



A Guide to Finding the Right Therapist for You!

Before deciding to begin psychotherapy, many clients wonder: “Will this really help me?” There are many factors that influence a person’s success in therapy, including the severity of the problem being treated, the client’s belief that the therapy will work, the effort that the client puts into their treatment, and the skill level of the therapist.

The quality of the therapeutic alliance (the relationship between client and therapist) is by far the strongest predictor of a successful outcome for the client and it is the client’s perception of the quality of the therapeutic alliance that matters most. Some qualities that stand out in a successful therapeutic relationship include:

- Mutual trust, respect, and caring
- General agreement on the goals of the therapy
- Shared decision-making or collaboration (meaning the therapist does not demand what you must do; you both float ideas together)
- Mutual engagement in the “work” of the treatment (or a shared sense of ownership for the treatment)
- The ability to talk about how the therapeutic relationship is going, including the ability to discuss any problems or misunderstandings that arise.

What should you look for in your therapist?



Empathy: A therapist should communicate empathy and understanding to their clients. They should also be open, flexible, and willing to adapt the treatment to your needs instead of expecting you to adapt to theirs.



Experience: A therapist who has been a client of psychotherapy and has diligently worked to improve themselves as a self-actualized human being will stand head and shoulders above others who have not!



Expertise on the therapeutic process: Look for a therapist who understands that they are the expert on the therapeutic process, and you are the expert on your own life. A good therapist will not try to tell you what to do or insist that you must do something you may not agree with or aren’t ready for.



Solicit feedback: Highly skilled therapists solicit client feedback about how things are going to facilitate even greater connectedness and collaboration.

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What questions should I ask a prospective therapist?

1. Have you been a client of psychotherapy yourself?
2. How will we choose the goals I will work on?
3. How do you structure your sessions?
4. What should I do if I feel I am not making progress?
5. How long have you been a psychotherapist?
6. Why did you decide to become a therapist?
7. How long do your clients typically stay with you?



There are many kinds of therapists and finding the right one for you is imperative to your success. Ultimately, to have a successful course of therapy, you need to be honest with yourself and your therapist. This is your journey, so make your needs and expectations known, communicate any difficulties you are having, and have hope in the power of a therapeutic relationship.



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