CASE STUDY · BORROWED BLUES

From “how do I know it’s working?” to a clear path through therapy

If people hesitate to start, or don’t come back, the fix is often clarity, not more features.

An independent therapist’s online practice

April 2026 to ongoing · Ria Nerurkar

Borrowed Blues



§ 01 · FRAME

Practical needs, not a crisis

What the therapist asked for

- Scheduling
- Not repeating the same questions on every discovery call
- Managing ongoing clients
- Keeping continuity between sessions

The scope we agreed

An online practice for one therapist that makes starting, and continuing therapy feel clear.

Not a marketplace, and not a general wellness app.

3 + 1	4	Live	5
client and therapist interviews	comparable services reviewed	platform in use	features live

WHAT I ASSUMED, AND WHAT I FOUND

Four assumptions the research overturned

× Assumed	✓ Found
~~Hesitant people want a slower start~~	They want a clearer one
~~Progress tracking means clients logging their moods~~	They want to see progress without doing the tracking
~~The hard part is finding a therapist~~	It starts after they've found one
~~The therapist's needs and her clients' needs are separate~~	Two of them have the same needs, seen from either side

§ 02 · EVIDENCE

The uncertainty lives inside therapy, not before it

"Therapy takes time, but how do I know it's working?"

- Doubt about whether it's helping

"I think progress tracking would help... but I don't want to be the one doing it."

- Progress, without the work

"Can I afford to continue this?"

- Cost makes every doubt heavier

Method. One therapist and three clients interviewed; four services reviewed: a London clinic, a Mumbai practice, a large Indian platform and a mood-tracking app.

Also found. Every service was English-only, and most explained therapy in clinical terms. Three interviews show a direction, not proof.

THE FINDING THAT CONTRADICTED MY OWN ASSUMPTION

“I don’t think I wanted slower onboarding. I wanted *clearer* onboarding.”

I expected hesitant people to want a gentle, slow start. One participant corrected me, and it changed what the intake had to do.



§ 03 · DECIDE

Build where the two lists overlap

The therapist needs

- A — Not to repeat the same questions on every discovery call
- B — Continuity between sessions
- Scheduling
- Managing ongoing clients

A · Built first

The intake

B · Built first

Between sessions

Her clients need

- A — To know what to expect before session one
- B — To see whether it's working, without doing the tracking
- To know they can afford to continue
- A way past language and family perception

Repeated discovery-call questions are the other side of clients not knowing what to expect. Building those two points first helped both people at once.

§ 03 · DECIDE

Two bets, and two things I said no to

Clearer, not slower

A staged intake and a “what to expect” guide explain what happens in session one.

The therapist carries the progress

After sessions, clients get a summary, homework and resources in their own account. No journal to keep. She reviewed every feature and approved the summaries.

Options I rejected

Therapist matching

Large platforms lead with it, but her clients’ problem started after they had already found someone.

A mood-tracking app

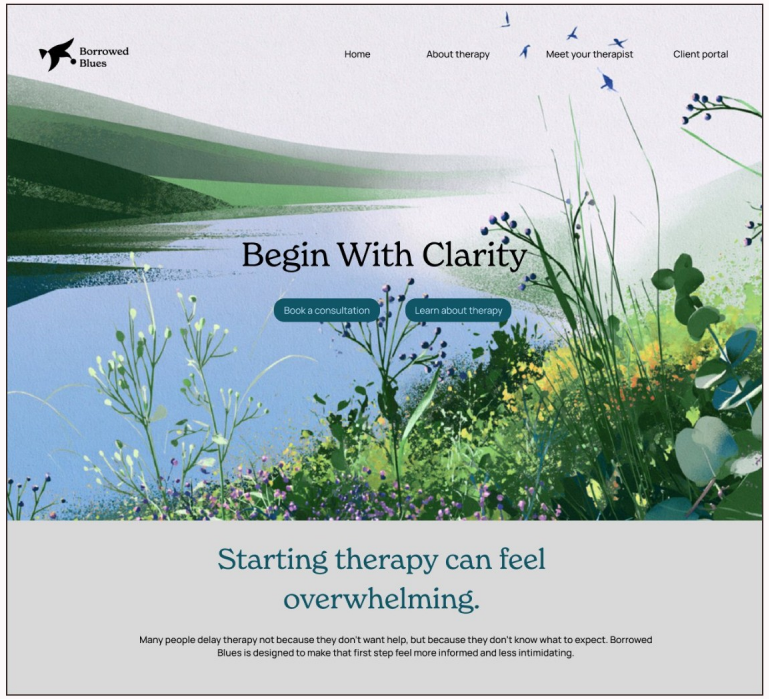
The obvious answer to “show me progress”, but it puts the work back on the client, which the research said not to do.

A clearer start, from the first screen

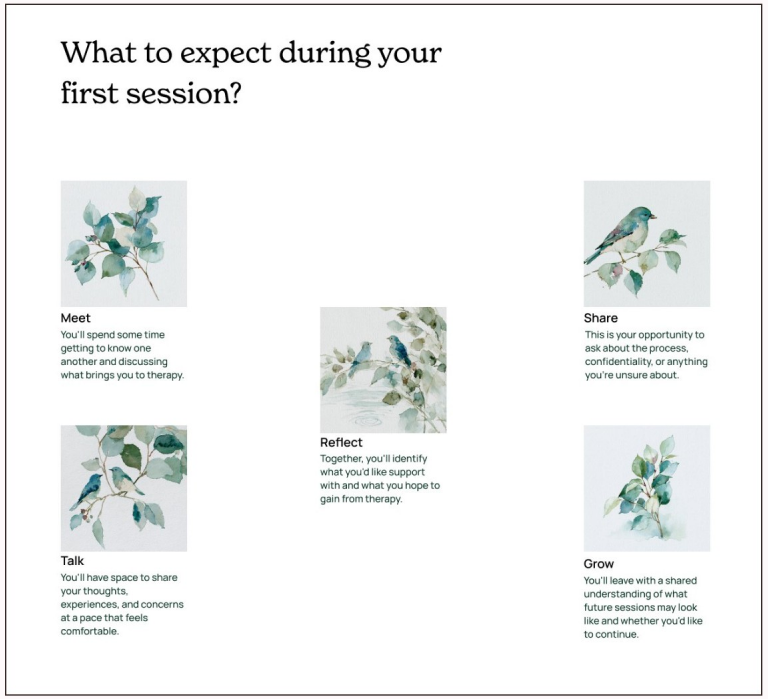
Live · revised after research

The home page names the fear directly: starting therapy can feel overwhelming.

The guide walks through session one, step by step: meet, talk, reflect, share, grow. It also says what you don't have to answer yet.

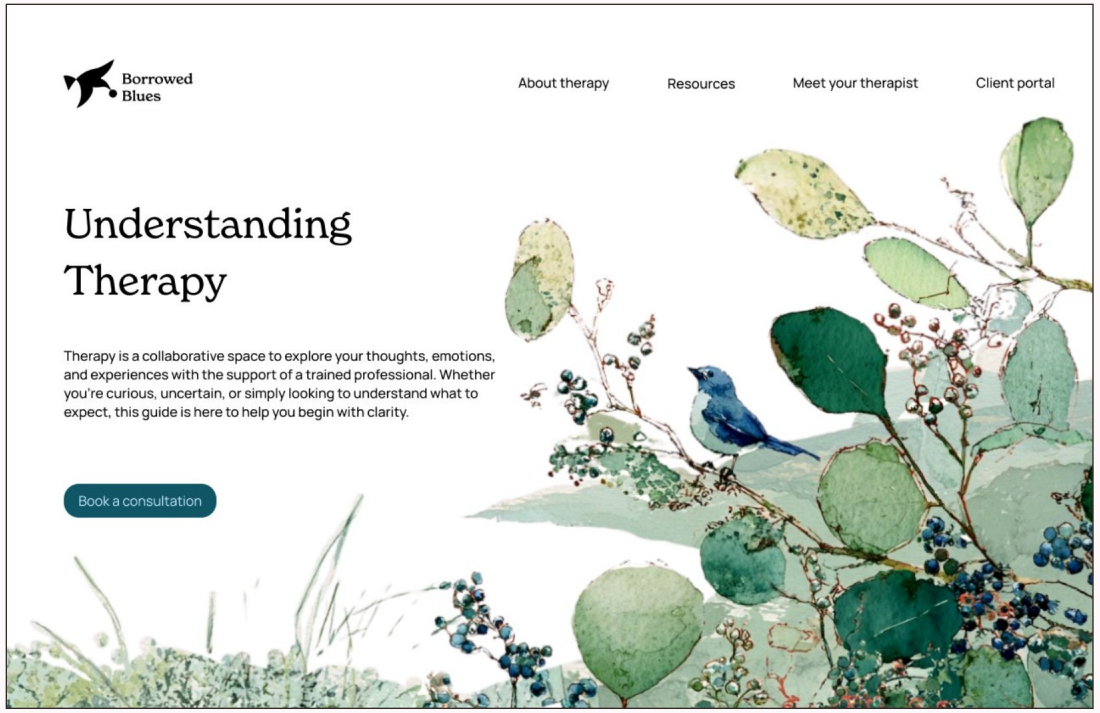


Home · Begin with clarity



Guide · What to expect

Plain words throughout



Therapy is:	Therapy isn't:
✓ Collaborative	✕ Judgement
✓ Confidential	✕ Advice giving
✓ Reflection	✕ A quick fix
✓ Growth	✕ Only for crises
✓ Personal	✕ One-size-fits-all

No method names or clinical terms. The site describes what happens instead.

Most of the services I reviewed explained therapy in clinical terms. This one says what therapy is, and what it isn't.

§ 04 · BUILD

Between sessions, in one place



Session summaries

Live

Written by the therapist, approved by her, waiting in the client's account.

Homework and resources

Live

Participants engaged more when therapy gave them structure.

A visual progress journey

In progress

The missing half of "how do I know it's working?"

Running the practice, and saying the price



Booking

Sessions on Google Meet, with the link emailed automatically.

Client accounts

Created by the therapist, each with its own login.

Fees, published on the site

₹1,000
a session

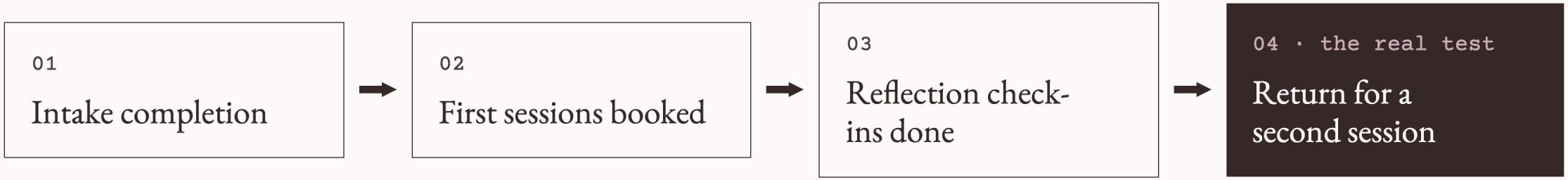
₹700
sliding scale

For students and people from marginalised communities. It answers “can I afford this?” before anyone has to ask.

§ 05 · TEST

What I’d watch, in the order it happens

The platform is live, but no usability testing has been done yet, and there’s no usage data.



Next

Test the revised intake with five people new to therapy.

A security and privacy review: the platform holds sensitive client information.

Widen the research beyond three interviews.

Language: the site is English-only, though participants named language and family perception as barriers.

FROM THE THERAPIST

“I was very comfortable being open about my needs and wants for this website. Ria did a lot of research, and gave me inputs I hadn’t thought about. The detailed presentation she sent gave me a concrete structure to hold on to while building it.”

Anushka Prabhu, therapist, Borrowed Blues



EVIDENCE TRAIL

From source to decision

Source	Finding	Decision
Therapist interview	Repeated questions on discovery calls; continuity matters	Staged intake; between-session space
Client interviews (3)	Want clearer, not slower; want progress without tracking; cost raises doubt	“What to expect” guide; therapist-led summaries; published fees
Competitor review (4)	Matching is standard; all English-only; clinical language	Matching cut; plain words; language left open

Building something people hesitate to start?

Book a fit call →