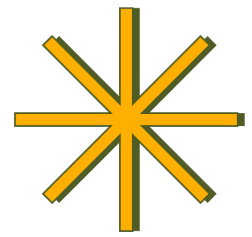
# Hello! I'm Brenton.

Brenton Guice, M.A., PLPC  
Owner of The Mental Hug  
Supervised by Aaron Shore, LCPC, LPC





# Why pursue counseling/therapy?



If you're reading this, there may be one or several reasons as to why you've begun the difficult yet courageous journey of pursuing counseling/therapy.

Sometimes we may find that while feedback and advice from family and/or friends can certainly prove useful, it may also coincide with judgment, shame, or even guilt.

**"Who looks outside dreams; who looks inside awakes."**  
-Carl Jung

Seeking someone who can provide counseling and therapy is helpful in that you are able to share, process, and grow with the help of someone who should provide no judgment, shame, or guilt. Someone who openly believes and accepts who you are while actively supporting and encouraging you to become who you want to be.



## **Difference between Counseling & Therapy**

The words counseling and therapy are often used interchangeably. You may catch me saying either – I am often referring to the same thing. However, there are just a few differences between the two.

Counseling is typically referring to short-term needs. For example, someone seeking counseling for difficulty processing a life transition and once that challenge has resolved or is met with acceptance, they may decide to cease counseling until another situation/problem arises.

Therapy is often long-term and focuses on you entirely. How you view yourself, the world, your thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

For example, if you are struggling with identity, anxiety, trauma, depression, or even being a highly sensitive person (HSP), therapy can be beneficial for a longer period to explore how your everyday life is impacted while also developing coping strategies to overcome those challenges.

You may choose to stay in counseling/therapy for as long as you'd like.

As a Provisionally Licensed Professional Counselor, I am educated and trained in providing both counseling and therapy.

## **How long will I need therapy?**

Your process is individualized to your needs and the length of counseling and/or therapy is ultimately dependent upon you and your provider.



Some may only seek short-term care, wanting to get back on their feet and then move on.

Others may find it necessary to start counseling, undergoing weekly sessions and then eventually maintaining bi-weekly or monthly appointments.

It is always recommended that when starting counseling and/or therapy, that you begin with weekly sessions to allow the provider to get a clear picture and understanding of what challenges you and to establish a strong therapeutic working relationship.



# A few tidbits



## Curse Words Allowed

It is definitely okay to say *whatever* you'd like and that includes curse words! In fact, if it elicits an emotional relief, it may even provide therapeutic benefits.

Please don't fret. Speak from your heart, say what's on your mind, and don't be surprised if you hear me say a few! In efforts to decolonize the therapeutic space, you're free to say whatever is on the mind.



## Laughter helps with healing

While laughter can sometimes be used as a coping or protective mechanism, it does have its own benefits.

Therapy is an emotive experience. There will likely be tears, ah-ha moments, anger, and happiness. Laughter has been shown to release feel good hormones, so just know that it is okay to laugh if the mood strikes or if you just feel like it!



## Are you the right fit for me?

This can be a difficult part of the process. Finding the right counselor/therapist is tricky. However, you'll know when it's a good fit.

I understand that I may not be the best helper for everyone that comes my way. If you need to continue searching, please do! I want you to be and feel comfortable. If you think we may be a good fit, say hello!





# Why Private Pay?

Unfortunately, I do not accept insurance at this time. Here are a few reasons as to why:

Insurance companies require that clients be given a mental health diagnosis for services rendered. There are many challenges that an individual may pursue counseling/therapy for that may or may not warrant a diagnosis. Once a diagnosis is established, it stays on your medical record for life.

Insurance companies can often dictate the course of therapy, the number of sessions they think you'll need, and can decide when you no longer need therapy. These are decisions that are best left to the client and the provider.

For individuals who would like to utilize insurance, there are ways to apply for reimbursement. I advise you call your insurance company and determine out-of-network benefits - including if you have a deductible, what the deductible is, and how much they will reimburse you for sessions rendered.

There are several providers that do accept insurance plans and if this is a high priority for you, you are more than welcome to find a provider who accepts your insurance. This could be done through your insurance provider's website or by searching through an online mental health provider directory.

Keep in mind, this is solely based on my own perspective along with experiences of several providers in the field. If you have any other questions, don't hesitate to ask!



# What approaches or modalities do you use and why?

I am eclectic in that I will pull from varying theoretical orientations depending upon what your needs are. This allows for individualized care to aid in your therapeutic journey. Below are just a few theories and modalities that may be used throughout your counseling/therapy experience whether with me or another provider. **As I continue to educate myself and expand my experience as a helper/healer, my use of certain approaches may ebb and flow over time.** Feel free to research further into these or other theories.

## Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a therapeutic approach that combines cognitive and behavioral strategies to help individuals cultivate psychological flexibility. ACT encourages acceptance of thoughts and feelings without judgment, promoting mindfulness and awareness of the present moment. The therapy emphasizes identifying and committing to personal values, guiding individuals to take purposeful actions aligned with those values. By fostering acceptance and commitment, ACT aims to enhance emotional well-being and resilience in the face of life's challenges.

## Internal Family Systems (IFS)

Internal Family Systems (IFS) is a therapeutic model that views the mind as a system of different parts, each with its own unique qualities and functions. Developed by Dr. Richard Schwartz, IFS involves exploring and understanding these inner parts to promote healing and integration. The approach emphasizes the importance of self-leadership, where an individual learns to connect with their core Self and acts as a compassionate and balanced leader for their internal system. Through this process, IFS aims to address internal conflicts, reduce emotional distress, and foster a harmonious relationship within oneself.

## EMDR

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a psychotherapeutic approach designed to alleviate the distress associated with traumatic memories. Developed by Francine Shapiro, EMDR involves guided bilateral stimulation, often in the form of side-to-side eye movements, to help individuals process and reframe traumatic experiences. The therapy includes a structured eight-phase protocol, focusing on past memories, present disturbances, and future actions. EMDR aims to facilitate the adaptive processing of traumatic memories, reducing emotional intensity and enabling individuals to integrate these experiences in a more adaptive way.

## Intersectional

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that acknowledges and analyzes the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and more. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality highlights how these overlapping and interlocking systems of oppression and privilege shape individuals' experiences. It recognizes that an individual's identity is multifaceted, and social issues cannot be fully understood or addressed by examining single-axis categories in isolation. Intersectionality encourages a more nuanced and inclusive approach to social justice, aiming to uncover and address the complexities of power dynamics and inequalities that individuals may face based on the intersections of various identities.

**HEADS-UP:** If certain approaches or techniques ever make you uncomfortable or are just not proving to be therapeutic, we can adjust and/or change the method(s) of counseling/therapy! Remember, this is **your** healing journey!!





# How do I prepare the phone consultation and my first visit?

## Phone Consultation

I always do my best to guide the conversation. This is an opportunity to hear a bit more about why you're wanting to pursue /therapy – an elaboration from your email inquiry. I will also share a little about me, what therapy with me looks like, and a few practice policies.

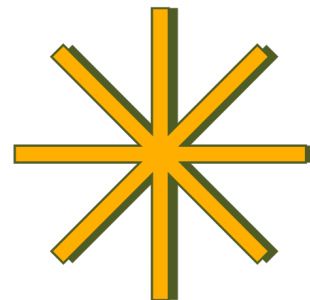
You are more than welcome to ask me questions during this time. A few questions that some clients find useful:

- How long have you been practicing?
- Are you more directive or guiding when helping?
- How will I know if therapy is working?

## First Visit

The first visit is what I like to call the “nitty gritty” appointment. It is usually more rigid than any subsequent appointments. This is primarily because we will review the informed consent, practice policies, and work through questions to gain a little more understanding of you and your background.

This is vital as it lays the foundation for the journey ahead. It is also a chance to get to know one another and begin establishing a strong and healthy therapeutic relationship. This is also another chance to ask any questions you may have had since the phone call.





# CRISIS RESOURCES

## **NATIONAL RESOURCES**

## **NUMBER**

Suicide Prevention Line (call/text)	988
Trevor Project (LGBTQIA2s+)	(866) 488-7386
Trans Lifeline	(877) 565-8860
Domestic Violence	(800) 799-7233

## **LOCAL RESOURCES**

## **NUMBER**

Missouri (KC locale)	(888) 279-8188
Kansas (Johnson County)	(913) 268-0156
Domestic Violence	(816) 468-5463
LGBTQIA2s+ Violence	(816) 561-0550

**the mental hug**







Thank you for being here and considering my support. I am committed to creating an inviting, inclusive, and safe-space for you to heal and grow.

If you're ready, I'm here!

## **Contact Info:**

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