

Choosing a Therapist

The search for a therapist can be daunting. Reaching out for support in a time of need is not easy. It is important to find a therapist that is a good fit. I offer this list as a starting place for some questions to ask your potential therapist. It is important to interview them so that you have more information with which to make an informed choice. I hope it is helpful for you in your search.

Questions for yourself:

- Have a clear idea of what you are seeking support with. What is bringing you into therapy?
- What are some qualities that you may want your therapist to have?
- What areas would you like them to have experience working with?
- What are your goals for therapy?

Questions to ask when interviewing a therapist. (Not all questions may be relevant to your needs)

- What kind of experience do they have working with the issues that are bringing you into therapy (eg: substance use, trauma, healthy relationships, anxiety, depression, life transitions etc)
- What do they find most challenging about working with these issues?
- What kinds of success have they had with their clients in addressing these issues?
- What, if any, is their area(s) of specialization?
- What therapeutic modalities do they use? (Eg: Psychodynamic; CBT; Trauma Focused CBT; Somatic; Psychoanalytic etc)
- Do they have personal experience with being in therapy and if so, what do they find challenging about being in therapy? What do they find rewarding about being in therapy?
- What is their policy about contact between sessions? What is their availability between sessions, should you need to reach out?
- What experience do they have working with people from different cultural backgrounds?
- What experience do they have working with people from the LGBTQ community?
- What experience do they have working with people who have involvement with the juvenile and/or adult criminal justice system?
- How do they know when it is time to end therapy?
- How do they track progress towards client therapy goals?
- How do they manage a situation where a client may be having difficulty following through with their therapeutic goals or therapist's requests?
- How do they navigate if a client disagrees with a therapist's recommendations?

Important:

You can research a therapist's license to ensure they are in good standing with the Board of Behavioral Sciences-which regulates mental health professionals in CA. Any disciplinary actions will be documented there. (<https://search.dca.ca.gov/>)
