# How to find a therapist

Our first blog entry isn’t so much of an opinion piece as it is a general guide on how to access therapy.

In the first episode of the podcast Where to begin? [link] we start right at the beginning with how to seek out and engage with a therapist. This is more difficult to explain than it might seem at first glance because the answer depends on where you live and what your resources are.

## Urgent help

In our show notes every week we provide a list of crisis response numbers, and this might be where you want to start. Particularly if your issue is urgent.

In Northern Ireland contact lifeline on 0808 808 8000  
In ROI Call 116 123 to speak to a Samaritan  
England -  <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline>  
Wales - C.A.L.L. Mental Health Helpline for Wales - 0800 132 737 (FREE and available 24/7) Text help to 81066.  
Scotland - <https://www.seemescotland.org/urgent-help/>  
The USA - If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center or text MHA to 741741 at the Crisis Text Line.  
Canada - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/mental-health-services/mental-health-get-help.html>  
Australia- Lifeline (call 13 11 14)

This is obviously just a selection of countries, but we also encourage you to google ‘The Samaritans’ and the country in which you live if you need urgent help that can’t wait.

## Private practice

Crisis lines and services, as the name suggests, are often designed for short term urgent support but do not provide longer term therapy.

In order to access long term therapy, one option is to seek a private practitioner. In episode one we discuss how you might do this with online databases such at that provided by [Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/counselling) for the UK, the US, Canada, in fact for 20 countries in total!

One way to protect yourself or provide some assurance of quality is to browse the listing of the local regulatory body (BACP UKCP, IACP, APA). Again, these listings can be found by googling ‘registered counsellors near me’.

This is not a guarantee of quality as we discuss in the podcast, or that any one counsellor or therapist will be the one for you. These just reflect some steps you can take to attempt to weed out unqualified or underqualified therapists. These registers and databases will list the practitioners’ qualifications, modality, specialisms, mode of operating and fee. So you can try and find a good fit before the initial session.

The different types of therapy are discussed in brief in Episode 2, ‘Other types of therapy are available’ and a comprehensive list can be found [here](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/types-of-therapy)

## Free options

Again, this depends on where your location, but in the UK you can access free therapy of many different types through the NHS. There is a waiting list and sometimes it is very long but if your need is urgent you will be fast tracked.

Numerous mental health practitioners work for the NHS and deliver psychological treatment on a full-time basis. Unfortunately, in the UK the need for mental health treatment currently outstrips the availability, resulting in long waiting lists. Supporting the statutory services are community, charity, and voluntary services who again provide therapeutic services for those in mental distress. Waiting lists vary by service and sector.

This is different in other countries who don’t have a health service or a strong third sector providing free counselling. Please do [send us a message](mailto:thankstherapy@gmail.com) with details of how your country works with regard to private and free counselling.

## Bottom line

Ultimately it is important to seek help in whatever form that is available to you. Especially if you feel you are in crisis. Even if you have felt the need to seek help for a while and don’t class your difficulties as urgent, you still deserve to feel better and live a happy and fulfilled life. It is worth taking the leap and seeing what help is available.