

Finding the Right Therapist for You

When searching for the right therapist, it's important to think about what you're looking for. As with any healthcare provider, mental health providers specialize and focus their practice in different areas such as anxiety, relationships or finding purpose in life. Ask yourself why you want to see a therapist.

How do I know if it's a good fit?

Probably the best method of choosing a therapist is to gauge your reaction to them. Like with all relationships, you should feel comfortable being open, honest and vulnerable. The right fit is a personal thing, one that you may not be able to determine until you meet in person and spend time talking. Asking your therapist a few questions in the beginning can help you get a sense of who they are and whether or not you think they could be a good fit.

Check in with yourself after your first meeting- it may take time to warm up to your therapist, and it's okay to decide to look around for someone else. The main goal is for you to benefit from the therapeutic relationship.

How to actually find a therapist:

- Call your insurance provider for a list of therapists, talk to the staff at SPS for referrals or go to the "Therapy Finder" on Psychology Today's website (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>).
- Once you find a few therapists that meet your needs (gender, location, insurance, specialty, etc.), do a little additional research. If the therapist has a website, check out their bio and credentials. Read articles they've published and search for them online to see if you can learn more about them.
- Take advantage of the complimentary phone consultation many therapists offer. You can create a shortlist of therapists you are interested in and set up a time to chat. Prepare any questions in advance (**see list below**). Pay attention to their demeanor and see how they make you feel.
- If the phone call goes well, meet in person.* This is the best way to know if it's going to be a good fit in the long term.

*Some therapists today offer phone and teletherapy. You can still ask for a phone/video consultation to assess if this style of therapy will work for you and if you feel good with the therapist.

Questions to ask your potential therapist:

1. What is your expertise or specialty? How long have you worked in this field?
2. My problem is _____. How do you go about treating that?
3. How does the type of treatment you offer work?
4. How will we assess my progress?
5. Do you have flexibility in hours? Do you have a cancellation policy?
6. What are your strengths as a therapist?
7. What is the cost per session and/or Do you accept my insurance?
8. Can you prescribe medication and make referrals for medication?