



How to Talk to Your Therapist

Here's what you can do if you feel like you need to disclose something to your doctor or therapist, but are uncertain whether they will keep your information confidential.

Ask the professional whether they share confidential information with your parents. Most professionals will answer with specific areas where they would be required by law to do. Some professionals may go further and tell you upfront they will share other behaviors they feel are important for your parents to know about (such as drinking or using drugs).

Ask the professional what types of information they feel they would need to share with your parents. Get as specific an answer as you can from the professional, so if you tell them something they haven't mentioned, they can't blindside you with a disclosure you had not expected.

Tread gingerly with the information you share. You don't need to blurt out everything, all at once (although that is often the human tendency to do so). Take your time, share a little, and gauge the reaction of the professional. If you feel that the information is safe with him or her, continue to share.

Remember, some sensitive information may be critical to your treatment. A doctor may not be able to accurately diagnose a medical or health problem if you're withholding an important piece of possibly embarrassing information. A therapist also may not be able to help you much if you're leaving out a big event or factor that might be contributing to your current feelings. You have to balance confidentiality concerns with actually getting help for your concern.

Most professionals are cool with most information. Teens regularly engage in behavior that parents would not approve of if they knew — drinking alcohol, experimenting with drugs, engaging in unsafe sex. These are not earth-shattering revelations to most professionals, who have heard virtually all of them before. So while it's a huge deal to you, it may not really be as big a deal to the professional (most of whom would keep such information confidential), but may be important to helping you get treated appropriately. For instance, many medications should not be mixed with alcohol or certain drugs; failing to share such information with a doctor could result in unwanted and possibly serious side effects.

Most professionals won't judge or lecture you. A doctor or therapist is first and foremost there to help you. So while they may say a word or two about whether you're making the best decisions in your life with certain disclosures, most will respect that you are a young adult finding your way in the world and not judge your behaviors.

thedrugguy.com