

READY TO LEAVE THERAPY?

Even though you may leave psychotherapy for any reason, or even for no reason, the termination process will be done professionally. The best way to terminate psychotherapy is to discuss this process with your therapist. Regardless of the reason for terminating, it takes at least one or two sessions to review your treatment. Your Therapist will want to discuss what they have learned and how they have progressed within therapy. It is a time to assess strengths and areas where growth is still needed. Strategies may still need to be developed to cope with these areas.

The terminal phase of the helping process involves (1) assessing when group goals have been satisfactorily attained and planning termination accordingly, (2) effecting successful termination of the helping relationship and planning for the maintenance of change and continued growth following termination, and (3) evaluating the results of the helping process. Deciding when to terminate is relatively straightforward when time limits are specified in advance as part of the initial contract. Judgments about termination that involve such goals are much less difficult when goals have been explicitly specified.

Of course, you will have the option to return to treatment again in the future—either for a one- or two-session “tune up” or to work on unresolved issues. There can also be times when your Therapist may terminate treatment. A Therapist may leave his or her practice, and treatment with all of his or her clients will have to be terminated, sometimes prematurely. Sometimes a Therapist realizes that the psychotherapy has moved into an area that requires expertise he or she does not have, and trying to continue psychotherapy without proper training or supervision would be an ethical violation.

Regardless of the reasons for terminating the treatment, your Therapist is bound by ethics to treat you with due respect and consideration in all things, including termination. You will be given enough advance notice (if possible) so that your emotional reactions can be processed.

Even after psychotherapy has terminated, you still hold the privilege of confidentiality. The Therapist cannot reveal anything about the client’s treatment without your permission. The Therapist will also have the legal obligation to retain the client’s treatment records (or “chart”) for a period of time dictated by state law.