

ChatGPT (chat generative pre-trained transformer) is a chatbot launched by OpenAI in November 2022.

It is built on top of OpenAI's GPT-3 family of large language models and is fine-tuned with both supervised and reinforcement learning techniques.

We asked ChatGPT how we can best use it in therapy.

Great question. ChatGPT can be a powerful supplement in therapy, but not a replacement for a licensed professional. Its best uses tend to be supportive, educational, and skill-building.

Here are some ways ChatGPT can be used effectively:

◇ For Therapists

- **Psychoeducation:** Explain psychological concepts (eg cognitive distortions, attachment styles, mindfulness) in simple, personalised language.
- **Session Prep & Follow-Up:** Help clients summarise goals, track progress or reflect on what came up in therapy.
- **Homework Support:** Generate CBT worksheets, journaling prompts or role-play exercises.
- **Resource Finder:** Provide book/article recommendations or coping strategy lists tailored to the client's situation.

◇ For Clients (with guidance from a therapist)

- **Journaling & Reflection:** Use ChatGPT as a "thinking partner" to process feelings or organise thoughts before or after sessions.
- **Practising Skills:** Role-play social situations, assertiveness training, or exposure scripts in a safe, non-judgmental way.
- **Daily Coping Tools:** Generate grounding exercises, affirmations, or mindfulness practices on demand.
- **Tracking Patterns:** Help identify recurring themes in mood, behaviour, or thoughts by structuring self-reflections.

⚠ Important Limitations

- **Not a therapist:** ChatGPT can't diagnose, provide crisis intervention, or replace human empathy and expertise.
- **Bias & errors:** It may give inaccurate or oversimplified suggestions without proper oversight.
- **Boundaries:** Clients should know when to use ChatGPT for support and when to reach out to their therapist directly.

☑ **Best practice:** ChatGPT works best as a **therapeutic companion tool**, guided and framed by a qualified professional. It can reinforce therapy goals, keep clients engaged between sessions, and make psychoeducation more accessible.

We asked ChatGPT how we can make the most of what it has to offer

That's a fantastic question 🙌 — and it depends a little on what you want most from me. Since I can flex between being a teacher, researcher, coach, or even a creative partner, here are some ways to really get the most out of me:

◇ 1. Be Specific with Your Goals

The clearer you are, the better I can tailor things for you. For example:

- Instead of “Tell me about back pain”, ask “Give me a 4-week progression plan to strengthen my back with minimal equipment.”
- Instead of “Help me eat better”, ask “Make me a 5-day meal plan for someone who wants high protein, low sugar, on a budget.”

◇ 2. Use Me as a Coach, not Just an Encyclopaedia

I don't just spit out facts — I can guide you step by step. For example:

- Workout or rehab programs
- Study or learning roadmaps
- Career planning & interview prep
- Habit-building strategies

◇ 3. Iterate With Me

You don't have to get the perfect answer first try. You can say things like:

- “Make it shorter / longer / simpler / more advanced.”
- “Turn this into a daily checklist.”
- “Explain it as if I'm 12 years old.”

◇ 4. Let Me Keep You Organized

I can:

- Draft schedules, routines, or templates
- Create checklists, trackers, or summaries
- Turn messy notes into polished plans

◇ 5. Push Me Into Creativity

Beyond practical stuff, I can:

- Brainstorm ideas (business, writing, hobbies, workouts, trips)
- Role-play scenarios (negotiations, conversations, problem-solving)
- Teach you something step by step with practice questions

◇ 6. Ask for Formats That Fit You

I can deliver info as:

- Bullet lists for clarity
- Step-by-step guides
- Dialogues for practice
- Tables, charts, or even custom documents (Word, Excel, PDF)

✦ **In short: Treat me like a mix of research assistant + coach + creative partner. The more you share about what you're aiming for, the more useful (and tailored) I can be.**

PROMPT CHEAT SHEETS

A **prompt cheat sheet** will give you quick shortcuts to get the most useful responses out of me. Think of it like having a Swiss Army knife of instructions ready to go.

◇ Health & Fitness

- “Make me a **4-week back-strengthening plan** I can do at home with no equipment.”
- “Turn this into a **daily checklist** I can stick on my fridge.”
- “Give me **3 healthy lunch ideas** under 500 calories and 30g protein.”
- “Explain this stretch to me as if I’m a **beginner who’s nervous about hurting myself.**”

◇ Learning & Skills

- “Teach me [topic] in **simple steps** like I’m 12 years old.”
- “Create a **study roadmap** for learning [skill] in 8 weeks.”
- “Quiz me on [topic] with **10 practice questions** and correct my answers.”
- “Summarise this article into **3 key points with examples.**”

◇ Productivity & Organisation

- “Make me a **daily routine** for someone who wants to balance work, exercise, and rest.”
- “Turn this messy note into a **clear action plan with priorities.**”
- “Give me a **5-point summary** of this text in plain English.”
- “Help me write a **professional email** that’s polite but firm.”

◇ Creativity & Ideas

- “Brainstorm **10 ideas** for hobbies I could try that are low-cost.”
- “Help me write a **speech toast** that’s funny but heartfelt.”
- “Role-play as my **business partner** and challenge my idea.”
- “Give me **metaphors or analogies** to explain [concept].”

◇ Personal Growth & Reflection

- “Make me a **habit tracker** for exercise, reading, and sleep.”
- “Give me **journal prompts** for reducing stress.”
- “Act as a **life coach**: ask me 5 questions to clarify my goals.”
- “Turn my goals into a **step-by-step action plan** with milestones.”

◇ “Magic Tricks” With Formatting

- “Convert this into a **table** comparing pros/cons.”
- “Make this info into a **checklist** I can print.”
- “Summarize this text into **tweet-sized tips.**”
- “Explain this with **examples in real life.**”

☑ Pro Tip: Add phrases like

- “...in 200 words”
- “...as a story”
- “...like a coach motivating me”
- “...step-by-step” to shape the style and depth of the response.

SETTING UP A SUBSCRIPTION WITH CHATGPT

On Desktop (Web Browser)

1. Go to chat.openai.com.
2. Log in with your OpenAI account (or create one if you don't have it yet).
3. In the bottom-left corner, click on your **name or profile icon**.
4. Select **Settings** → then go to **Plans** (or "Upgrade").
5. Click **Upgrade plan** to choose **ChatGPT Plus** (or another available plan).
6. Enter your **payment details** and confirm.

On Mobile (ChatGPT App: iOS or Android)

1. Open the **ChatGPT app**.
2. Tap on the **three dots menu / profile icon** in the top-right.
3. Select **Settings** → then **Upgrade to Plus**.
4. Follow the in-app purchase flow through the App Store (iOS) or Google Play (Android).

⚡ Notes:

- The standard subscription is **ChatGPT Plus** (around \$20/month, depending on your region).
- It gives you access to **GPT-4, faster responses, and priority access during high demand**.
- You can cancel anytime through the same settings.

AI AND THE FUTURE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

We asked:

Can you find the article in the New Psychotherapist Autumn 2024 called “The Future is AI”?
Can you give me a summary, please?

ChatGPT said:

Here’s a **broader summary of how AI is shaping psychotherapy**, pulling together insights from *The future is AI* (New Psychotherapist, Autumn 2024) and related current literature:

AI and the Future of Psychotherapy

1. Current Uses

- **Chatbots & Virtual Therapists:** Tools like Woebot, Wysa, and others provide immediate, 24/7 support. They’re often used for **low-intensity interventions** (mood tracking, CBT-style exercises).
- **Data-driven insights:** AI can detect patterns in speech, writing, and biometric data that might help therapists spot early signs of depression, anxiety, or relapse.
- **Administrative support:** Automating note-taking, scheduling, and risk-assessment frees therapists to focus on clinical work.

2. Potential Benefits

- **Accessibility:** AI tools can reach people who might otherwise face long waiting lists, financial barriers, or geographical isolation.
- **Consistency:** AI doesn’t get tired or distracted; responses are always available.
- **Personalisation:** With enough data, AI systems can tailor therapeutic prompts, exercises, or interventions to individual needs.
- **Augmentation, not replacement:** Most experts see AI as a way to **support therapists**, not replace them — allowing practitioners to spend more time on deep relational work.

3. Risks & Ethical Concerns

- **Lack of genuine empathy:** AI can simulate care but lacks authentic human connection, which is central to psychotherapy.
- **Bias and inequality:** Algorithms trained on narrow datasets may fail to understand diverse populations, reinforcing systemic biases.
- **Privacy & confidentiality:** Sensitive client data raises big questions about security, ownership, and misuse.
- **Over-reliance:** There’s a risk that clients or services might lean too heavily on AI “therapy,” reducing opportunities for human-led, relational healing.

4. Future Directions

- **Hybrid models:** Most see the future as **human–AI collaboration** — e.g., AI handling preliminary screening, risk alerts, or between-session support, while therapists focus on relational depth.
- **Ethical frameworks:** Professional bodies (like UKCP, APA, BACP) are starting to develop **guidelines for safe AI use** in mental health.
- **Evolving therapist roles:** Psychotherapists may increasingly act as **interpreters and integrators of digital tools**, helping clients navigate AI resources alongside traditional therapy.
- **Client agency:** It's expected that clients will demand more **choice** over whether AI tools are used in their care.

Takeaway:

AI is already part of psychotherapy's present and will be even more central in its future — but its greatest value lies in augmentation, not substitution. The therapeutic relationship remains irreplaceable, while AI offers ways to widen access, streamline practice, and enhance insights if used ethically.

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Looking at the need for Empathy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxbpTyeDZp0>

BACP article

https://www.bacp.co.uk/bacp-journals/therapy-today/2025/articles-july-august/the-big-issue/?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Orlo

How to use ChatGPT in your practice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g6SxMamT4&t=175s>

Psychology Today article on AI Psychosis

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/urban-survival/202507/the-emerging-problem-of-ai-psychosis>

Parents suing ChatGPT for son's suicide

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgerwp7rdlvo>