

5...CUSTOMIZES AN APPROACH FOR YOUR SITUATION

The primary aim of many kinds of therapy is to help people grow and change in ways that allow them to think and act more effectively. This approach will vary with therapists.

Whichever approach your therapist takes, what's important is that you're comfortable with it and that your therapist is flexible. If it doesn't seem to be working for you is she willing to switch gears or refer you to someone else if necessary?



6...ENCOURAGES YOU TO SHARE ALL YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THERAPY

Most people at some time or another have a concern or even a criticism about their experience in therapy. This is natural. They may be afraid to voice concerns, however, for reasons like fear of hurting the therapist's feelings or not feeling it's their place to question the therapist,

The right therapist for you will encourage you to say how you feel about your therapy, even when you don't feel it's going well. She will ask for feedback and welcome your opinion.

7...HAS GOOD CREDENTIALS

Before signing on, it's important to make sure a therapist meets basic professional and educational standards. In addition you may also want to ask your therapist if they have experience or additional training in treating problems like yours. You may also contact the professional associations for the professionals that may be involved in your care, which may include the following:

- **Psychiatrists (M.D.)** are physicians and the only mental-health professionals licensed to prescribe drugs. They often combine talk therapy with medication.
- **Clinical Social Workers (M.S.W.)** has earned master's degree in social work. They are trained in individual, family and group counseling, with a special emphasis on tapping community resources.
- **Marriage and Family Therapist** have earned a minimum of a master's degree and specialize in marriage counseling.
- **Clinical or Counseling Psychologist (Ph.D., Psy.D., Ed.D.)** has spent an average of seven years in postgraduate school developing expertise in human behavior, diagnosis and treatment.
- **Limited Licensed Psychologist (M.A., L.L.P.)** has earned a master's degree in psychology, which specializes in psychometric testing. They also have additional training in individual, family and group counseling
- **Addictions Professional (CAC)**

Huron Behavioral Health



Choosing The Therapist Right For You !

THE RIGHT THERAPIST...

1... HAS MANY OF THE SAME QUALITIES YOU'D WANT IN A CLOSE FRIEND

“Right from the start, the therapist should be someone you admire and respect, someone you believe you could form and maintain a relationship with,” says Margaret Heldring, Ph.D., psychologist and clinical assistant professor at the University of Washington in Seattle. “This is going to be someone you’ll be sharing your intimate thoughts and vulnerabilities with, after all, so it’s vital that you feel that this is someone you trust or could grow to trust.”

If the relationship doesn’t feel right for some reason—not comfortable, not safe, not warm—then you’re unlikely to get anywhere together. You should not feel that your therapist is cool and detached.

2...SHOWS PROFESSIONALISM

Besides these qualities that you might expect from a good friend, a good therapist should follow a code of ethics that includes confidentiality and certain boundaries.

Appropriate boundaries that therapists must follow include things like:

- not having an outside relationship with a client while she’s in treatment
- not counseling somebody they already know
- not having any sexual contact with the client
- structuring the financial arrangements honestly, such as not billing an insurance company for sessions that did not occur

Crossing any of these boundaries would be wrong and unprofessional and should be reported.

Other warning signs that indicate a lack of professionalism would be a therapist that:

- Is often late to begin or end sessions
- Takes calls during sessions
- Confuses you with other clients
- Forgets what you’ve said in past sessions
- Talks about himself instead of keeping the primary focus on you.

3...WORKS WITH YOU TO ESTABLISH GOALS

Usually, clients come to therapy focused on a specific problem. They know what hurts. What they’re not clear about is what to do about it. A good therapist helps you find out what’s causing your pain. Together with your therapist you should establish some goals to work toward so that you both know what you are working towards.

Goals should be established right away, with the understanding that they may change over time.

Another aspect of goal setting is discussing how long therapy may take. The therapist should be able to give an estimated length of time you may be in therapy. A review of your goals, from time to time, will allow you to assess your progress. And when you’ve met your goal, a good therapist gently helps you end the therapy and have a sense of closure and satisfaction about the experience. She also lets you know that if another problem arises in the future, the door to return is always opened.

4...EMPOWERS YOU

Before entering therapy, many people have the idea that a therapist will be like a detective in a mystery movie: asking questions and investigating, putting the clues together and, in the end, solving the problem.

In reality, that is not at all the way a good therapist works. A good therapist does not attempt to solve problems for you. At best, she provides helpful insights and offers new ways of looking at your situation, giving you the ability to solve the problem for yourself. A good therapist will help you identify your strengths and how to use them in solving your problems now and in the future.

