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BetterHelp Online Therapy Review: A Complete Guide in 2024

Updated: October 21, 2024

Our Handbook team signed up for BetterHelp online therapy to see first-hand how this platform can benefit your mental health. Here's what we learned in our BetterHelp review.

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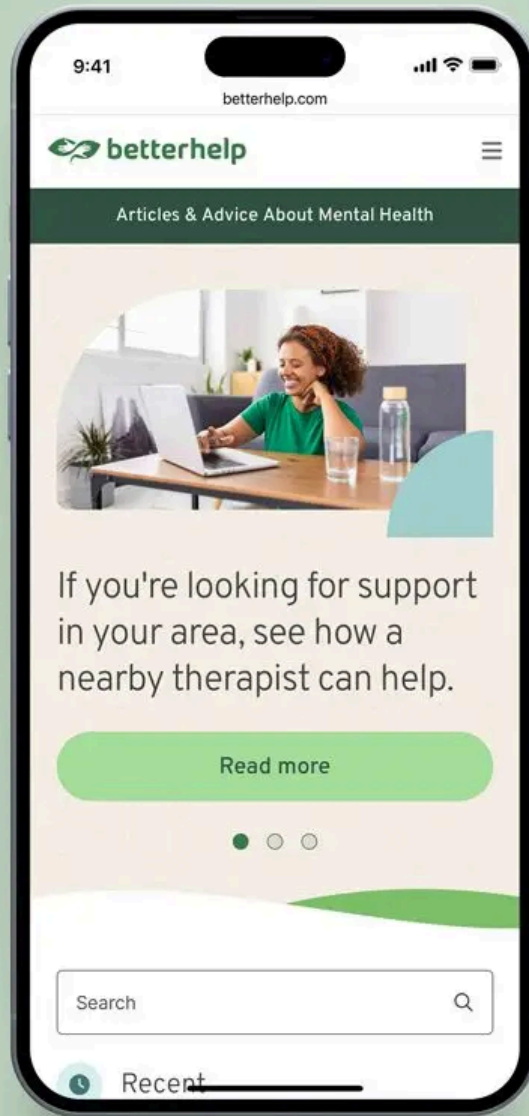
Managing Editor

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[Why trust us](#)

Key takeaways

- We recommend BetterHelp as the number one platform on our best online therapy page for those seeking affordable, convenient online therapy with a large therapist network.
- BetterHelp typically costs \$65-\$90 per week, billed every four weeks, and does not accept insurance. They offer financial aid options and occasional discounts.
- Unlike many online therapy platforms, BetterHelp offers therapist-led group sessions as part of their subscription. These can be valuable resources for support and connection.



BetterHelp is a widely recognized online therapy service designed to make mental health care accessible and convenient. Our testers explored its benefits firsthand and found it to be an excellent option for those seeking affordable, flexible therapy from a large network of licensed therapists. A standout feature of BetterHelp is its inclusion of therapist-led group sessions, providing valuable support and connection. With costs ranging from \$65 to \$90 per

week and financial aid options available, BetterHelp offers an inclusive and user-friendly experience. Our detailed BetterHelp review includes insights from extensive testing, user surveys, and expert consultations to give you a complete picture of what to expect.

We want you to know that you're not alone in this journey. Online therapy allows you to receive mental health care from the comfort of your home, which can make it more convenient to reach out for help when you need it. BetterHelp is our HelpGuide Handbook Team's overall pick for the [best online therapy](#) platform. Learn about its benefits and drawbacks in our review.

BetterHelp



- Vast network of licensed therapists serving all 50 states.
- Unlimited in-app messaging so you can reach out to your therapist anytime.
- Discounts and financial aid available.
- Subscription includes extra features like group sessions, journaling prompts, worksheets, and more.

9.9

Exceptional



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Our final verdict on BetterHelp

Our team tested BetterHelp to give you a first-hand look at the platform. We found the sign-up process user-friendly and appreciated the variety of communication options, including video chat, messaging, and even [online group therapy sessions](#) (a standout feature!) While our tester couldn't get matched with an LGBTQ+ therapist initially, she was happy with the ease of switching therapists until she found a good fit.

Who should consider using BetterHelp: Those seeking affordable and convenient online therapy with a large therapist network, especially those who may benefit from group sessions.

Who should consider other options: People in crisis situations needing immediate care, those requiring medication or a formal diagnosis (BetterHelp therapists cannot diagnose), or those who want a guaranteed match.

BetterHelp highlights

BetterHelp

9.9

Exceptional



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Key Product Features

- **Best for:** Individuals seeking affordable, convenient online therapy with a large therapist network
- **Cost:** \$65-\$90 per week, billed every four weeks
- **Insurance accepted?** No
- **Session lengths:** 30 to 45 minutes
- **Types of therapy offered:** Counseling, mindfulness-based therapy, family therapy, couples counseling, group therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, exposure therapy,

dialectical behavioral therapy, interpersonal therapy, psychodynamic therapy, gestalt therapy, humanistic therapy

- **Communication options:** Messaging, video chat, phone calls, live chat (during scheduled appointments)

Pros and cons

+

What is BetterHelp?

BetterHelp is a leading online therapy platform best known for its extensive network of therapists speaking over 56 languages and affordable subscription model. They work best for those seeking a convenient and accessible therapist online. BetterHelp offers individual therapy for adults for many mental health issues, including [anxiety](#), depression, trauma, and life transitions. Currently, BetterHelp does not offer online psychiatry.

While BetterHelp doesn't specialize in online couples or [family therapy](#), it does have a sister site called Regain that's specifically designed for [couples seeking online therapy](#). You can learn more about it in our [Regain review](#).

BetterHelp is primarily designed for adults over 18, so it isn't suitable for children. However, it offers several therapy modalities, including [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy](#) (CBT), which is highly effective in addressing issues like anxiety and depression. Our traditional therapist tester used the platform's CBT services and reported a positive experience, noting that the online format provided meaningful, structured sessions to help manage negative thought patterns.

Our therapist's testing notes on BetterHelp:

"She was knowledgeable and provided education about what CBT is and that is what she utilized during the session."

Communication is a key feature of BetterHelp's services. You can connect with your therapist through secure messaging and live chat sessions during scheduled appointments. Thanks to the flexibility of communication, users can choose the communication option that best fits their comfort level.

How does BetterHelp work?

BetterHelp connects people with licensed therapists for teletherapy sessions. A BetterHelp subscription includes in-app messaging and one live therapy appointment per week via chat, phone, or video.

BetterHelp's sign up process

As you sign up, BetterHelp walks you through a detailed questionnaire that asks questions about your current mental health status, age, gender, sexual identity, and other personal identifiers. It also asks why you are considering therapy to better match you with a new therapist.

Once sign-up is complete and you match with a therapist, you can click through additional BetterHelp offerings such as group therapy sessions, journaling, and messaging.

How to match with an online therapist

BetterHelp uses an algorithm that's designed to connect users with a suitable therapist. Unlike some other platforms, users cannot choose their therapist directly, though. Instead, the algorithm considers factors like your location, therapist availability, and the preferences you indicate during signup:

BetterHelp allows you to specify preferences for an LGBTQ+, BIPOC, or therapist with a specific religious background. However, it doesn't guarantee a match. In the case of our tester, they requested an LGBTQ+ therapist but weren't initially matched with one. Luckily, BetterHelp makes switching therapists easy, and our tester was ultimately able to switch to a therapist specializing in LGBTQ+ therapy.

Our survey results on BetterHelp user satisfaction with therapist matching are encouraging; over 88 percent of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their therapist match. While there is a chance you might need to switch therapists to find the right fit, BetterHelp's algorithm appears to work well.

Live video sessions

Live video sessions are the closest thing you'll get to in-person therapy. You will meet via video call through your counseling room online or through the app. This format allows real-time interaction, similar to what the patient would

get in a traditional therapy session. According to our Handbook Team's January 2023 survey of 200 BetterHelp users, 66 percent of BetterHelp members used its video therapy option.

The importance of connectivity in online therapy cannot be understated. Being able to see and hear your therapist in real-time makes it easier to express emotions and establish rapport. Plus, this video format also allows for non-verbal cues like body language and facial expressions, which are essential for understanding and building trust.

Our therapist tester did experience some technical issues during her video sessions, but she found the experience very effective despite this.

Our therapist's testing notes on BetterHelp:

"Throughout the session, the therapist seemed present. There were a couple of connection issues that caused some delays but nothing causing a complete disconnection. The therapist let me share my concerns and attempted to problem solve. Overall she seemed interested in my experiences and listened to what I had to say."

→ [Johanna Padilla](#)

Live chat sessions

BetterHelp's live chat sessions are similar to messaging, except your therapist will reply immediately during your appointment. [Text therapy](#) can be a good option for people who prefer texting over talking. Plus, you can always review your conversations later because the chat sessions will remain in your counseling "room" unless you cancel your monthly subscription.

Our testers tried chat therapy with BetterHelp for the first time and found it surprisingly helpful. Even while chatting on their phones during a walk, they felt that the therapist could effectively address their concerns. Plus, the therapist offered resources like books and worksheets and typed their responses in real time.

Our tester was pleasantly surprised by their first chat therapy session on BetterHelp. They found chatting with their therapist from their phone convenient while walking around a park. The therapist also gave them valuable resources, such as book recommendations, online tools, and worksheets. The tester reported that their experience was better than previous in-person therapy.

However, the tester also noted one downside: the therapist suggested taking an Enneagram personality test, which felt more like a personal interest than a therapeutic tool.

Despite this, the chat platform's live feature stood out. The tester could see the therapist typing in real time, making the chat more interactive. While the platform offers unlimited messaging, live chat conversations aren't saved once they are closed, so they cannot be revisited later.

From one of our BetterHelp testers:

"I had chat therapy for the first time on BH today and I was pleasantly surprised with how useful the experience was. I chatted from my phone during a walk around the park. The therapist recommended a book, some other online resources, and sent over worksheets. She was a better fit than my previous therapist."

In-app messaging

BetterHelp offers in-app messaging with your provider at all hours of the day, but you should not expect an immediate response. According to our January 2023 survey of online therapy users, only 50 percent of BetterHelp subscribers received a response from their therapist within a day. Of the rest, 17 percent received responses within a few days, 25 percent received responses within a week, and eight percent said it regularly took more than a week for their therapist to respond. We recommend you ask your therapist during your initial session when and how often they will reply to your messages.

You will receive an email when your therapist sends you a message. Messaging can be convenient between sessions when you have a quick question or need to check in with your therapist. It also creates an ongoing conversation you

can reference at any time. BetterHelp allows you to “shred” messages you send to your therapist if you choose. Once shredded, these messages will no longer be visible in your account.

Phone calls

You can schedule a phone session with your therapist the same way you schedule a chat or video appointment in the app. To speak with your therapist over the phone, log in to your therapy room at the scheduled time, and the system will request your phone number. Once you answer the call, it will connect you with your therapist to start the phone session.

Group sessions

The platform offers 90-minute therapist-led group sessions with your subscription. Group sessions have five to 18 participants and are popular among subscribers. According to the same January 2023 survey of BetterHelp users, 79 percent also attended a group session at least every other week, and 47.5 percent attended weekly.

One of our testers attended this group session to learn more about effective self-care.

Topics include:

- Tired of Helping? The Compassion Fatigue Support Group.
- Living With Chronic Pain Support.
- Adjusting to Change/Life Transitions.
- Divorce/Separation Support Group for Adults.
- Boundary Identification, Setting, and Enforcement.
- Women's Support: Healing From Domestic Violence & Trauma.
- Queer Women.
- Mood and Affective Disorders Support Group.
- Recovering From Dysfunctional Family Systems.
- Surviving Imprisonment: My Loved One is Incarcerated.

Our tester used the group sessions and reported that her experience was great. She found the group session surprisingly helpful.

From one of our BetterHelp testers

"I attended a group session and genuinely loved it. If I were to choose BetterHelp over another platform for any reason, it would be for the experience I had in the support group. I felt truly seen, heard, and understood in a way I hadn't before by people who shared similar life experiences. It was really special."

Additional features on BetterHelp

In addition to therapy sessions, our testers also explored BetterHelp's features that support self-directed wellness. For instance, there are journaling tools for recording thoughts and experiences, such as the one pictured below. During our tester's therapy session, the therapist recommended worksheets specific to their problems, which they found helpful.

Before starting therapy, participants describe their reason for entering therapy and set goals for sessions.

What other users are saying

According to our February 2024 BetterHelp survey, the majority of users were satisfied with their therapist match, which is a positive sign. Many found chat therapy particularly useful, even for complex issues. Those who stopped using BetterHelp reported that affordability was their biggest reason behind ceasing therapy, though 12 percent did find the therapy ineffective. 80 percent of users shared at least one identity trait with their therapist, making them feel more comfortable.

How much does BetterHelp cost?

BetterHelp therapy ranges from \$65–\$90 per week, based on your location, preferences, and therapist availability. BetterHelp bills every four weeks, and you can cancel your subscription anytime. The platform accepts Health Savings Accounts (HSA) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) for payment. You can also pay by credit card or PayPal.

While signing up for BetterHelp and answering the questionnaire, our tester received a promotional discount for listing the podcast name where she first heard about the platform. BetterHelp automatically deducted \$9 per week, saving our tester \$36 in the first month.

Handbook Tip

When you invite your friends and family using a referral link, they get two free weeks of therapy when they join, and you get \$150 credit for every referral. Your credits will automatically be applied to your next membership payment.

Is BetterHelp covered by insurance?

Unlike other platforms for [online therapy that take insurance](#), BetterHelp does not accept health insurance at this time. However, some reviewers think paying upfront makes the platform more convenient than dealing with insurance.

“Huge improvement over traditional, insurance-strangled therapy structures. The pricing turns out to be better, too. There is a monthly fee, but you can see your therapist a lot more often than I was ever able to see my in-person therapist, and you can do it from the privacy of your own home office/computer screen.”

– Anne C. (VERIFIED [BBB CUSTOMER REVIEW](#))

BetterHelp does not accept Medicare or Medicaid.

Does BetterHelp offer financial aid?

The platform offers financial aid up to 40 percent off for those who are eligible, and you can find discount codes to make [online therapy more affordable](#). However, some customers found BetterHelp doesn't consistently deliver on the discounts offered on its website.

In a mental health emergency:

Online therapists may not be the most appropriate resource to help in a mental health crisis. If you or someone you know is a danger to themselves or others around them, it is an emergency, and it cannot wait for an online therapist's response.

- Calling or texting 988 for the [Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#).
- Chatting online at [988lifeline.org](#).
- American Sign Language users can use [988 Videophone](#).
- Veterans with hearing loss can text a Veterans Crisis Line responder at 838255.
- Calling the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA)'s Helpline at 1-800-662-4357 or text your zip code to 435748.

All the above options will connect you with trained professionals who can provide crisis support. You can find even more resources, including international options, on our [helpline directory page](#).

Our BetterHelp testing experience

To give you the most comprehensive BetterHelp review possible, we dove deep. So far, we've spent over 7,500 hours researching 70 online therapy platforms before testing 14 of the most popular options. To understand real user experiences, we surveyed 1,200 people, conducted focus groups, and consulted with over 60 mental health experts.

12,000+ hours
of research

87 platforms
researched

37 platforms
tested

2,800 people
surveyed

30 people
interviewed

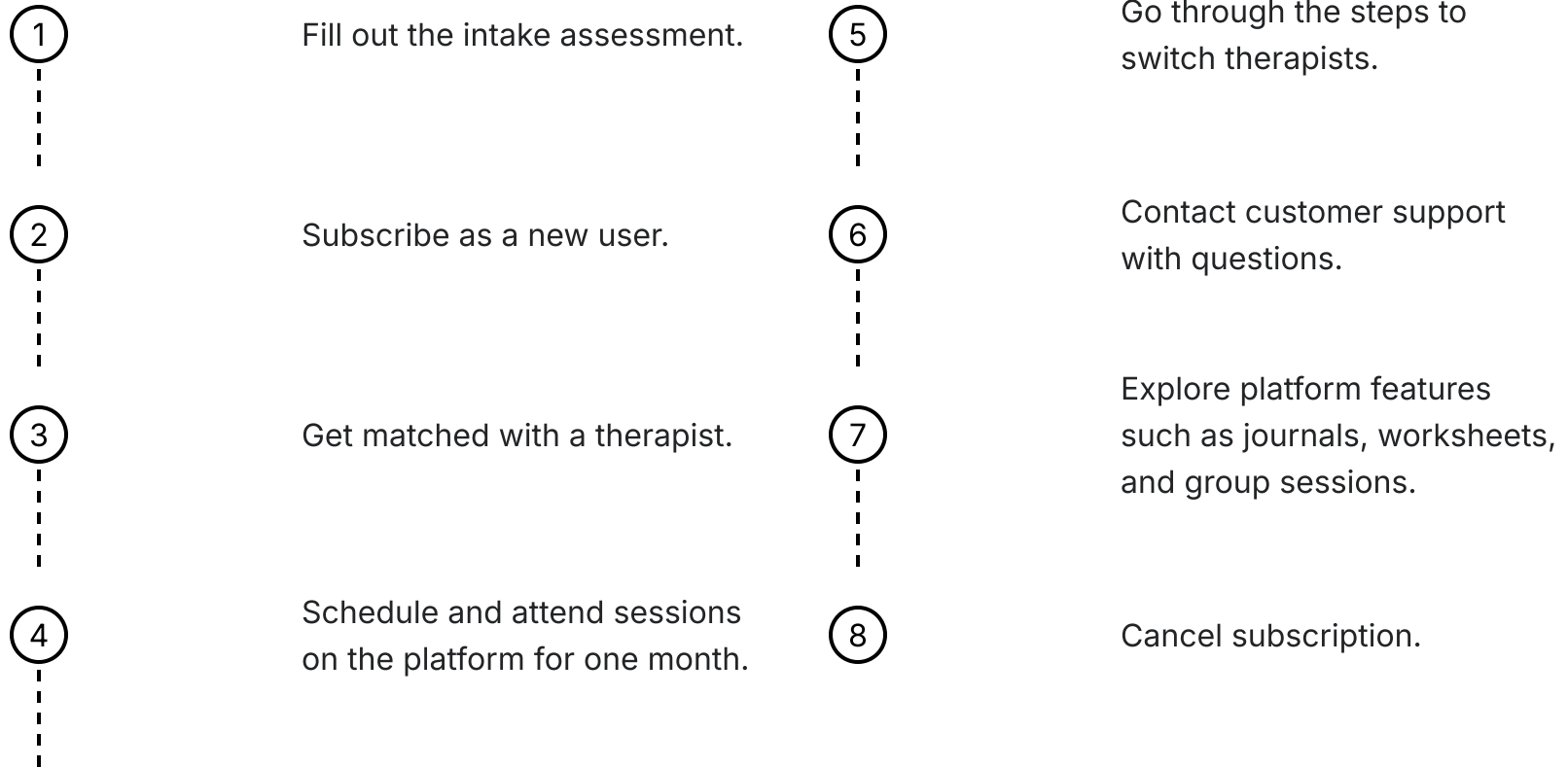
60+ experts
consulted

During our deep dive into BetterHelp, we signed up and explored its features firsthand. Our testing included going through the therapist matching process, testing communication tools, and the overall effectiveness of the therapy. Our tester also switched therapists, which they found easy and straightforward.

We also assessed BetterHelp's pricing structure and subscription options, staying on the lookout for potential hidden fees.

In addition to hands-on testing, we also surveyed real users about their BetterHelp experiences, exploring aspects like therapist matching success and the effectiveness of their therapy. We also consulted with mental health professionals familiar with BetterHelp to get their insights on the platform's strengths and weaknesses.

Our BetterHelp Testing Process



Compare BetterHelp to other online therapy platforms

To understand how BetterHelp stacks up against competitors, we compared it to other popular platforms, like Talkspace, which you can read more about in our [Talkspace review](#). BetterHelp offers a broader range of communication options compared to Talkspace's focus on text-based therapy. This can be a major advantage if you prefer more flexibility in how you connect with your therapist. For a more in-depth comparison of features and pricing, specifically between BetterHelp and Talkspace, you can see our review of [Talkspace vs. BetterHelp](#). Plus, you might also want to read our [Brightside review](#) to see how other platforms approach online therapy a bit differently.

	Visit Site	Visit Site	Visit Site	Visit Site	Visit Site
Monthly Cost	\$260-\$360	\$260-\$380	\$260-\$400	\$300-\$352	\$240-\$360
Insurance accepted?	No	Limited	No	Yes	No

	Visit Site	Visit Site	Visit Site	Visit Site	Visit Site
Services	Individual therapy (18+), group therapy	Individual therapy, couples therapy	Individual therapy, couples therapy, family therapy, medication management (limited)	Individual therapy, medication management	Couples therapy

Our final verdict

BetterHelp provides various ways to connect with a therapist so you can access mental health care in the comfort and privacy of your home. While the platform does not accept insurance, it does offer financial aid to those who qualify, and discounts are available.

Our tester particularly enjoyed the group therapy sessions included with the subscription and thought this offering made the platform stand out from some of its competitors. Although BetterHelp therapists cannot diagnose mental health conditions or prescribe medications, they can make referrals to mental health professionals, like [online psychiatrists](#), who can.

Frequently asked questions

Is BetterHelp actually legit?

What are the disadvantages of BetterHelp?

How much does BetterHelp cost?

References

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