NEWS LESSON

Why Are More People Talking to Therapists?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Why can talking to someone help with a problem?
2. Is it easier to discuss mental health now than in the past?
3. What makes a person good at listening?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**improvement**	☐	A	an angry talk between people who do not agree
2	**survey**	☐	B	ready and happy to do something
3	**considered**	☐	C	a set of questions asked to many people to find out what they think
4	**loosely**	☐	D	thought about something carefully before deciding
5	**qualified**	☐	E	in a way that is not exact or careful
6	**argument**	☐	F	having passed the training you need for a job
7	**entirely**	☐	G	completely
8	**willing**	☐	H	a change that makes something better

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

More people talk openly about mental health and therapy. But getting the right help can still take time and money.

1 Twenty years ago, saying "I'm seeing a therapist" could stop a conversation. Today it often receives the same reply as any other appointment: that sounds sensible, I hope it helps. The change is real, and most people would call it an improvement.

2 A large UK survey suggests how far it has gone. Between February and March 2026, YouGov asked 5,058 adults about therapy for the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Thirty-seven per cent said they had seen a therapist at some point, up from 35% the year before. Of those who had, 72% said they found it helpful.

3 That last number is worth reading carefully. It describes what people reported about their own experience. It does not mean therapy works for everybody, or that it is the right answer to every problem. Some people try it and stop. Some need a different kind of support entirely.

4 Being willing to go is also not the same as being able to go. The same survey asked people who had considered therapy but never started. Thirty-five per cent said the cost stopped them. Twenty-two per cent said the waiting list was too long. Talking about help has become easier much faster than getting it.

5 A waiting list is easy to say and hard to live through. Several months is long enough for a problem to grow, or for a person to decide that asking was a mistake.

6 Something else has changed along the way. Words from the therapy room are now used everywhere, in group chats and in videos online. Having the language to describe a feeling can genuinely help a person explain what is wrong. The risk is that a serious word gets used loosely, as a quick way to end an argument rather than understand one.

7 None of this makes listening less valuable. A friend who pays attention is not a substitute for a qualified professional, but it is not nothing either. What a person usually wants first is somewhere private to say the thing out loud.

8 The harder question is for the rest of us. A country can be very comfortable discussing mental health and still leave people waiting months for support. Being open about a problem is the easy part. Paying for the answer is the test.

Sources: British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, public perceptions survey. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. In the survey, 37% said they had seen a therapist at some point. T F NG
2. The survey shows that therapy works for everybody. T F NG
3. The survey was repeated in other European countries. T F NG
4. Cost was given more often than waiting lists as a reason for not starting therapy. T F NG
5. The writer says a wait of several months can let a problem get bigger. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

describe **friendship** **habit** **reply** **sensible** **serious** **substitute**

1. It is _____ to book a check-up before a small health problem gets worse.
2. Doctors treat a _____ illness much more carefully than a cold.
3. It can be hard to _____ exactly how you feel when you are very upset.
4. A video online is not a _____ for advice from a doctor.
5. When she shared her news, his _____ was kind and calm.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Twenty years ago, saying "I'm seeing a therapist" could _____ a conversation. (STOP)
2. Between February and March 2026, YouGov _____ 5,058 adults about therapy. (ASK)
3. It does not mean therapy _____ for everybody. (WORK)
4. Words from the therapy room _____ now used everywhere, in group chats and in videos online. (BE)
5. A country can be comfortable discussing mental health and still _____ people waiting months for support. (LEAVE)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Some words always go together. Say the whole pair in your head and choose the one that sounds natural.

draw	keep	make	pays	run	take	waiting

1. A good listener _____ close attention to what you say.
2. She has been on a _____ list for three months.
3. It can _____ a big difference to talk to someone.
4. You should _____ care of your mental health.
5. A good friend will _____ your secret and not tell anyone.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Should everyone learn basic listening skills at school or work?
2. How can a country make support easier to reach?
3. Is asking for help a private choice, a social issue or both?

9 Role-play: booking a first appointment

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the clinic receptionist

A caller wants to book therapy. The free waiting list is about five months. A private session this week costs 70 pounds. Explain both choices, ask what the caller can manage, and suggest one more option.

Student B · the caller

You've felt very stressed for weeks and want to see a therapist soon. You can't afford much money and you don't want to wait for months. Ask questions and try to find a solution.

Useful phrases

I'd like to book an appointment, please.

How long is the waiting list?

I'm afraid it's about five months.

That's too long for me, I'm struggling now.

Is there anything cheaper?

We could offer you a shorter course of sessions.

Afterwards, tell the class what the caller decided, and say why.

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 H · 2 C · 3 D · 4 E · 5 F · 6 A · 7 G · 8 B

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 sensible · 2 serious · 3 describe · 4 substitute · 5 reply

6 Verb forms

1 stop · 2 asked · 3 works · 4 are · 5 leave

7 Language focus

1 pays · 2 waiting · 3 make · 4 take · 5 keep

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