

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LOOKING FOR A THERAPIST



The Mecca of Black Wellness



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Finding the right therapist can be like finding the right pair of jeans...sometimes you have to try on a few before you find the right fit. The search for that special therapist that you can be honest with, get the help you need, afford to pay, and fit into your schedule can be quite overwhelming. However, the more you know about yourself and your needs, the easier the process can be. Below are lists of questions we recommend you ask potential therapists and reflect upon after the first session. After you speak with the therapist, reflect on his/her/their responses and determine the best appropriate next step.

Questions To Ask a Potential Therapist

Depending on the therapist's preferred method of communication, you can email, text, or call the therapist to ask questions prior to committing to a new therapist. We recommend you talk on the phone with the therapist, especially if you will be doing therapy face-to-face or via video.

1. What can I expect in a typical therapy session with you?
2. Do you have experience working with (name the feelings, thoughts, behaviors you are most concerned about)?
3. What are your experiences working with people with my background and/or identities (e.g. gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, parenting background, etc.)?
4. What is your therapeutic style in working with clients and addressing similar concerns and/or identified problems?
5. How often would we need to meet with each other to address this issue (e.g., weekly, biweekly, number of sessions)?
6. What is your availability for appointments (Does the therapist have a variety of appointment times available)? What is your cancellation policy?
7. How do you believe people change or problems and concerns become less distressing?
8. How do you measure success in therapy? What happens if there are not any changes in my (name the feelings, thoughts, behaviors you are most concerned about)?

Questions to Ask Yourself After Meeting with the Therapist

After the therapist answers your questions, reflect on the following and then decide if the therapist is the right fit for you.

1. Did you feel comfortable talking with the therapist? Did you feel rushed or heard?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Did the therapist understand the meaning of what you were trying to communicate?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Did you understand the meaning of what the therapist was trying to communicate?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Did you feel like the therapist could help?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Can you afford to go to the therapist as frequently as recommended or as you would like?
 - a. Yes
 - b. If your answer is no, even if you really feel connected with the therapist, you should call someone else. Not being able to afford sessions is a deal breaker.
6. Does the therapist's available days/times work for you?
 - a. Yes
 - b. If your answer is no, even if you really feel connected with the therapist, you should call someone else. Not being able to attend appointments as needed is a deal breaker. Getting to therapy appointments should not be the hard part.

Suggested insights from questions

- It is unrealistic to expect to find the perfect fit in a therapist.
- If the majority of your responses are "Yes," consider starting therapy with that therapist.
- If majority of your responses are "No," you should consider contacting another therapist to determine if there is a better therapeutic and lifestyle fit for you.
- Remember therapy is a process and you may not know all of these answers after the first visit, it may take a few sessions.
- Certain things such as money and time are deal breakers and real barriers to therapy being effective. Being willing to be honest with yourself and the therapist about these and other barriers.
- You have already taken an amazing step towards improving your life; honesty will only increase positive outcomes.

"There are people out there with the ability and desire to help you. With patience, research, and honesty, you will find that person." Dr. Crawford

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RESOURCES DURING CRISIS OR DISTRESS

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit, <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> or dial 1-888-628-9454 to speak to someone.

Psychology Today

www.PsychologyToday.com

Psychology Today's Therapy Directory lists clinical professionals, psychiatrists and treatment centers that provide mental health services in the US and internationally.

Therapy for Black Girls

www.TherapyForBlackGirls.com

Therapy for Black Girls is an online space dedicated to encouraging the mental wellness of Black women and girls.

Zoc Doc

www.ZocDoc.com

With Zocdoc, you can see doctors' open appointment times and book instantly online, make informed choices with verified reviews, and stay on top of important checkups with tailored reminders.

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