

Title: Mental Health Monday - Talk Therapy & Counseling

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Welcome to another Mental Health Monday (on a Tuesday)!

Over the last year due to COVID and moving states I've been without my team of mental health professionals to help me thrive, not just survive. Finally, a few months ago, I felt comfortable enough to start my search for a new therapist in my area. I've had many therapists throughout my life, some of them were a great fit, and some were total flops. I've realized recently that I've started to really refine my process for vetting therapists before scheduling an appointment and meeting the first time. Today, let's talk about the benefits of talk therapy and the stack of resources available to help you find the right therapist for you.

Benefits of Talk Therapy

Therapy/counseling isn't just for people who suffer from a mental health disorder or are going through a crisis. Everyone benefits from having a professional to talk about life experiences with. Talk therapy can help you develop and understand your values, goals in life, and roadblocks along the way.

According to [Healthline](<https://www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-therapy#individual>), talk therapy can also:

- * help improve communication skills
- * help you feel empowered
- * empower you to develop fresh insights about your life
- * learn how to make healthier choices
- * develop coping strategies to manage distress

Types of Talk Therapy

One of the important first steps to finding a therapist is determining what type of therapy you're most interested in experiencing. For me, I know that in order to thrive I need a combination of therapy that produces actions and coping mechanisms and works at acceptance (especially when it comes to sitting with uncomfortable emotions and not fighting them). While looking for my new therapist, I looked for someone who specializes in CBT and ACT specifically.

According to the [American Psychological Association](<https://www.apa.org/topics/psychotherapy/approaches>) the different approaches of talk therapy are broadly:

* **Psychoanalysis and psychodynamic therapies**. This approach focuses on changing problematic behaviors, feelings, and thoughts by discovering their unconscious meanings and motivations. Psychoanalytically oriented therapies are characterized by a close working partnership between therapist and patient. Patients learn about themselves by exploring their interactions in the therapeutic relationship. While psychoanalysis is closely identified with **Sigmund Freud**, it has been extended and modified since his early formulations.

* **Behavior therapy**. This approach focuses on learning's role in developing both normal and abnormal behaviors.

* **Ivan Pavlov** made important contributions to behavior therapy by discovering **classical conditioning**, or associative learning. Pavlov's famous dogs, for example, began drooling when they heard their dinner bell, because they associated the sound with food.

* **"Desensitizing"** is classical conditioning in action: A therapist might help a client with a phobia through repeated exposure to whatever it is that causes anxiety.

* Another important thinker was **E.L. Thorndike**, who discovered **operant conditioning**. This type of learning relies on rewards and punishments to shape people's behavior.

* Several variations have developed since behavior therapy's emergence in the 1950s. One variation is **cognitive-behavioral therapy**, which focuses on both thoughts and behaviors.

* **Cognitive therapy**. Cognitive therapy emphasizes what people think rather than what they do.

* Cognitive therapists believe that it's dysfunctional thinking that leads to dysfunctional emotions or behaviors. By changing their thoughts, people can change how they feel and what they do.

* Major figures in cognitive therapy include **Albert Ellis** and **Aaron Beck**.

* **Humanistic therapy**. This approach emphasizes people's capacity to make rational choices and develop to their maximum potential. Concern and respect for others are also important themes.

* Humanistic philosophers like **Jean-Paul Sartre**, **Martin Buber** and **Søren Kierkegaard** influenced this type of therapy.

* Three types of humanistic therapy are especially influential. **Client-centered therapy** rejects the idea of therapists as authorities on their clients' inner experiences. Instead, therapists help clients change by emphasizing their concern, care and interest.

* **Gestalt therapy** emphasizes what it calls "organismic holism," the importance of being aware of the here and now and accepting responsibility for yourself.

* **Existential therapy** focuses on free will, self-determination and the search for meaning.

* **Integrative or holistic therapy**. Many therapists don't tie themselves to any one approach. Instead, they blend elements from different approaches and tailor their treatment according to each client's needs.

Additional reading on types of therapy:

* [PsychCentral - Types of Psychotherapy](<https://psychcentral.com/lib/types-of-psychotherapy#how-to-choose>)

* [Healthline - A Guide to Different Types of Therapy](<https://www.healthline.com/health/types-of-therapy>)

* [GoodTherapy - Types of Therapy](<https://www.healthline.com/health/types-of-therapy>) \- More in depth on the different techniques

Finding a Therapist Resources

There are many different approaches you can take to finding a therapist. I personally use online databases to find a therapist who has an approach that meets my needs, then cross-reference with my insurance provider to make sure I'm covered.

[Healthline](<https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-find-a-therapist>) has a great article on how to find a therapist which lists the following suggestions:

1. Consult your primary care physician for a referral

2. Ask someone you trust for suggestions

3. Use a reliable online database

1. [APA - Psychologist Locator](<https://locator.apa.org/>)

2. [Psychology Today - Find a Therapist](<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>) \- This is the one I use

3. [American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy - Find a Therapist](https://www.aamft.org/Directories/Find_a_Therapist.aspx)

4. [Good Therapy - Find a Therapist](<https://www.goodtherapy.org/find-therapist.html>)

4. Explore local resources - Community programs or employer offered services

5. Reach out to organizations that address your area of concern - Examples being:

1. [National Eating Disorder Association](<https://map.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>)

2. [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](<https://adaa.org/>)

3. [National Center for PTSD](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/find_therapist.asp)

6. Think about your goals ahead of time and find a provider who can help you achieve those goals

7. Try online therapy

1. [Talkspace](https://try.talkspace.com/affiliate?utm_content=108187203&siteID=9_EdAQ1wkL8-CyQG R58T5phNsNcCXuJrYg&ranMID=41986&ranEAID=9%2FEdAQ1wkL8&ranSiteID=9_EdAQ1wkL8-CyQ GR58T5phNsNcCXuJrYg&LSNSUBSITE=LSNSUBSITE&utm_source=Healthline&utm_campaign=Affiliate_Linkshare&utm_keyword=3&utm_adgroup=3612025&utm_adid=81&utm_medium=affiliate)

2. [BetterHelp](https://www.betterhelp.com/get-started/?go=true&transaction_id=10228d0974417a967ce2b543244bee&utm_source=affiliate&utm_campaign=2072&utm_medium=Desktop&utm_content=&utm_)

term=healthline-_-found=1&gor;=start)

8. Ask questions that matter to you about their approach and credentials

9. Pay attention to your own response

It may take time to find a therapist who is the right fit for you and that is ****okay****! I personally have gone to consults with as many as 5 providers before finding the right fit in the past. You may also find that after some time together, the approach of your provider isn't working well for you anymore and that is ****okay**** too! Therapy should be a benefit, not a hindrance. If you find that your needs aren't being, it's likely time to start the search again.

A note for people who do not have insurance:

It's possible to find an affordable therapist even without insurance. I'd recommend reading through the following resources:

* [Medical News Today - Is Therapy an Option Without

Insurance](<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/therapy-without-insurance>)

* [Healthline - Therapy for Every Budget](<https://www.healthline.com/health/therapy-for-every-budget>)

* [ADAA - Low-Cost Treatment](<https://adaa.org/finding-help/treatment/low-cost-treatment>)

Additionally, online therapy apps may be a cheaper alternative for individuals without insurance.

Wrap Up

Anyone can benefit from Talk Therapy and there are more resources out there than ever to help you find the right therapist for you! Let me know if there's anything you'd like for me to add to the post or correct.

****Let's all try to #RatioAtSelfCare this week!**** Happy chatting!