



SEO Guide

for therapists

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SEO and Google

Most people begin their search for a therapist on Google initially, so if you want people to find you, it is very helpful if your site shows up in the Google search results. In order to do this, you need to convince Google's algorithm that your website is worth visiting when a potential client searches for a counsellor in your area. That's where Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) comes in.

SEO Ingredients

SEO is made up of three main ingredients:

1. Getting a good reputation online
2. Giving the search engines lots of information about your site
3. Making your site as helpful as possible.

Getting a Good Reputation Online

Google works out your online reputation by looking at the links from other sites to your site. Google treats each link as an endorsement – if another website is linking to you, it implies that your site is valuable in some way. The more links you can get to your website, the higher your credibility as far as Google is concerned. It is important that these links are both relevant to your site and authoritative. Lots of low quality links from un reputable sites may work against your credibility as far as Google is concerned.

Relevant sites may be therapy or mental-health related sites or business sites which are relevant to the geographical area you practise in.

How to get links back to your website

- **Ask your colleagues.** If you have a colleague with a different specialty than you, the two of you could agree to link to each other's websites. If you are on the board of Trustees for a mental health charity, ask if they can link to your website from your biography on their website.
- **Guest blog.** Look for mental health blogs and see if you can write an article for them and get a link back to your site in return. [Counselling Directory](#) allows guest blogs and blogging on their site can be very helpful in attracting visitors to your website.
- **Submit your website to all relevant directories for your area.** [Google My Business](#), [Yelp](#), and [FreeIndex](#) are good starting points. If you have profiles with [Counselling Directory](#) or [Psychology Today](#) (and others), make sure your profile links to your website.
- **Make genuinely useful content** that people will want to link to. For example, you may want to write an article about coping with anxiety. If your article is really helpful, people who find it might choose to link to it of their own accord, without you even needing to ask.

Giving Search Engines Information About Your Site

Adding Keywords To Your Pages

Make sure you sprinkle relevant keywords into your website, so that Google can work out what our site is about. Words such as "counsellor", "counselling", "therapy", "psychotherapist" as well as your geographical location are helpful, as well as mental health concerns such as "depression", "anxiety", "trauma", "PTSD", depending on the client groups you want to attract. Make sure you don't overdo it though, as Google detects "keyword stuffing", which will work against you. It is important that your writing is natural, otherwise your Google ranking will suffer, as will your prospective clients' experience of your website.

Creating New Pages For Keywords

Rather than mention all the different issues you work with on a single page, if you have an individual page for each of the issues that you specialise in, Google is more likely to decide that your individual pages deserve to be shown when someone searches for those specific issues.

For this technique to work, your pages need to be detailed and well-made, and you should ideally try to get backlinks to your individual pages. It is probably better to focus on two or three pages for the issues that you most like to work with.

Also, make sure that these pages refer to your geographical location. Your clients will usually search for a therapist in their area, so it's important that your individual pages are not about "counselling for depression" but "counselling for depression in [my geographical area]".

Add Keywords To Your URL

Make sure that the URL for a particular page reflects the content of that page. For instance, if you have a page which focuses on trauma and PTSD, make the URL something like <https://yourdomain.co.uk/trauma-ptsd>.

You can take this to the level by making the URLs extra descriptive. For instance, let's say you have a page about depression treatment, and you've decided to give it the url example.com/depression. There's nothing wrong with that, but it would be more effective to include more keywords in the URL, eg <https://yourdomain.co.uk/counselling-depression-yourgeographicallocation>. That way you're telling Google that your page isn't just about depression, it's about the treatment of depression in your geographical location.

Add Your Address

Putting your address and phone number in the header or footer of every page gives Google a very clear signal that you are located at a particular address, which means it will be more likely to show your website to clients who are near you.

If your website design doesn't allow you to add your address and phone number to every page, at least put your full address on your contact page.

Get Listed on Google My Business

[Google My Business](#) is Google's own directory for local businesses. Google uses the information in that directory whenever anyone does a search for a local business.

A [Google My Business](#) listing allows you to add a description of your business and photos of your business. Having an updated [Google My Business](#) listing will make it more likely that your business shows up in Google Maps results and in Google search results.

When you create your Google My Business page, try to include some high-quality photos of the rooms you work from, and use a detailed description that includes specific keywords that relate to your business. For instance, “XYZ counselling provides compassionate therapy to individuals suffering from mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. We have been practising in (geographical location) for ten years.”

Make Your Site As Helpful as Possible

Your website needs to have quality, helpful content that goes beyond just trying to book sessions. It's fine for your website to list the services that you offer and give information about your professional background. Ideally you should go beyond that and write content that would be genuinely helpful to people, even if they never book a session with you.

For instance, you might write an article about what to look for in a therapist, or an article about how mindfulness can help with social anxiety. You might write some reviews of helpful books on depression, or record videos where you demonstrate a relaxation exercise. Articles should be substantial enough, but not too long. 600 - 900 words is optimal.

This valuable content works in several ways: it gives potential clients a sense that you know what you're talking about and that you might be the right counsellor for them; people might reference your content on their websites, which gives you more links; quality content makes your website stand out to Google.

If you want to put this in practice, one effective strategy is to choose a topic that you can write 5-10 articles about, that you can really explore in-depth. For example, you could write five articles on managing anxiety, with each article covering something different (using mindfulness to combat anxiety, seeking therapy for anxiety, different kinds of anxiety, etc). That way, you'll come across as an authority about anxiety and that means Google is much more likely to send people who want counselling for anxiety to your website.

Feeling overwhelmed?

You may feel overwhelmed by the above information, so try to see your website as a work in progress. Rome wasn't built in a day! It will take time, but every step you take towards completing the above tasks will make a difference to how Google ranks your site.



If you are considering a new website, are wondering about moving your existing website to a new host, or if you just want some support for your WordPress website

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