Tips for Picking the Best Therapist for You

Therapy can be an excellent way for a person to begin living a happier, healthier life. With the practice, one can:

* learn healthy coping techniques for stressful life situations
* catch negative thinking patterns causing more harm than good
* improve overall mental health
* better interpersonal relationships
* build confidence and a greater sense of self
* figure out life and career goals
* and so much more

However, the key to successful therapy is a therapist who is the right fit for you. Where one therapist may be a great option for your friend, they could be the wrong option for your specific situation. Every therapist will have different techniques, approaches, expertise, and life experiences that guide their therapy practice.

If you are considering pursuing therapy, there are a few things you may wish to consider when searching for the best therapist for you. These include:

# **Your Goals**

There is a reason you have decided to pursue therapy. Perhaps it is to heal from a traumatic life event. Maybe it is to cope with a mental illness. Or, perhaps you have a completely different reason.

No matter why you have decided to take the brave step of pursuing therapy, the bottom line is that you likely have goals you want to meet. Before searching for a therapist, you will benefit from taking a moment to think and write down those goals.

Two questions to consider include, “What do I want to gain from therapy” and “What am I struggling with right now?” Answering these questions will help you narrow down your search for a therapist, and give your therapist a great starting point to push off of in your first session.

Your goals might change as you attend therapy and work toward healing. This is simply a rough draft of the things you wish to address and accomplish while attending therapy in order to ensure the therapist you choose can help you.

# **Your Lifestyle**

Everybody’s life looks different. Some people live in a city and have plenty of time to reach a therapist’s office. Other people may find themselves in an area where therapist offices are few and far between. Others may have jam-packed schedules that make it hard to attend therapy.

Your schedule and location will determine a lot about the therapist and type of therapy you should pursue. How often will you be able to make your appointments? Would in-person, remote, or hybrid appointments work better for you? These questions should help you find the right therapist.

# **The Types of Therapy You’d Like to Try**

Now, you are certainly not expected to be an expert in different types of therapy. However, you may have heard about a type of therapy you believe could suit your needs. Maybe a doctor recommended it to you, or you heard great things about it treating similar cases to yours. A few different types of therapy include:

* Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)- this form of therapy involves finding negative thinking patterns and behaviors and learning skills to change them. It has been proven to be a highly effective form of [therapy](https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/patients-and-families/cognitive-behavioral#:~:text=Cognitive%20behavioral%20therapy%20(CBT)%20is,disorders%2C%20and%20severe%20mental%20illness.) for many people and is used to treat ailments like depression, anxiety, addiction, relationship problems, eating disorders, and other mental illnesses.
* Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)- this form of therapy is a form of CBT that is especially adapted for helping people build skills for managing their emotions. It is great for those who are struggling to manage and regulate their emotions and has been shown to be effective in treating mental health conditions like borderline personality disorder (BPD), depression, anxiety, anger issues, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
* Person-centered therapy- this form of therapy allows the client to take more of a lead in their therapeutic session, which allows them to discover their own solutions. It can be great for clients who are looking to build self-confidence, gain a greater sense of personal identity, earn more trust in themselves, or learn to build stronger interpersonal relationships. It has been used in treating anxiety, depression, and grief.

The right therapist will work with you to find the form of therapy that works best for your goals and struggles.

# **Your Budget and Insurance**

Some insurance companies cover therapy, which means that you will want to ensure that you are going to an in-network therapist. Most of the time, you can call the therapist’s office or your insurance to make sure your treatment will be covered.

If your insurance will not cover your treatment, you will have to consider how much you are able to budget for your therapy.

# **Any Mental Health Conditions You Wish to Address**

If you have mental health concerns or conditions that you wish to address, it is imperative to be conscious of them when searching for the best therapist for you. Different therapists will have different areas they specialize in, and finding a therapist who specializes in the mental health concern you wish to address may give you a greater start in your therapeutic journey.

# **Cultural Competence**

Finding a therapist who is competent in cultural aspects that are important to you can play a huge role in ensuring you feel heard, supported, and validated throughout your therapy journey. Every person will require different things from their therapist for effective counseling, and a huge part of these qualities will depend on the client’s personal identity. This can include your gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, language, and religious beliefs.

# **How to Tell if Your Therapist Is the Right Fit for You**

Sometimes, you can do all of the research, find a therapist who fits all your criteria, and still struggle to build a proper therapy connection with the therapist you choose. There is nothing wrong with that. The most important thing in a successful client-therapist relationship is that you feel comfortable enough to open up and share your thoughts, feelings, and emotions. If you are feeling hesitant about your relationship with your therapist, consider these five questions:

* Do you find your therapist to be trustworthy?
* Do you like your therapist?
* Does the therapist exhibit expertise in approaching cases similar to yours?
* Does your therapist have availability that works for you and your schedule?
* Do you believe your therapist can be successful in helping you reach your therapy goals?

If you are still unsure about your relationship with your therapist, sometimes talking to them about it may allow you to receive the help you need to build confidence in your therapy decisions. However, it is important to know that you are always allowed to switch therapists as needed.

# **Final Thoughts**

Finding the right therapist will take bouts of trial and error. While it can be helpful to consider these six aspects of your therapy in your search for a therapist, the best way to learn if they fit your needs will be to attend a therapy session or two. As you attend these sessions, consider the comfort and openness you feel toward your therapist.

Do they feel like someone you could build a trusting relationship with? Will they help you feel supported, validated, and understood in your therapy sessions? How much are you willing to open up to them?

If you are in search of a therapist that is the right fit for you, our compassionate and caring professionals are here to help. [Contact](http://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php) us today, and we will work with you to set you up with the therapist you need to begin living a happier, healthier life.

**References**

<https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/patients-and-families/cognitive-behavioral#:~:text=Cognitive%20behavioral%20therapy%20(CBT)%20is,disorders%2C%20and%20severe%20mental%20illness>.

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