

What to expect

Some people will feel a bit nervous prior to and/or during their first therapy meeting. I would like to reassure you by saying that this is perfectly normal and will usually recede quickly. The first steps tend to be the hardest. One can feel nervous for a variety of reasons but there is one for which I can help you immediately, which has to do with not knowing what to expect. The purpose of this sheet is to give you an indication of what will happen. The first meeting can adopt one of the following three formats:

- I. An initial assessment
- II. The first stage of a progressive assessment (which will then last more than one session)
- III. A therapy session

I. Initial assessment

In this case, the session will be divided into the following phases:

- To start with, we may have a brief “settling in” period during which we simply break the ice
- Then, I will ask you what brings you here, what issues trouble you and what are your objectives in therapy
- If time allows, I will also ask you about your previous experience of therapy and why you chose me
- Then, I will share my thoughts and initial observations. If I do not find it premature, I may offer a general outline of what the therapy will look like
- Finally, I will answer any questions you may have

Below are two questions that I frequently get asked. I will be happy to discuss these more deeply, if you request it, as well as any other topic which interests you or that you may be curious about.

How do I work?

My ways of working are tailored to my client’s personality, needs, requirements, and circumstances, and will also depend on the kind of relationship that I develop with them. They are therefore adaptive rather than definite. I will work in the way which feels the most appropriate and effective in your case. Having said this, generally, my ways of working entail an exploration of my clients’ issues and psychological life in the context of an open dialogue.

Which theories and techniques will I use?

This, again, will partly depend on who you are and how our relationship develops. In every case, my focus is on offering therapy which rests on an accurate and effective picture of human psychology, as everything stems from there. For this reason, I use a mix of theories, some of which already exist while others result from my own research and my personal and professional experience. My website offers a useful resource to get more information about this (links below). Otherwise, you can ask me directly.

<https://www.guyvandewalle.co.uk/what-i-offer>

<https://www.guyvandewalle.co.uk/faq>

II. The first stage of a progressive assessment

Same as above, but spread over more than one session, usually as therapy is starting and unfolding.

III. A therapy session

This is for clients who need and/or want to engage in therapy straight away. This will often be the case of those who have previous experience of therapy (with me or another therapist), know the drill, and simply wish to get on with things. It may also be the case of those who simply need to talk and be heard straight away and are happy to have the assessment process become a part of the therapeutic process.