



**What is family therapy?**

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- Family Therapy can help those in close relationships better understand and support each other.
- Family Therapy aims to:
  - Enable family members to express and explore difficult thoughts and emotions safely.
  - Understand each other's experiences and perspectives, even when these might be different.
  - Appreciate each other's needs, even when these might be different.
  - Build on family strengths.
  - Work together to make useful changes in their relationships and their lives.

## **Family life isn't always easy...**

Families can be very complicated because everyone is unique.

Each person thinks and talks about things in a different way, and each person has different ideas, feelings, worries and strengths.

All kinds of changes can make family life more stressful, such as an illness, unemployment, moving home, new family members, getting older, divorce, death and trauma.

Some families find their own ways to manage these changes, and some families find it much harder, for all kinds of reasons.

Family therapy can help families at all stages of life when they're feeling overwhelmed, sad and angry; when they're not sure what to do for the best; or when they feel stuck in repeating patterns of hurtful or harmful behaviour.

## **What does 'family' mean?**

Family therapists understand that different people have different ideas about what 'family' means.

So 'family' is used to describe any group of people who care about each other and call themselves a family.

As well as parents and children of all ages, they may also involve grandparents, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins, friends, carers, and other professionals.

They try to include whoever is important to the family.

## **What might family therapy be like?**

Some family therapists work in teams, because it helps make sure we're not missing anyone's perspective if there is more than one clinician involved.

Others work on their own.

But they will all help families and individuals to talk about their hopes, and to work towards their own goals as a family.

Sometimes it only takes a few sessions to help a family find their way. Sometimes difficulties are more complicated, and families may need longer to find the solutions that work best for them.