



Therapy – a client's perspective

An introduction

Hello. I'm Alice Ayres. Up until now on this blog, it's always been the therapists speaking. This is the first of a series of blog posts in which I will be presenting a view from the other chair, the view of the client. I hope it will be useful to those considering or currently undergoing therapy to hear about my experiences. I won't be going into detail about the content of my therapy sessions; it's quite embarrassing enough just talking to my therapist about it, never mind anyone else (even under a pseudonym.) However, I will go through some of the main things that may concern someone considering therapy. How do you find a therapist? What will the first session be like? What do you do if you disagree with your therapist? How do you make plans to end your therapy? I will attempt to discuss all these questions, and more besides, over the course of this blog series. I hope it will be helpful.

Considering therapy – a client's experience

Where to start?

The idea of starting therapy can be a daunting prospect. If you're lucky enough to be able to arrange to see a therapist privately, how on earth do you go about finding someone who will be a good fit for you?

I've had therapy several times over the years, starting when I was in my late teens, and I've experienced several different modalities. Some of these worked better for me than others.

Although I didn't fully appreciate it at the time, each experience of a different therapist and a different modality would prove to be immensely valuable in the long run. When choosing my current therapist, I had an idea of what (and who) might work for me and I felt more confident in my ability to discriminate between the many therapists in my area as a result.



Identifying the issues, finding a therapist

It's a good idea to first think about the main issues that are troubling you, and to read up on the different approaches available before seeking a therapist.

Of course, despite saying this, and typically for me, I wasn't at all systematic or organised when it came to finding my current therapist. I knew I wanted to see a UKCP-registered psychotherapist, as I had never seen one before, and I had an idea that I might work best with a man. So I typed "UKCP-registered psychotherapist" together with my location into Google, and sorted through the results. The guy I decided to contact had a photo of himself, which I liked. I thought he looked straightforward, honest and trustworthy. Of course, a good photo doesn't mean he would necessarily have been all of these things, or even one of them, but first impressions are important, and I'm only human, after all. His website was laid out well and jargon-free. I decided to email him and ask for a consultation.

First contact

A few things stand out in my memory about my initial contact with my therapist. He replied quickly and was clear and kind in his communication. One rather embarrassing thing that I remember is that he gently pulled me up on idealising him too much before we'd even had a consultation appointment. I imagine I was probably too effusive in my thanks. I'm sure that I had some unrealistic idea that everything would now be fine forever, and that I was going to be fixed. As I was shortly to discover, therapy, even effective therapy, doesn't quite work out that way...

Alice Ayres

The writer of this blog is not a current or past client of any therapist presently or formerly practising at Brighton & Hove Psychotherapy. Alice Ayres is a pseudonym.