



Questions to ask a prospective therapist

You may be brand new to counseling. Maybe you have experienced therapy sometime in your past. Whether it was a good, neutral, or negative, it's important for you to write lists as a baseline in addition to the suggested questions below.

Remember, **you** are hiring a therapist. Counseling is for **your** benefit. It's not about pleasing a professional. Be aware of what feels right for you. You are hiring for their expertise, not a "power-over" relationship.

Things to include on lists for previous counseling experiences

Examples of negative experiences might include: Didn't feel heard or understood. I felt judged. Counselor was late. I couldn't get regular appointment times. It was too expensive.

Examples of positive experiences might include: I felt validated. It was a good match personality-wise. Therapy was effective. I was able to get unstuck.

Include what's important as you choose from these questions.

- What is your specialty?
- How comfortable are you with X, Y, or Z (issues you need help with)?
- How has your training and experience impacted your therapy with clients?
- What has been most rewarding for you as a counselor?
- Describe your ideal client.
- How connected are you with other therapists? Do you refer? Do you use community resources? i.e. Celebrate Recovery, Al-Anon, etc.
- What do you do to refresh your soul?
- What if I'm uncomfortable with therapy? Or I feel offended?

These items should be in the *Counseling Agreement* you would sign before a first appointment. But if not, other logistical questions include:

- How do you handle communications in between sessions?
- Does an administrative assistant handle your schedule and calls?
- Where is your office located?
- What is the waiting room like? How long is a normal wait time while in the waiting room?
- Do you take insurance? Health Savings Accounts?
- What is your missed session policy?
- How long are your sessions and what are your fees?
- May I bring my pet to the sessions?
- Is it okay to _____ (knit, crochet) during the session?