

## Guidelines for Seeking Therapy

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Sharing some general tips about managing mental health and seeking therapy:

- Seek it if you've been feeling disoriented (in a bad way) and in the dumps for more than 3-4 weeks at a time. Don't agonise over this decision. Your responsibility towards yourself includes getting appropriate and timely help.
- It can take a few tries before you meet the right therapist. If you feel threatened by, judged by or uncomfortable with someone you meet, move on and try a new one. The idea is to begin the process. Some signs to watch for would be the therapist showing disapproval towards your lifestyle choices or belittling any part of your worldview or identity.
- Therapy can be expensive, but if you would spend the amount on physical health problems, then spend it on mental health without overthinking it.
- Once you begin your sessions with someone with whom you've been able to establish trust, keep an open mind and focus on doing what they ask you to do. Be completely honest and ask any number of questions, but don't get too analytical or skeptical. Most of therapy is understood only in retrospect.
- This one is crucial - just gaining great insights will not fix your mental health. It will only clear out a path that had previously been obscured by your way of relating to life - and give you a good place to start. It may give hope, but in order to successfully fix the problem, you will need to do the work, walk the path yourself. This will become clearer as you begin the process.
- If you're discussing the possibility of medication, demand a full explanation of your therapist for their recommendation.

Also -

- Don't go to therapy if you only need to vent - you need to want to get better - so if you're not serious or desperate about this goal, then maybe wait to become more miserable first.
- Therapy or not - try not to romanticise or philosophise your pain - this will hinder progress. These may be subconscious ways to avoid transitioning over to a less familiar mental space even if it's going to be healthier.
- Don't believe yourself if you think you know everything about your problems and that the therapist won't or can't get it. If you had the whole deal in your grasp, then you would've also known how to opt out of the misery.
- If you have wanted to seek therapy but have excessive burnout, a poor prior experience or don't have the energy to start/restart the process, ask a trusted family member/friend to help you, and then go with that, dropping all reluctance. If no one comes to mind, ask me, I can help at least with people in Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi.
- If you know you're unwell but still don't want to seek help, then that's fine. Just make sure you understand clearly that this doesn't have to be a permanent decision. Revisit it from time to time.
- If you are a parent, know that this is affecting your child/ren in ways that will most likely go unnoticed for a long time, but not forever.