



## WHAT TO EXPECT IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

Taking steps to address your child's social-emotional health is important and a recommended piece of all health and wellness. Here are some tips to guide your expectations of your initial experience with psychotherapy:

The first meeting will include the patient and parent/guardian together for an information gathering and rapport building session. The therapist may request parent/guardian attend all or part of the initial therapy session. We will review different aspects of the child's social, medical, emotional history as well as important details of the family history. Parent/guardian will also bring an initial consultation survey that may inform questions the therapist may ask about; if there is any part of this information you would like to discuss privately with the therapist, please inform them at the beginning of the session. We will review limits of confidentiality and safety planning for any child/adolescent who expresses high risk behaviors. We will also discuss expectations and goals for therapy and the importance of commitment to regularly attend sessions.

We ask parents to understand that therapy can sometimes cause upsetting feelings to emerge, and that the child's problems may worsen temporarily before improving. We also emphasize that the patient may experience significant relief after starting therapy, which indicates a positive impact of having a safe space to share. While the immediate symptoms or stressors may change, we strongly encourage you and your child to follow through with treatment recommendations to fully process concerns and issues that were initially presented. Our clinicians are licensed professionals with multiple approaches to therapy depending on the age, current concerns or problems, or recommendations from primary care provider. Below you may read more information on what you may experience at Palm Beach Pediatrics.

**Play Therapy:** The process of using play to work with and help children with emotional and behavioral concerns. It is a therapeutic model for children dealing with various types of emotional stressors, difficult life transitions, and other situations that cause stress or emotional pain. When using play materials, children are in charge and they are in their natural element. This allows them to explore feelings in a safe and empowering way. There are toys that reflect a wide range of themes and experiences: nurture, danger, safety, aggression, family, school, emotions, etc. Play therapists create a space and provide toys that allow children to find a way to express and process emotions and experiences. By doing so, they gain emotional mastery and develop strategies to cope with difficult situations.

**Individual Psychotherapy:** During psychotherapy, you learn about your moods, feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Psychotherapy helps you learn how to take control of your life and respond to challenging situations with healthy coping skills. There are many types of psychotherapy, each with its own approach. The type of psychotherapy that's right for you depends on your individual concerns and discussion with therapist.

**Family Therapy:** Family therapy is a type of counseling that can help family members improve communication and resolve conflicts. Family therapy can be useful in any family situation that causes stress, grief, anger or conflict. It can help you and your family members understand one another better and learn coping skills to bring you closer together. The therapist may suggest a family session or parent-only session to address treatment goals together. Phone communication with parents/family members is available if provided appropriate permission by parent/legal guardian (see communication consent forms). Our therapists are often in sessions throughout the day, please understand we will return your call if able within 24 hours of receiving. If you require a consultation or in-depth conversation with a therapist, we recommend you schedule a time for a face-to-face or phone consultation.