

7 Key questions to ask when selecting a therapist

1

Is the therapist licensed to practice in the state that I live in?

- Make sure your therapist is licensed to practice in the state you reside in or if they are in training, make sure the therapist is working with a licensed supervisor in their profession.
- Licensed therapists and counselors are graduate-level mental health providers that have extensive training in the treatment of mental, behavioral, and emotional problems.

2

Am I comfortable with this therapist?

- Make sure you feel comfortable with the therapist you choose to work with.
- Research shows the most significant factor contributing to positive results in therapy is a good relationship between therapist and client.
- Be honest about your preferences. It's okay to seek a therapist that has similar qualities or life experiences as you. For example, if you want a female therapist, a queer, or a Black therapist look for that.

3

What are the terms and the logistical aspects involved in seeing this therapist?

- Therapy requires both a financial commitment and a time commitment so it's important to have clarity about the time therapy sessions are offered, the location where therapy will occur (in-office or virtual), the price, payment methods, insurance options, confidentiality, etc.

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How does the therapist accept feedback from their clients and admit their mistakes?

- A healthy counselor is open to feedback and to learning that something they said may have hurt or offended you.
- The best therapists are willing to look at themselves, to check their feelings, and to honestly and openly admit and address their mistakes.

5

Does the therapist have experience helping others with the particular issues for which you are seeking therapy?

- The more experience therapists have addressing a particular issue, concern, or problem area, the more expertise they have developed.

6

Does your counselor adhere to ethical principles in regard to issues such as boundaries, dual relationships, and confidentiality?

- There are numerous ethical guidelines designed to keep therapist from harming clients.
- Most importantly, there is a guideline barring against dual relationships. When a therapist enters into a therapeutic relationship with a client, they should not have any other relationship with that person, such as teacher, friend, employer, or family member, although there are some exceptions to this rule in villages or very rural communities.

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7

Has your therapist done their own therapy?

- One of the best ways to learn how to help someone to heal is to do your own therapy and to experience the healing process firsthand.
- Therapists who have been in their own therapy tend to have a good appreciation of the process of starting therapy and being in therapy.