

How to Choose a Good Therapist

Finding a good therapist can be like finding a good plumber, accountant, or dentist. It can feel like looking for a needle in a haystack, but once you do find a good one you are glad that you took the steps to make it happen. For most people this search can feel intimidating and confusing leading them to put off counseling longer than needed.

Here are some things that I would suggest in finding the right therapist for you. Take time to become aware of what it is you need and what you are looking for in a counselor. Being a psychologist and having a Ph.D. does not necessarily make the therapist better than counselors with a Master's degree. There are many factors in addition to education that make up therapeutic competence. Read what the person has to say about themselves online as well as what their reviews are saying. Do your research on the counselor and look into the types of therapy they offer to determine if the therapist is right for you. Ask people and professionals who you respect and value their opinion for references. Many people have participated in therapy and are open to sharing the names of good psychologists and counselors. You can also view my article [Warning: Therapy May Be Hazardous to Your Health](#) here to give you further information on choosing a counselor.

Narrow your selection down to two or three individuals and then going to the top one on the list for a visit. If the therapist is not a good fit, then I suggest going to others. It is perfectly fine to therapist shop. For adolescents, I suggest that parents include the adolescent in the search and allow them to counselor shop, but that they have to eventually choose at least one of the agreed upon options. Some therapists are willing to have a short consultation on the phone which allows you to do an interview process which can help you narrow down the search. This can give you a much better sense of who the person is and if they will be a good fit for you. After giving a brief synopsis of you situation and what you are looking for you could ask:

What is your experience helping people in these areas.
Can you share a bit about how you help people.
How do you feel working with this issue.
What are your costs, fees and do you take insurance.

Make sure you connect with the person, feel safe with them and sense that they are competent and effective enough for you to make the changes you want to make. If you are not making the changes you want, talk with the counselor about it or consider finding another counselor. Again it is OK to therapist shop... meaning if you aren't getting what you need then I suggest going to someone else who can help you. I guarantee that there are therapists that can help you get what you need. You are obviously ready for change, otherwise you would not have read this far. In summary I suggest working with a person that you like, trust, and that is capable of helping you make those changes happen.

Feel free to email about what you are looking for in a psychologist and I will be happy to send you a list of names based upon what you are looking for.

