

The Therapy Boom: Essential Support or Over-Commercialised?

Advanced (C1-C2)



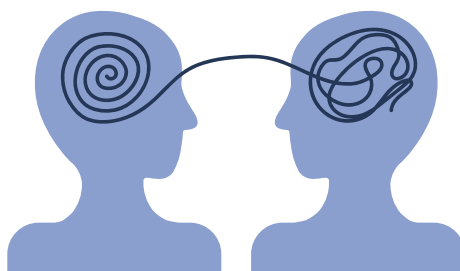
WARM UP

Part 1. Read the quote below and then discuss the questions.

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.”

— William James

1. Do you agree that therapy can change people's lives?
2. Why do you think therapy has become so popular in recent years?
3. Is therapy essential for everyone, or only for those with diagnosed conditions?
4. Can therapy be both helpful and over-commercialised at the same time?



READING TEXT

Part 1. Read the following text.

The Therapy Boom: Essential Support or Over-Commercialised?

Therapy has moved from the margins to the mainstream. Once stigmatised, it is now promoted through podcasts, apps, and social media, with millions seeking professional help or digital alternatives. Advocates argue this reflects progress: greater awareness of mental health, reduced stigma, and improved access to essential support.

Critics caution that therapy has also become a booming business. With hourly fees, subscription models, and self-help industries worth billions, some question whether mental health care is drifting towards commercial exploitation. Concerns also arise about over-diagnosis, reliance on unregulated apps, and the dilution of therapy into consumer-friendly soundbites.

The central debate is whether the “therapy boom” represents a long-overdue recognition of mental health needs, or whether it risks turning personal struggle into profit. Should therapy be viewed as a universal right, a personal choice, or a commercial product?

Part 2. Discuss the questions below based on the text.

1. What reasons are given for the rise in therapy’s popularity?
2. How do critics see therapy as becoming commercialised?
3. What risks are associated with therapy apps and the self-help industry?
4. What does the text suggest about over-diagnosis?
5. What main question does the text raise about how therapy should be viewed?



DEBATE

Part 1. Match the terms to their meanings.

Mental health stigma

Universal right

Commercial exploitation

Overdiagnosis

Therapeutic alliance

Consumer trust

Preventive support

Self-help industry

1. _____ Exploiting people's needs or vulnerabilities for financial gain.
2. _____ A relationship of trust and collaboration between client and therapist.
3. _____ Making a medical or psychological diagnosis too readily or excessively.
4. _____ Care aimed at maintaining wellbeing before illness becomes severe.
5. _____ The prejudice or shame attached to mental illness or seeking help.
6. _____ Belief that something should be accessible to all as a basic entitlement.
7. _____ A multi-billion-dollar market of books, podcasts, and coaching products.
8. _____ Confidence in the safety, integrity, and value of therapeutic services.

Part 2. Complete the sentences with the correct terms.

1. Therapy's growing popularity reflects a decline in _____.
2. Some argue therapy should be treated as a _____, available to all.
3. Critics accuse parts of the industry of _____, charging high fees for minimal benefit.
4. A strong _____ is one of the best predictors of successful outcomes.
5. Rising rates of _____ risk medicalising normal emotional struggles.
6. Programmes that provide early _____ can prevent more serious crises later.
7. The global _____ thrives on people's desire for quick solutions.
8. Without _____, clients may avoid seeking help altogether.

Part 3. Look at the useful expressions. Rewrite the sentences using these expressions to make them sound more formal and persuasive for a debate.

Framing the issue: The key question is whether... / We might reframe this as...

Hedging: It could be argued that... / To some extent, I agree, although...

Challenging assumptions: Doesn't that overlook the fact that...? / Are we assuming that...?

Weighing trade-offs: We must balance X against Y... / The benefits are clear, but we must also consider...

Conceding then pivoting: That's a fair point; however... / I agree up to a point, but...

1. Therapy is always a good thing. ->
2. The industry makes too much money from people's struggles. ->
3. Online therapy apps can't be trusted. ->
4. Everyone should go to therapy, whether they need it or not. ->

Part 4. Take part in a structured debate with your teacher/partner. Use the vocabulary and debate expressions from this lesson. Speak fluently, challenge ideas politely, and support your opinions with clear reasons and examples.

Mental health stigma

Universal right

Commercial exploitation

Overdiagnosis

Therapeutic alliance

Consumer trust

Preventive support

Self-help industry

Round 1: Argue that the therapy boom is a positive development, providing essential support.

Round 2: Argue that therapy is over-commercialised and risks losing its integrity.

Round 3: Free debate — propose whether therapy should be a right, a choice, or a product



REFLECTION

Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

1. Do you think therapy should be free, subsidised, or private? Why?
2. What role should technology play in therapy?
3. Can you think of ways to improve access to therapy without over-commercialising it?

WRAP-UP TASK (OPTIONAL HOMEWORK)

Part 1. Write an opinion blog post (180–220 words) on:

“The Therapy Boom: Essential Support or Over-Commercialised?”

- Use at least 4 vocabulary items (e.g., therapeutic alliance, commercial exploitation, preventive support, self-help industry).
- Use at least 2 debate expressions.
- Present one counterargument and refute it.

