

ADOPTTEENS

Accessing the Adoption Support Fund for therapy

Not many people know this, but as an 18-year-old adoptee, you can access therapy through the adoption support fund (commonly known as the ASF). The therapy is available to adopted children and young people who need support. Adopted young people and their families need support for all sorts of reasons and at different times of their lives. It is extremely normal for young adopted people to receive therapy at some point in their lives and it can be hugely helpful. People have therapy for a whole host of reasons such as:

- Issues with relationships
- Wanting to explore identity
- Understanding their history
- Feeling anxious, depressed or angry
- Low self-worth
- Struggling with loss & change

As an 18 year old, you can access this therapy with or without your parents' consent. It can take a little bit of time for therapy to be set up, but the process should be simple for you and the starting point is speaking to your social worker if you already have one. If you do not you would need to contact your local adoption team, which would be either One Adoption North, One Adoption South or One Adoption West depending on where you live. We have put their contact numbers and email addresses at the bottom of this guide for you.

A therapist is someone who is skilled and experienced in supporting people with difficulties, worries, or confusion in their lives. A therapist is someone who can help you make sense of your thoughts and emotions and explain how these can affect how you behave, how you see the world and how you see your relationships. A therapist can use different skills such as play, art, drama, talking, music and even eye movement to support someone to share and make sense of their thoughts and feelings and ultimately help them reach the goals they want to achieve. For example to feel better about themselves, or to have a better relationship with someone.

Here is a young adult's story of accessing music therapy when they turned 18

[Teresa's story: The aftermath of turning 18](#)

What was it like making contact with your social worker?

I found it quite nerve wracking. I have had a few social workers and was not sure what to expect; I did not know if I would get any support. When I turned 18, I did not have a social worker because most of my previous ones had left to venture on to different things in their lives. Eventually I found a new social worker; it was when I was in my last year of college. I

ADOPTTEENS

found that personally I was going through many changes, such as lots of things ending. My new social worker was lovely and was easy to contact and to talk with. I loved that she was always organised and supportive.

What did your social worker ask you?

She did not ask a lot; we only spoke about what I felt comfortable with disclosing. When we did speak, I felt a little anxious, but as our sessions went on my anxieties eased.

What were your conversations like?

The conversations were very mixed for example; my social worker would ask how college and family life was we did not just talk about the steps of accessing therapy. I felt comforted by the fact someone took time out of their day to listen and have a conversations with me. My social worker became a great confidant; she found out who I was she listened to my many interests and hobbies and many stories of my life.

What the process of getting therapy was like?

I first underwent meetings with my social worker and then after talking we both concluded that it might help me to try therapy. The reason for this is that therapists are Qualified in that field.

How did it feel?

I felt like there was a glimmer of hope, I also felt like I was not alone anymore; someone was helping me along the twisty rollercoaster that I was on.

What was starting therapy was like?

Play Therapy

First, I had play therapy and to start with, I was anxious. I took on this therapy when I was attending college. I think the sessions lasted for about 30-45 minutes they also took place in an empty room at my college, which at first did not bother me. Then I found that after my sessions I would then go straight back into my lesson, which would unearth many raw emotions, which was not pleasant. Play therapy did not really work for me so we stopped this and then I started Music therapy instead.

Music therapy

I was very optimistic when my social worker spoke and asked me what helps when I find myself in difficult situations, I replied with stating that music is a universal language that I love. We both concluded that music therapy might be a great and new exciting path to go down. I am ecstatic to share with you that I absolutely loved experimenting with a variety of instruments.



ADOPTTEENS

Music therapy is looking at pieces of music that link to certain parts of your life, you slowly untangle the past carefully and at your own pace, nothing is forced or rushed. Looking back now I can definitely say that from detangling past relationships with partners and friends and family members I can now make more sense of my life. The main subject that was a common factor was about not knowing how to accept love for who I am, instead of trying to be someone that would fit a perfect mould for people. Love is a key emotion that follows you into adulthood so I am happy that I untangled it in my therapy sessions.

Did you tell your parents you were going to access therapy?

I did not, as I understandably didn't want my mum to worry; I wanted it to be an independent thing that I did by myself; For me. I thought the less people who knew the smoother the process would be. I also did not want to have to stress about it, as it can already be a nerve-wracking thing to do.