



Kerry James Therapy

T: 07939 942471

E: kerryjamestherapy@outlook.com

W: www.kerryjamestherapy.com

AI within therapy - Information

AI = Artificial Intelligence

The role of AI in therapy is increasing and many people now find themselves using or considering the benefits of a chat bot for help with their worries, feelings and difficulties. Apps such as ChatGPT, Woebot, DeepSeek, Claude, Gemini, Siri, CoPilot, Alexa, Pi and many more are available to download at the tap of button and often come with free versions alongside paid ones.

These applications use conversational support to help the user with whatever they are questioning. Worries, fears, sadness, loneliness, education, friendship issues, relationship issues, existential thoughts – anything a person wants to talk about is available in an instant.

So, what are the benefits?

- They are easy and simple to use
- You get 24/7 access
- No costs involved
- No waiting lists
- No face-to-face meetings
- It's very convenient and available
- It's very accessible (Particularly for those with anxieties, phobias, disabilities etc)
- It's very agreeable (isn't it great to have someone in our corner all the time?!)
- It's not a real person so we can tell it anything we want
- It's easy to build a 'relationship'

And what are the disadvantages?

- There is no crisis management
- There is no risk assessment
- There are issues around safety
- It could re-traumatise someone without the right safeguards in place
- It can't read body language or what isn't being said
- It's not real so it isn't actually building a 'relationship'
- There is no challenge if needed
- Confidentiality & Privacy issues

- It lacks consciousness because it isn't real
- It lacks self-awareness because it isn't real
- It doesn't think, it simply predicts from the data you've given it what you might say next
- Hallucinations – what are these?

AI Hallucinations – AI gets it wrong!

Hallucinations within large language AI models are when information is given out to the user that is incorrect, misleading or even made up. This can happen when the AI model doesn't have enough information to correctly predict what it thinks you are wanting to know or the information it has acquired or been given is incorrect or biased. If the dataset it has is incorrect or biased then these problems can then be perpetuated or amplified every time it is used leading to misinformation, lack of trust and negative consequences. Within therapy this could have dire consequences if the user is unaware of these issues.

Admin usage – Applications and computer programs are being developed continually with AI now embedded within them to make processes quicker and easier. Notes, reports, posts on social media - AI can work faster than the human brain, taking boring and laborious tasks and allowing the therapist to spend more time with clients. Questions to be aware of when working with therapists:

- Where is my information being held?
- What information is being held?
- Who owns that information?
- What if you don't want your information 'out there' – how does the therapist manage this?
- Does your therapist give you an option to opt out?

These are also questions to ask yourself when using a chat bot – what information are you giving it? and do you understand that the data you are feeding it is being taken and educating it for further use within its whole system. Where is your data going?

The environmental impact – AI applications require vast resources of energy, water and land. Training AI models leaves a huge carbon footprint. The waste produced by AI technology (E-waste) includes hazardous materials such as lead, mercury and cadmium which filters into our soil and water supplies.

The purpose of this information is not to sway you one way or the other but to simply give you some basic information with regards to the use of AI within therapy currently and what that might mean for you. I completely understand if people feel that using a chatbot is the right thing for them to do and know of people who use chatbots as therapy or in between therapy sessions. Hopefully this information will give you an awareness of both the benefits and disadvantages of chatbot use.